

1 IN RE: HALIFAX SCHOOL :
2 BOARD PUBLIC HEARING :

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6 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
7 PUBLIC HEARING

8
9 BEFORE: DEAN HILE, CHAIRMAN
10 MATTHEW ULMER
11 TRUDY T. WITHERS
12 NATHAN WILBERT
13 HARA FRANK
14 THOMAS WEBER
15 BRAD HARKER
16 ROBBIE EYSTER
17 SCOTT CORSNITZ

18
19 DATE: MAY 9, 2019, 7:00 P.M.

20 PLACE: HALIFAX HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING
21 3940 PETERS MOUNTAIN ROAD
22 HALIFAX, PENNSYLVANIA

23
24 APPEARANCES:

25 CUNNINGHAM, CHERNICOFF & WARSHAWSKY, P.C.
BY: BRUCE J. WARSHAWSKY, SCHOOL SOLICITOR

ALSO PRESENT:

DAVID R. HATFIELD, SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

1 MR. HILE: Call to order. Pledge allegiance to the
2 flag, then a moment of silence.

3 (The pledge of allegiance recited.)

4 MR. HILE: Okay. Everyone, you can be seated.

5 102. Please note tonight's public hearing will be
6 stream lived and recorded to Halifax Area School District web
7 site as per school board policy 816.

8 Can I have a role call?

9 Mr. Corsnitz?

10 MR. CORSNITZ: Here.

11 MR. HILE: Mr. Eyster?

12 MR. EYSTER: Here.

13 MR. HILE: Miss Frank?

14 MISS FRANK: Here.

15 MR. HILE: Mr. Grosser?

16 Mr. Harker?

17 MR. HARKER: Present.

18 MR. HILE: Mr. Hile. Here.

19 Mr. Weber?

20 MR. WEBER: Present.

21 MR. HILE: Mr. Wilbert?

22 MR. WILBERT: Here.

23 MR. HILE: And Miss Withers?

24 MS. WITHERS: Here.

25 MR. HILE: We have eight present and one absent.

1 1.04. Introductory remarks from Mr. Bruce Warshawsky, our
2 solicitor.

3 MR. WARSHAWSKY: Good evening. I am Bruce
4 Warshawsky. I am the solicitor to the Halifax Area School
5 District. Tonight we're having a hearing. The hearing is
6 being held pursuant to Section 780 of the Public School Code
7 of 1949 as amended, which requires the scheduling of a public
8 hearing not less than three months before a determination is
9 made whether Enders-Fisherville Elementary School should be
10 permanently closed.

11 The provisions of the school code provide that this
12 hearing shall be held publically. It is in accordance with
13 Act 38, also known as Section 780 of the Public School Code.
14 Act 38 provides as follows: In the event of a permanent
15 closing of a public school or substantially all of the school
16 facilities, the board of school directors shall hold a public
17 hearing on the question not less than three months prior to
18 the decision of the board related to the closing of the
19 school. Notice of the hearing shall be given in a newspaper
20 of general circulation in the school district at least fifteen
21 days prior to the date of such hearings. A notice was
22 published in the Upper Dauphin Sentinel on April 23, 2019
23 setting May 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. as the date and time of the
24 hearing. I find that this hearing has been duly constituted
25 and properly convened pursuant to what is required by the

1 school code.

2 In the school code Section 13-1311, it sets forth
3 the reasons and the authority for a school board to close a
4 school. That section permits the closing of a school for the
5 following reasons: One, on account of the small number of
6 pupils in attendance; two, the condition of the then existing
7 school building; and three, for purposes of better graduation
8 and classification, or four, other reasons.

9 The purpose of this hearing is informational and for
10 the board to review certain facts and details of the school
11 closing so that they can later consider these facts.
12 Consideration and the final decision may not be made by law
13 for three months after this hearing.

14 Our agenda will be as follows in two parts. Part
15 one will be presented by the superintendent and will describe
16 the background which is the part of the consideration of
17 closing the school. Part two is for public testimony. It is
18 an opportunity for you through oral or written testimony to
19 make comments regarding the school closing and/or
20 reconfiguration that you feel are pertinent to the board
21 making its decision. Thank you.

22 MR. HILE: Part 105. Administration presentation.

23 MR. HATFIELD: Good evening and welcome. Thank you
24 for coming out tonight.

25 Of course, many of you know, my name is David

1 Hatfield. It has been my pleasure to work in this community
2 for about sixteen years.

3 As superintendent we have had I think a very
4 difficult year as far as budget. And we have put thoughtful
5 consideration into making some decisions that we had hoped not
6 to make for years to come. When it became pretty obvious to
7 that we needed to look at not only staffing issues, but also
8 facilities and operations during this budget cycle, we began
9 to consider looking at closing the Enders-Fisherville School
10 and moving those students into Halifax Elementary School. I
11 don't need to tell you that that's why you are here tonight.

12 We do have ample opportunity tonight for public
13 comment. Feel free to come up, speak, give your name and role
14 in the community, whether you are a parent, a staff member or
15 a member of the community. Please limit your comments to five
16 minutes. And if you don't feel comfortable speaking tonight,
17 there is some comment sheets out in the lobby. Feel free to
18 leave comments. We'll leave public comment open I believe for
19 thirty days. And any comments that we receive either to my
20 email or written comments will be added to the public record
21 for tonight's meeting.

22 All right. So when we began to look at the
23 feasibility of running two elementary schools, one of the main
24 considerations that we made was on student enrollment.

25 If you have been at the previous budget meetings or

1 had opportunity to watch on live stream or to review the power
2 points that have been posted to our web site, you will have
3 seen this graph before that demonstrates the reduction of
4 student enrollment in Halifax Area School District.

5 We see here on the left that essentially when I
6 arrived here in 2002, 2003, our student population was 1310.
7 And we have seen a steady decline after a brief plateau, a
8 steady decline to where we're now with an anticipated student
9 enrollment next year of 749 students.

10 I want to point out that there are different sources
11 for this data. Data that's to the left in dark blue was taken
12 from the enrollment data that we filed with PDE every October
13 1st. So that's like our official student number, student
14 enrollment for that year. And then to the right is data that
15 we received from our Power School, our student accounting data
16 to the right of that.

17 When we began to look at the budget, one thing that
18 we took into consideration was student enrollment was the
19 number of students in each grade. And we had to make a
20 consideration essentially of whether we can serve those
21 students in the educational environment by having three
22 classes in each grade or four classes in each grade.

23 It has been our practice for the last several years
24 to have four sections at almost every grade level. We looked
25 at those numbers, and we did some simple math. That math is

1 outlined for you there with projected student enrollments by
2 grade level for next year.

3 You can see that starting at the top, we anticipate,
4 and Mr. Ansel I believe is almost close to finalizing our
5 enrollment for next year in our pre-K program of twenty
6 students that are almost all four-years old with some three
7 year olds.

8 We looked at our kindergarten enrollment for next
9 year which is 58. And you can see even at 58 students in
10 kindergarten, if we reduce to three sections, that would be
11 nineteen -- two sections of nineteen and one section of
12 twenty.

13 We as an administrative team are very sensitive to
14 class size. And we wanted to make sure that we stayed within
15 an acceptable range, because we want to continue the tradition
16 here at Halifax where we feel we have been able to provide
17 students with individual attention in the classroom setting.

18 As you see then, grade two through grade five, there
19 was -- we were under seventy at every level except for grade
20 four initially where there was seventy-two students and then
21 there was some increasing enrollments that brought seventy-two
22 students also to projected enrollments for next year for grade
23 three. Those numbers at seventy-two and seventy-three don't
24 account for students that are in our building but are pulled
25 from the regular classroom for the majority of their day or

1 part of the day. So those numbers are somewhat inflated. I
2 think that when we looked through again enrollment figures
3 just this morning, we would anticipate that the third grade
4 classes with students in regular attendance would actually be
5 four or five students less than at the seventy-two number.
6 That's why when we put forth some proposals to the school
7 board, we had maintained four classrooms for fourth grade,
8 because the number was the highest. And we felt in reviewing
9 the students that were going into that grade, that there was
10 some students with needs in there that would benefit from
11 having the four classrooms in that grade for next year.

12 Then you can see at the middle school, we have a
13 large student population moving into fifth grade next year at
14 87. And then at high school, of course, we have kind of the
15 anomaly in grade ten with just sixty students.

16 So on the left there it's kind of broken down at
17 students at each grade level, and then the total for each
18 building down below, and then the total enrollment down below
19 that.

20 On the right side are the numbers of students we
21 enroll at Dauphin County Vo-tech, the number of students that
22 are full time in the CAOLA program and that is our own cyber
23 school that we offer here at Halifax. And the content is
24 provided by the Capital Area On Line -- I am sorry, the
25 Capital Area Intermediate Unit. So those kids, although they

1 are listed on the left in the number of students who are
2 enrolled, those students generally do most of their work at
3 home setting or outside of the school setting.

4 We have 33 students that are enrolled in non-public
5 or christian schools. We have 34 students that are enrolled
6 in cyber charter schools, a number of home schooled students,
7 four of our students who go to the vocation-agriculture
8 program at Upper Dauphin. They leave a half day from the high
9 school and go to Upper Dauphin. And then we have other
10 students that are ours that are in non-attendance. So they
11 may be in special programs to address certain behavior,
12 emotional, special educational means that they may have at
13 school here.

14 All right. I certainly don't need to tell you much
15 about the history of Enders-Fisherville. Many of you worked
16 there for several years. Many of you attended there or had
17 students that attended there as well.

18 There are some facts about Enders-Fisherville
19 school, when it was built, the square footage. Of course,
20 many of us have walked the halls. We have seen the murals.
21 We have heard the childrens laughter there. So we don't have
22 to talk too much about the facilities itself.

23 What I do want to outline though is that there has
24 been some renovations to that building, of course, in 1988
25 notably the library was added. In the late '90s, the heating

1 system was upgraded from coal to oil.

2 There has been several projects to work on the roof.
3 There was modular instructional space added that is in the
4 back of the school by the playground. Security cameras were
5 updated and repaired in 2015. And the air conditioner in the
6 office area was replaced.

7 You can see on that previous slide identified some
8 issues with the building. But I thought that that warranted a
9 slide of its own. Much of this data is taken from a
10 feasibility study that was completed just three years ago by
11 KCBA where they outlined some issues with the facility that
12 would need to be addressed. Repointing of the masonry is an
13 issue. The HVAC system is an issue at Enders-Fisherville.

14 If you have driven through to pick up a student, or
15 if you park in that parking lot regularly, you know that the
16 parking lot would need major work.

17 The sewage system I think is the one that's most
18 troubling because we would need substantial sewer upgrades to
19 that facility if we were to continue to use it.

20 And additionally, Enders-Fisherville receives their
21 internet -- it is actually beamed from this building to that
22 building. And that technology has been integrated, and we
23 feel it would need to be repaired or replaced in the near
24 future.

25 When we looked at operational savings, associated

1 personnel reductions for this budget, we approximated that
2 \$200,000 a year we would be able to save if we were not
3 running Enders-Fisherville next year.

4 We're not at this point -- I think it is important,
5 there is not a for sale sign in front of the
6 Enders-Fisherville Elementary School. Halifax Area School
7 District is looking to retain ownership of that. And in doing
8 so, even if there are no students there, we would still need
9 to care for the building and the grounds to a certain level.
10 So we wouldn't be able to recoup this full savings in the
11 budget.

12 Actually there is a slide later where we are
13 looking, it's more of an itemized view of how we approximated
14 the savings moving into next year if we would close
15 Enders-Fisherville. And this is where I turn to my business
16 manager, Matt Ulmer, who worked on this itemized deduction
17 list.

18 MR. ULMER: The itemized list was really just taking
19 line items from the proposed budget associated with
20 Enders-Fisherville and removing them from the budget or
21 reducing them. Maybe not fully removing them because we are
22 looking to have the building operate in some capacity to
23 maintain the systems in the building. So trash removal saves
24 \$5200; electricity, that's not a fully eliminated number,
25 that's just a reduction, so it would be a savings of 12,000;

1 repairs and maintenance, again that's just a savings of
2 \$10,000. That isn't the full line item because we still
3 anticipate we would still have some upkeep of the building.

4 Heating oil, that's a reduction, again not the full
5 amount, just a reduction. We wouldn't be heating as warm as
6 we currently are. We would be maintaining the systems to a
7 lower level.

8 Ground care, again, we would still have to mow and
9 maintain the property, but that still is a reduction from the
10 budgeted number for that facility.

11 Transportation cost, this was taken from again the
12 CVA study as was a projection that they anticipated. We
13 believe it's a conservative number. We would hope to maybe
14 save a little bit more money. But until we actually get all
15 of kids rostered and do an actual assessment of what the
16 transportation costs will be, we felt that that \$100,000 was a
17 fair estimate that they had provided in that feasibility
18 study.

19 Computer infrastructure, again, wouldn't be
20 maintaining some of the current systems that are used at that
21 facility. So that would be an elimination from the budget.

22 Courier services, again, that's the annual trips
23 that we make out to that building. We would be reducing that
24 and saving costs there. And then some of the mileage that we
25 would pay to staff when we are commuting between buildings, we

1 wouldn't have those. They would all be at the Halifax
2 Elementary School. So we wouldn't have that additional cost
3 of paying reimbursement, which is a total operational savings
4 of just shy of \$150,000.

5 MR. HATFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Ulmer.

6 Of course, there are some positions that are solely
7 dependent on that building running, one of which is the
8 building secretary, who is phenomenal, has been very
9 instrumental. But if we looked at closing that building, we
10 would also reduce that staff. We would see a reduction in
11 cafeteria staff as well.

12 Generally, all of the reduction in staff, teaching
13 staff and aid staff would be tied to reducing class, running
14 four classes down to three classes at the grade level that I
15 mentioned previously.

16 There are positions though that we think there are
17 still a need for. If we were to move students and teachers
18 into Enders-Fisherville, one of them is the custodial
19 position. We had been operating I feel half a person or full
20 person down in our custodial maintenance staff. And adding
21 pre-K, kindergarten and first grade I think would justify
22 retaining a custodial position for this next year and then
23 evaluating that as we move into the years in the future as how
24 we can service that with our custodial staff, whether that
25 would be two full time or one full time, and one part time

1 person or just one person, which I don't feel would be
2 feasible.

3 Additionally, we would look to keep the nurses aid
4 position. Currently we have a -- our school nurse is
5 generally stationed here at the middle school/high school
6 building and serves our largest population. We have a nurses
7 aid at the elementary school and a nurses aid at
8 Enders-Fisherville.

9 In every other year that I have been here previous
10 to 2015, we always had four on the nursing staff. So I feel
11 like moving to two would very much stretch us very thin, and
12 we wouldn't be able to provide the services to our students
13 that we had in the past in our nursing program. So moving a
14 nurse in, they would be able to -- certainly kids in pre-K and
15 kindergarten would have some needs that we would need to meet
16 in the nurses office, whether it's diapering and changing or
17 just falling down on the playground. So in our budget
18 proposal, we're keeping those positions in the budget for next
19 year.

20 Next I thought it would be wise to look at the
21 condition of Halifax Elementary School because certainly there
22 are some needs in that facility that I think we're all pretty
23 much aware of that don't go away if we move more students
24 there.

25 Certainly there may be more of a sense of urgency in

1 addressing some of those needs as we address the student
2 population, even though the student population we would
3 foresee next year if we combine would still be in line with
4 some historic levels.

5 If you remember in 2002, 2003, there was 400 or more
6 kids in the district. And if you kind of amortize those kids
7 out in those grade levels, Halifax Elementary has seen student
8 populations that would be commensurate with what we're
9 proposing for next year. But to be certain, there are some
10 needs in that building that we would need to address.

11 In the past, school boards had looked at feasibility
12 studies for major renovations for the elementary school or
13 building a new elementary school.

14 We would certainly need to shift gears and look at
15 other ways that we could address the renovations to that
16 building in the future, whether there is a -- through energy
17 savings programs that are tied to construction and renovation
18 or other means. But certainly we know and have been given
19 consideration to the needs of that building that would need to
20 be met in the future.

21 You can see there that probably one of the most
22 devastating things that happened to Halifax Elementary was the
23 M word that happened in 2002 when we had to take students and
24 move them to local churches and actually close down while the
25 building was remediated. There has also been roofing

1 projects. There has been HVAC projects that have been done to
2 that building. As recently as yesterday, there has also been
3 some improvements to the paving that is out front of the
4 school as well.

5 There are some planned projects as we move forward
6 into this summer and into next year that have essentially
7 already been budgeted for or will be paid for through the
8 acquisition of the Act 44 safety and security grant. So
9 initially we received \$25,000 from the state for that grant.
10 That is going to go to harden that entrance. So we're putting
11 another set of doors in the lobby of Halifax Elementary School
12 to make that entrance more secure and to route all of traffic
13 after the students come in during the school day in through
14 the office. Certainly -- we're reconfiguring the office
15 somewhat and the way the students would enter.

16 Many of us notice when you entered this building,
17 you entered a vestibule that was secured during the school day
18 and all traffic had to flow where people had to sign into the
19 office. That is what we're proposing for the elementary
20 school as well. We estimated that project would cost about
21 fifteen to 18,000 dollars. And that would come from the
22 \$25,000 that we have from the Act 44 grant.

23 We are also fortunate last week to find out that
24 there is a part two to the Act 44 grant that was a competitive
25 grant, and Halifax was awarded 34,000 dollars for that grant

1 that we're going to also put into safety and security updates
2 including the acquisition of Motorola radios for teachers
3 during emergencies and on recess duties, other things to
4 identify rooms that in times of emergency and other issues
5 that the board and the INA school safety and security audit
6 that was created this year outlined as areas to improve school
7 safety and security.

8 Additionally, we have some money that is set aside
9 from the Barrett Memorial Library Fund to make some upgrades
10 to the library. Of course, if we close Enders-Fisherville, we
11 would be combining collections and a library, and we should
12 probably work to make that a more inviting and appropriate
13 place for students to come and learn, and learn the love of
14 reading.

15 These concerns are concerns not only that were
16 brought up in the KCBA study, but were also concerns that were
17 highlighted by parents in comments, teachers and
18 administrators in the Halifax Elementary building.

19 We have worked very hard to try and make student
20 drop off with buses and parent pick up and drop off more
21 efficient. We have done that mostly through really dedicated
22 staff that stand out there and make things happen in the
23 morning even on the coldest mornings to try and expedite that
24 student drop off and pick up.

25 We know that the addition of kids from

1 Enders-Fisherville are going to put a strain on that already
2 strained system. So Mr. Sim, Mr. Ansel, Mrs. Sauer and others
3 have begun to work on improving those procedures so that that
4 runs efficiently in the morning. Whether that is staggering
5 bus times and parent pick-up times or redesigning the way that
6 parent pick up happens, that's something that we have given
7 consideration to if we were going to add students to Halifax
8 Elementary School.

9 Of course, one of the projects that was done very
10 noticeably when you entered the school, we upgraded that rail
11 system to that stairway that was seen for many years to be not
12 quite up to the safety standards that we hoped. There are two
13 other side stairways that have not been addressed. And we
14 would think that moving forward we would address those
15 stairwells. Additionally, we have HVAC issues with some leaky
16 pipes. When the weather gets warm, the pipes condensate and
17 drip on to the drop ceiling.

18 We also recently had an issue with our HVAC
19 controller head unit. We're waiting on an estimate to
20 replace. Additionally, the plumbing in the bathrooms I
21 believe are mostly original to the building. The windows are
22 not as energy efficient as we would hope. Of course, as I
23 mentioned earlier, their recommendations from the safety and
24 security audit that we're going to look at including doors and
25 other door locks and other security measures.

1 There are three rooms that you will see on the map a
2 couple slides forward that are the rooms in the basement that
3 don't have windows. And there is not natural light that comes
4 into those rooms. Currently, those rooms are home to health
5 and to music and to band. Am I correct, Mr. Sim, on that?
6 Those three rooms in there don't have natural light. If you
7 can see in the next slides that we're not proposing to make
8 those rooms full classrooms. They would stay rooms -- special
9 rooms that kids would just rotate in and out during the day
10 so kids wouldn't be in for seven and a half hours in the room
11 without natural sunlight.

12 The cafeteria tables and equipment are aging. The
13 flooring and the surfaces, they're old seven-inch tiles. Of
14 course, that would -- eventually we would look to address.
15 The lighting is one area where we can upgrade and make
16 substantial energy savings cost if we would upgrade the
17 lighting.

18 And then last, I mentioned earlier, the library
19 furniture that we would address that almost immediately this
20 summer or next school year using grant money. That wouldn't
21 come from the budget directly.

22 All right. Here is our sample Halifax Elementary
23 map. And I apologize with my old eyes, I am having a hard
24 time seeing it. Many of you out there are younger than me but
25 may have a hard time seeing it as well.

1 This whole slide show with these maps are posted on
2 our web site. So if you want to take a look at those and
3 enlarge them to see. Generally what we want to do in this map
4 was not say where we would expect every single teacher to go
5 next year. Many elementary maps are not identified by room
6 number, instead by teacher names so students know where Mrs.
7 Eyster's room is. But they may not understand where room B7
8 is with our alpha numeric system to number these rooms. But
9 what we wanted to do was make an accounting for the classrooms
10 that we anticipate would exist next year. We wanted to make
11 sure that every single classroom, that we had had ample room
12 for all students. And we wanted to make sure that we were in
13 compliance with PDE, not only for our regular education
14 students, but also for our special education students. The
15 Department of Education lays out pretty strict guidelines that
16 all schools are told to follow, and we're in complete
17 compliance now. And with any additional students from
18 Enders-Fisherville, we believe that we'll be in complete
19 compliance with PDE expectations for student and classroom
20 sizes and meeting capacity and fire codes, and everything else
21 for next year.

22 You can see there, there is -- we actually thought
23 that we would need one pre-K room, 220 full size classrooms,
24 then there is some group instruction classrooms. Those are
25 not full size classrooms.

1 When you get a better picture of this map on line,
2 you will see the words SGI. And that simply is just shorthand
3 for small group instruction rooms. So that's when we -- where
4 some of our specialists would meet and work with kids in small
5 groups, whether those are special education teachers, type one
6 teachers, school psychiatrists, so those are the smaller
7 rooms. Many of you are familiar with that layout where those
8 small rooms occur. There is also, of course, indicated here
9 the kitchen and cafeteria as indicated in the upper level, but
10 it's also indicated on the lower level because we know that we
11 kind of have a split level school when it comes to that
12 cafeteria, it's between floors.

13 And there you can see on the bottom that we would
14 have marked these classrooms that I have indicated do not have
15 natural sunlight as special classrooms. So those classrooms
16 would not house students in a regular home room with a regular
17 instructional area.

18 And then on the right here I have marked as special
19 education. That's currently our autistic support classroom.
20 We have looked at different variations already of this map
21 where we place grade levels at different places that's most
22 appropriate. Of course, the downstairs classrooms here were
23 originally kindergarten classrooms and are equipped with
24 bathrooms. And so that was for us an area that we thought
25 that would be most appropriate for our younger students. But

1 certainly we're going to get teacher input on that as well as
2 we begin to look and roll out those maps about what is most
3 appropriate for the placement of different grade levels.

4 All right. Now, I am not going to be able to
5 explain this to you. This is the work of Mr. Sim and Mrs.
6 Sauer. Essentially what this sample elementary master
7 schedule does is a way for the administration to chart out to
8 make sure that we had dedicated recess time, class time,
9 instructional time and cafeteria time for each of the grade
10 levels since we're adding grade levels to Halifax Elementary
11 School.

12 Mr. Sim, is there anything that you want to add to
13 this slide?

14 MR. SIM: Sure. I think the main purpose of the
15 slide is not necessarily to study the detail, say, well, that
16 is interesting, a kindergarten is going to have specials at
17 9:00 o'clock or so on. The first thing we wanted to make sure
18 kind of like a puzzle is, it's impossible to have all of the
19 kids go out and have recess, eat lunch, have specials and
20 would it all work. And the answer to that is yes. But
21 actually since this draft, there has been about seven others
22 because we're not going to make any decisions in a vacuum. So
23 lots of teacher eyes are on it already. And even reaching out
24 to our whole IU where, for instance, when is the best time to
25 have specials for our younger kids. That's changed a little

1 bit. I had fourth grade recess in the morning. Some of the
2 teachers weren't super excited about that. And fifth grade
3 recess, I was on the fence about whether fifth graders should
4 still have recess or not. That's now back in. So some
5 teachers are nodding yes. So the bottom line is, you know, I
6 have been in this a lot enough to know that it all works.

7 And just so you know, all of the white space there
8 is going to be a lot of learning that happens during that
9 space. We just haven't identified whether we are reading,
10 writing, doing math, or other things there. Social studies.
11 Science. I don't want to leave anybody else. It's all good.

12 MR. HATFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Sim.

13 All right. One of the things that we look at,
14 actually a board member brought to our attention perhaps if we
15 are moving to all students on this campus, we should look at
16 potentially cost savings that we could realize from going from
17 one bus run. That would be having kids from pre-K the whole
18 way up through twelve on the same buses and doing one bus run.
19 Certainly we could, realizing costs savings there. I would
20 imagine there would be some parents that would have concerns
21 with having those age spans on the bus. And we could
22 certainly address that. But there is other factors that I
23 think before we even begin to address those parents' concerns
24 or the concerns of teachers or the community in having one bus
25 run, it came to our realization very quickly in conversations

1 with Rohrers, they simply could not staff us if we did one bus
2 run. As of this morning we were four drivers short. So we
3 had essentially three routes right now that are staffed by a
4 rotating cadre of people from Rohrers. And then we had one
5 bus driver that was out sick today. So we have all of our bus
6 routes staffed completely by Rohrers. But you see the Rohrer
7 vans that have do you want to drive a bus, call this number.
8 You hear the ads that they -- if anybody is looking for work
9 and could tolerate driving a school bus full of kids, I
10 encourage you to apply with Rohrers. Certainly not the job
11 for me. But we would have to increase the number of runs from
12 fourteen to twenty in order to do a bus route. And Rohrers
13 simply said they could not accommodate us in our current
14 contract with them, and certainly could not really accommodate
15 having twenty drivers here for that one bus run.

16 We also realized if we went to one bus run, we would
17 need to alter the start times either to the high school or
18 elementary school or come to a middle ground. There is a lot
19 of challenges and leg work that come with changing master
20 schedules and all that goes to accommodate that. Potentially
21 moving to one bus run may be something we consider in the
22 future, but we have ruled that out for next year; however,
23 with the proposed elimination of Enders-Fisherville, we would
24 look right off the bat to eliminate two whole routes. We
25 would realize a savings now and help to address some of the

1 concerns with labor shortage relative to bus drivers.

2 Additionally, we would be able to eliminate a small
3 bus that currently runs now. It's actually more efficient
4 and a better cost savings if we would just run larger buses
5 instead of smaller buses. So we would look to redo our
6 routes. Certainly Michelle Bisking and Lori Smith and Rohrer
7 and everybody that works so hard on planning these bus routes
8 and making them as economically viable as possible and holding
9 down student ride times are going to face some challenges this
10 summer in re-organizing the routes.

11 One thing that we know that at least initially in
12 the beginning of the school year, that we could have some
13 increased turn around time in trying to get buses out of the
14 Halifax High School/Middle School Complex and out into their
15 routes just to cover the amount of area.

16 Usually we see that subside somewhat after we're
17 able to fine tune routes after the first couple of weeks of
18 school. Of course, I mentioned earlier, we would need to
19 re-assess the parent pick-up areas, the times and potentially
20 a staging area working in partnership with the township.

21 All right. So I went through a lot. I delivered a
22 lot of information. And I know that you are going to have a
23 lot of comments and certainly a lot of questions about what
24 has been delivered tonight. But in my closing remarks, I
25 think it is important to say that it is my recommendation

1 based on enrollment and the future investment in
2 Enders-Fisherville that I would like the board to consider
3 closing Enders-Fisherville this summer in accordance with PDE
4 timelines for the beginning of the '19-'20 school years.

5 All right. And I think, Mr. Hile, you have some
6 instructions relevant to public comment.

7 MR. HILE: Yes. These are the guidelines for oral
8 testimony. The board recognizes the value of school
9 governance, of public comment, educational issues and the
10 importance of involving members of the public.

11 Public comments are welcome on topics on the hearing
12 agenda or topics relative to the issue immediately before the
13 board. Topic on other issues are neither appropriate nor
14 permissible. The board also recognizes its responsibility for
15 proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its
16 business in an orderly and effective manner.

17 Public testimony will be limited to five minutes per
18 person. Please do remain sensitive to your allotted time.
19 Others may wish to speak. One speaker may not give his or her
20 time to another speaker. Please respect the board members,
21 presenters and others in the audience when you speak. Please
22 do not talk when another person is giving public testimony.

23 The board values every speakers comments and wishes
24 to be able to hear them. Guests in the audience are asked not
25 to make comments or gestures about the speaker's view point

1 such as clapping or agreement or derogatory remarks when you
2 disagree.

3 Individuals may be unwilling to present their
4 opinions if they feel they're going to be treated
5 discourteously. Please remember that we are role models for
6 our children. So please model appropriate behavior for their
7 sake.

8 When you testify, for purposes of the stenographer,
9 please state your name, address, and whether you are a
10 resident, a parent, a staff member or whatever combination of
11 these that you are. There is a stenographer present to record
12 all of the testimony. The record will remain open for thirty
13 days. So if you think of something after the hearing that you
14 would like the board to consider, put your thoughts in writing
15 to the board care of the board secretary and it will become
16 part of the packet of testimony that will be considered by the
17 board.

18 Now, I'd like to T.V. pause here. If anyone has to
19 use the bathroom before we start the public testimony. Five
20 minutes. How about five minutes?

21 Okay.

22 (Brief recess.)

23 MR. HILE: We are going to do public testimony now.
24 Raise your hand. And I will call on you individually until we
25 get to everybody.

1 All right. Flo.

2 Be mindful of the five-minute timeframe.

3 FLO MALLONEE: I am Flo Mallonee. Thank you,
4 Mr. Hatfield, you gave me the idea. I am a member of the
5 community. I am a resident --

6 MR. HILE: Flo, please use the mic so she gets it
7 correctly.

8 MS. MALLONEE: Don't use this as my time.
9 M-a-l-l-o-n-e-e. Flo. I am a resident, a member of the
10 community, as well as chair person of our Halifax Township
11 Planning Commission of which I have been a member for over a
12 dozen years. I also attend the township supervisors meeting.
13 So I am familiar with municipal government as well as coming
14 to the school board meeting.

15 And when I speak, I don't have a typed paper or
16 anything else. I am speaking from the heart from what I have
17 heard here, from what I have learned, and from what I see.

18 Now, one of the things that I seen and I know is
19 that we're in a bad situation. And hopefully we'll get out of
20 it and never get in it again. But we are. But one thing I do
21 know among other things is that what we have been doing does
22 not work. And anyone, even a young student knows that when
23 you do the same thing over and over, and it isn't working, you
24 find something else in a better way. And I think that we
25 have. And as you all know what we're talking about is doing

1 -- raising school property taxes. If I were a member of this
2 school board, and say I were working and collecting a
3 paycheck, and possibly my husband yet or my spouse working,
4 there would be no way that I would be ever able to say to
5 people that have lived in this community, the same people
6 because we haven't had any growth in twenty years that I am
7 going to raise your property taxes.

8 These people who are many of them senior citizens on
9 social security, low income people who's health costs have
10 gone up exorbitantly. When I talk to some people and find out
11 what they are paying for low health costs, I know what comes
12 out of my social security check. I don't have a choice. They
13 raise it. They take it. And that's only for 80 percent,
14 coverage doesn't cover anything else. I would not have the
15 nerve to say to them I am going to raise your taxes especially
16 when it doesn't work.

17 Now, we have come up with some new ideas. And
18 closing Enders-Fisherville maybe doesn't seem good to some
19 people. But what I have heard today, Mr. Ulmer, you have
20 given a good amount, Mr. Hatfield, I am very happy with
21 hearing what you had to say. And I think that we will still
22 have the same teachers giving our kids a good education which
23 you -- they are doing now. I am very happy to see the
24 education they're getting. I have many members of my family,
25 one of which is a school teacher, she was hoping that maybe

1 she would teach up here, but she's -- didn't work out that
2 way. But you may not like closing the school, but when you
3 listen, and the money we're going to save and that school over
4 there is going to need a lot of work. It also has a septic
5 tank, it also has well water, those kind of things in the
6 future, talking about green and taking care of, are going to
7 pose problems. So even though it doesn't sound like what you
8 want to do, it is a good alternative and it sounds like a
9 wonderful thing. I think the money we're going to save
10 slowly, and it's going to build up, maybe some day even sell
11 the property, we're going to give our kids what our intention
12 here is without punishing the people of this community when
13 we're already the third highest school property tax in Dauphin
14 County. Think. Listen. Don't close your mind. Our federal
15 government is doing that now. They make up their mind. They
16 could give a hill of beans about anybody else but themselves.
17 Let's think about everybody. We're thinking about our kids
18 and giving them a good education. And we will and will
19 continue to do so. Moving the school is not going to lower
20 their education. And we all know that, and don't pretend we
21 don't.

22 Please consider, don't have your mind closed just
23 because you want something. Think of what is the best for the
24 community, the children and above all the education. We will
25 give them a good education. I don't care what anyone says, we

1 have good teachers, will continue have to them. Thank you for
2 listening.

3 MR. HILE: Thank you, Flo.

4 Who's next?

5 MS. BURKHOLDER: My name is Chandra Burkholder.

6 C-h-a-n-d-r-a B-u-r-k-h-o-l-d-e-r. I am a resident, a parent,
7 and a substitute teacher. And my concern is with moving from
8 Enders into Halifax Elementary is the playground equipment. I
9 would like to know if there are plans to move the pre-K shed
10 and the dinosaurs, some of the other pre-K kindergarten, first
11 grade equipment into Halifax Elementary.

12 I have had three children go through the pre-K
13 program, and I know that the kindergarten, first grade
14 equipment is not age appropriate for the pre-K students. And
15 so that's why we have the shed with the various age
16 appropriate equipment. And I am guessing that the Halifax
17 Elementary for second through fifth grade is not appropriate
18 for kindergarten and first grade. So I am thinking as a
19 parent about the safety of and having all children have age
20 appropriate equipment for their recess.

21 MR. HILE: Thank you, Chandra.

22 Who's next? Anyone? Yes.

23 MS. RANCK: Hi. Jo Ranck. J-o R-a-n-c-k. I am a
24 resident. I am a parent. I am also a substitute.

25 My concerns mirror Chandra's.

1 MR. HILE: Please talk into the mic.

2 MS. RANCK: My concerns also mirror Chandra's. My
3 kids have all gone through the pre-K program. The playground
4 equipment didn't meet state needs. We were told that in our
5 meeting. They didn't have sheds. But even that didn't meet
6 all of the state needs. And you got docked points on that.

7 In order to keep the state grant, you need to earn
8 all of the points to continue running the pre-K program. It's
9 a great program. I would like to see it continue. So that's
10 a big concern. How are you guys going to address that?

11 Then you talk about the even longer bus times. My
12 kids already ride 55 minutes. Now are they going to ride 80.

13 And did you consider in your declining enrollment
14 all of the kids that are currently home schooled and charter
15 school and private schooled in your numbers. You have them
16 off to the side. But is it really a declining enrollment or
17 is increase in those because now they're allowed to do that
18 and not forced to go to Halifax. So is it really a decline or
19 is it a movement of students?

20 That's all I have for now. I am sure I have more,
21 but that's all I have.

22 MR. HATFIELD: Could you repeat the question for me
23 please? The last question about what students are --

24 MS. RANCK: The declining enrollment?

25 MR. HATFIELD: Yes, please.

1 MS. RANCK: The declining enrollment, do you have
2 that as a really declining enrollment, or is it a movement of
3 students to private, charter, home school, those sort of
4 things versus actually students moving out.

5 MR. HATFIELD: That -- I can go back and kind of
6 maybe address that slide. This certainly isn't a question and
7 answer session. We want to hear as many questions and
8 concerns that people have. But on the slide, if I could get
9 back to it, Matt. Just go back to the enrollment slide if
10 that's possible. For some reason that doesn't seem to be
11 working with my equipment. He might have difficulty bringing
12 that up. So we're actually seeing a reduction in school age
13 students in our community. So yes, that is certainly
14 happening. And that is what we're seeing, the majority of the
15 reduction of student population is the reduction in school age
16 children. The number of kids that are -- the number of kids
17 that are home schooled has been pretty steady for us. Where
18 we have seen an increase in recent years that has a direct
19 impact on our budget is the number of kids in cyber charter
20 schools. So that number I believe was on that slide at 34 the
21 way that cyber charter school funding works.

22 MR. HILE: Dave, we can't hardly hear you. Use a
23 microphone.

24 MR. HATFIELD: The way that cyber charter school
25 funding actually works right now is those cyber charter

1 schools claim a majority of our student -- per student
2 enrollment costs. So many local school districts have it much
3 worse than we do. We certainly got it plenty bad. Even if
4 you just round down to \$10,000 per student, don't count any of
5 the special needs students that are out where the costs are
6 almost double that, that 34 students at \$10,000 a piece. That
7 we have seen a significant impact in students there. That
8 directly effects our budget. But overall declining enrollment
9 in all areas otherwise.

10 MS. RANCK: The last two points that I wanted to
11 make was what are you currently going to do with the
12 Enders-Fisherville building when you shut that down? What are
13 your plans to do with that? And what is the reduction in
14 administration for that as well?

15 I know that Mr. Burley's position was added when we
16 had surplus in the budget. I have that letter somewhere at
17 home. When he stopped being principal, he became director of
18 curriculum. I believe it's Darla's position now. What is
19 going to get reduced on that if we have a decline in student
20 administration or students?

21 MR. HATFIELD: Thank you.

22 MR. HILE: Thank you. Anyone else? Anyone?

23 Go ahead.

24 MR. MILLER: Scott Miller. Small Valley Road. I am
25 both a parent and a resident, little league coach.

1 You know, as a parent, you know, kind of torn both
2 as a parent but also as a tax payer. I get we got to do
3 something. You know, on the surface as a parent, you know, I
4 got a kid that's in kindergarten, I got one now that's in
5 third grade.

6 You know, as Mrs. Ranck said, you know, I got
7 concerns about the bus ride.

8 The other thing is I know last year my second grader
9 was eating lunch at 10:30 or 10:45 or something like that. I
10 don't know what time he eats now. Till he got home, that was
11 a lot. So I am hoping that, you know, if you guys have it
12 planned out, if you really have it planned out I guess is what
13 I am saying.

14 The other is I guess some questions for the board.
15 I know what that feasibility study, one of the things was
16 there was talk bantered about potentially of a new elementary
17 school. Does this take that off the table and are we going to
18 ride with what we have? I mean as a tax payer, it's a little
19 easier to swallow if that's what we're going to do rather than
20 spend, you know, a bazillion dollars somewhere else to buy
21 another property somewhere down the line. So I guess, you
22 know, that's a question for the board. The other is, you
23 know, just as a parent, you know, my little guy in
24 kindergarten really had a lot of anxiety being around a lot of
25 people. It really did help to have him in a smaller setting.

1 I think it also helps to be around the younger age group, not
2 all of those kids, you know, kindergarten through fifth grade
3 in one spot. That's as a parent.

4 As a tax payer, I recognize we're in a tough spot.
5 I do think, Mr. Hatfield, you have thought this through. It
6 wasn't a knee jerk reaction. But, you know, I would like to
7 know what the plans are too though for a new school, if we're
8 going to stick with what we got, or if we're going to still
9 end up spending more money. You know, just the thought if
10 Enders-Fisherville property is going to be liquidated, you
11 know, we're going to sell property there, if we're going to be
12 building a new school, we're going to be looking for property
13 somewhere else, you have ten acres out there. To me, it would
14 make a whole lot more sense for an elementary school, you
15 know, long term, to demolish there and build a site out there.
16 I would get why you wouldn't put a high school out there. You
17 know, it's -- the road network with never would support
18 athletic events and things like that. For an elementary
19 school, I think it an ideal spot. So that's all I have.

20 MR. HATFIELD: Thank you. Thank you. Anyone else?
21 Going once. Going twice. Okay. No one else.

22 All right. I will read the proposed timeline. The
23 board will continue to receive information from the public and
24 administration as necessary over the next three months. No
25 action to vote on possible closer of Enders-Fisherville School

1 can occur until at least three months, not ninety days after
2 these selection -- after Section 780, public hearing. This
3 will be put the vote, excuse me, possible closure on August
4 13, 2019. For the board -- again, sorry about that, I thought
5 there was another page. Now, it will be -- the vote will be
6 on August 13, 2019 at the board meeting.

7 Anything else? Okay. That's it.

8 (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.)

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1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence
2 are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on
3 the within proceedings, and that this copy is a correct
4 transcript of the same.

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Maria N. O'Donnell, RPR
Notary Public

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