

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL ESTIMATE
BUDGET WORKSHOP
AND
PUBLIC HEARING
HELD WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010 AT 7:00 P.M.
ATRIUM OF THE GEORGE INNESS ANNEX
141 PARK STREET, MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY

I. THE MEETING WAS OPENED AT 7:16 P.M. AND THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS READ:

Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner:

1. On Tuesday, February 23, 2010 notice of this meeting was faxed to the Montclair Times, the Herald and News and the Star-Ledger. The time, date and location of this meeting were accurately set forth therein.
2. On this same date a copy of said notice was filed with the Township Clerk and was posted at the public bulletin board in the first floor main hall of the Board of Education building, 22 Valley Road.
3. Copies have also been mailed to all persons who have requested same at no cost.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE OCCURRED AT 7:16 P.M.

III. ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD

	PRESENT	ABSENT
Jerry Fried	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Renee Baskerville	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Rich Murnick	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Shirley Grill	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Shelly Lombard	<u> x </u>	<u> </u>
Staff Members	<u> 40 </u>	
Members of the Public	<u> 135 </u>	
Members of the Press	<u> 2 </u>	

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE 2010-2011 BUDGET

Mayor Fried stated that this meeting is a budget workshop and public meeting mainly to respond to the questions and comments of the public. He stated that he received a fair amount of emails from parents. He stated that everyone understands the financial difficulties that we're facing. He stated that he is very proud of the Senior CGI students who sent a very clear articulate and balanced message during Governor Christie's visit in the face of cuts that are really unprecedented and brutally hard to deal with.

Mayor Fried indicated that this year's proposed budget has a lot of important structural changes within the schools and in the high schools and the end result is a significant loss in jobs of teachers, counselors, and other staff. He stated that right now the emails really support the core issues of what the mission of the schools are all about which is to provide a quality integrated educational system of schools.

Mayor Fried related historical information about the magnet school system. He stated that he sees this school system as one to prepare students for college and the real world. He stated that students get an opportunity to appreciate differences in others and an equal opportunity for social justice.

Dr. Alvarez spoke about the magnets, equity, and advocacy. He stated that this is a magnet school district and all schools should look different. The Kirwan Institute determined that if the magnet school program did not exist, the Montclair Public School community will be as it was in 1967. He stated that the core mission is to continue to move toward desegregation in the schools. He stated that they want to entice parents and encourage students to go to particular schools within the community. That is at the heart of how the Board of Education began this conversation about the budget and there were things that were valued as a result of it which include student achievement, full day Kindergarten, and transportation. He indicated that they opted to keep some of those things that were critical to programs in the budget. However, at this time it is not possible to fund all of these programs.

In terms of equity, *Dr. Alvarez* stated that there is a lot of talk about how some schools were hit harder than others. In fact, some schools have more resources than others. He stated that things have been balanced out throughout the school. He spoke about how the district plans to utilize instructional aides, student assistant counselors, and curriculum specialists throughout the schools. He stated that all elementary schools will have anywhere between 2.5 – 3 curriculum specialists based on the amount of students they have. *Dr. Alvarez* stated that they retained one world language teacher at Nishuane for the Mandarin program and 1.6 teachers at Hillside school. He stated that they reduced the availability of the ESL teachers at Northeast and Edgemont schools. The Board also reduced the instrumental music program but retained one nurse in each of the schools.

He indicated that it has been a difficult year and the cuts have been painful and not necessarily the district design that he as the superintendent would want for his schools but it is what the times calls for.

Dr. Alvarez spoke about Governor Christie's visit to the Montclair School District. He stated that it was interesting to have him in the district to note that Montclair is taking the lead in making changes work. He stated that the Board and District will continue to advocate as they have had good discussion with the Governor and the Commissioner. There may be a resolution for the Board to consider regarding state aid. He announced that Senator Nia Gil's office confirmed that she along with Sheila Oliver and Tom Giblin will be hosting a town hall meeting to deal with state aid issues.

Marybeth Rosenthal and Sally Coughlin Co-Presidents of the PTA spoke about the letter writing campaign in order to advocate on behalf of the district. They stated that they hope to find a group in Montclair who would like to assist in this campaign.

Dr. Alvarez stated that they are required by law to approve a budget by April 8th and will continue to work with the Board of School Estimate in this process. He stated that there is still some flexibility at the building level to move some things around.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that the Board of Education approved that budget on March 22 and on the next day the budget was sent to the County Superintendent's office as they are required to do. Friday and Monday she and Dr. Alvarez had numerous conversations with the County Superintendent about the budget and his reaction was that the tax levy was too high and that he couldn't approve the budget but that the Board would have to cut more. She stated that they replied that they couldn't cut anymore and explained that they cut \$7 million out of the budget. He asked about anticipated revenue. She explained that there is a line item in the budget called extraordinary special education aid that the district received over a couple of years. This is aid that the district has received after an application has been submitted and is based on students with extraordinary needs. She indicated that the district receives a portion of state aid for in district students that costs over \$40,000 and out of district students that costs over \$55,000. She added that she had not anticipated any revenue in next years' budget. She stated that she had very little confidence that that aid would be received next year. The County Superintendent told Mrs. Sullivan that he was told by the Governor's office that that money would be available for the 2010-2011 budget. He felt confident that this amount could be budgeted and that aid will be received. She stated that they had agreed to budget \$425,000 in that line with the understanding that the tax levy would be reduced. The state aid is increasing \$425,000 and the tax levy is decreasing \$425,000 so there will be a tax levy increase just under 4.4%. She stated that the County Superintendent wasn't thrilled with it but understood the pain that it would cause to instruction to make cuts.

Mayor Fried began the reading of questions from the public.

1. How were you able to establish where cuts were equitable?

Dr. Alvarez responded that in most cases they tried to give schools a compliment of a ½ day SAC, and curriculum support people.

2. Is the board planning to inform the parents of each school what the resulting impact is to their own building? How do we know that all these cuts have equalized all these schools and where is the documentation for each school?

Dr. Alvarez responded that they had asked each principal to talk to their own school community but indicated to be careful because they didn't want to alarm people early on in the process. In some cases teachers have bumping rights and a position may be cut but the person will not be losing a job.

3. At this point is there a plan to make sure that each elementary school receives the same amount of funding for their magnet?

Dr. Alvarez responded that there will not be an equalizing according to salary and according to budget. He stated that it is difficult to do because some schools have greater needs. It is not possible to create a magnet system that is completely equal.

4. How many magnet coordinators does Nishuane have? When was the library at Nishuane last renovated and when were the other libraries renovated? With budget cuts what is the student-teacher ratio specifically at Nishuane and also in comparison to other K-5 schools?

Dr. Alvarez responded that Nishuane does not have any magnet coordinators.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that Northeast and Bradford libraries were built with their additions, Watchung was just renovated partially with PTA and Board of Education funding, Edgemont had to have some work done due to water damage, and Rand had a horrible library but will have a new library when they move to the new building.

Dr. Alvarez indicated that he does not have information about the student-teacher ratio at present but it can be provided at a later date.

6. Could you please speak to your plans to increase funding in most special education line items?

Dr. Alvarez stated that most of the categories in special education may increase because of more and more students classified and more special education students moving to Montclair. He stated that the District Management Council is looking at ways the District can provide some of the services much more efficiently in order to curtail some of the rising costs in that area.

8. Have you considered implementing a 'Meatless Monday' program as the Baltimore school district has to save money.
9. Could the district fund raise to keep some positions or could local schools share teachers on alternate weeks?

Dr. Alvarez stated that no the district do not want parents to get into fund raising for positions. He stated that the idea of sharing staff is a possibility and the scheduling would have to be worked out and explored further.

10. How can you possibly consider eliminating formal language instructions in five of seven elementary school? You're putting children in the five schools at a serious disadvantage in middle school.

Dr. Alvarez responded that they wanted to apply and provide some kind of exposure to students through technology, video, and in-house volunteers to world language.

11. Will PTA's be encouraged to raise money for a general fund so that schools with powerhouse PTA's aren't restoring programs independently?

Mayor Fried responded that money for PTA's wouldn't be used for restoring programs but could be used for enriching programs.

12. Are we looking at out sources aides and custodians? And is the Board looking to outsource food service staff for additional savings?

Mrs. Sullivan indicated that food service has already been outsourced. This program is sometimes subsidized up to \$50,000 which varies from year to year. She added that custodians were privatized at the bigger schools for night time cleaning. The Board has not moved to privatizing during the day when school is in session. It is something that could be explored but hasn't been something that the community would support. Transportation and aides were privatized many years ago. She indicated that they had not yet privatized instructional aides and that the Board has not had the greatest success with the Essex County Services Commission providing staff. She suggested that the Board wait and see how it works out for the other districts. If this is an item that the Board would like to explore it will be upon low bid.

13. What is the status of the principals and supervisors union contracts? Will they also be making salary concessions and paying into their health plans?

Dr. Alvarez indicated that the supervisor's contract is tied into the MEA contract so they will follow suit and the principal's are currently in discussions with Dr. Patterson.

14. Would the teachers union be willing to contribute a portion of the 624 members' \$700 annual dues to save a job or more?

Mayor Fried responded that is a question to be answered by the teachers union.

15. Which members of the MEA made salary concessions? Or did the entire MEA agree to the concessions?

Dr. Alvarez responded that the concessions were made by the individual teachers, secretaries, custodians and aides that are at the top of the guides. All others will still receive their incremental increase. That savings was in excess of \$900,000.

16. The Montclair Times wrote an article about salaries at Central Office staff not really taking an increase, but there were increases?

Dr. Alvarez stated that the district operate on an academic year so salaries are struck July 1 through June 30. He added that there were increases to his annuity payments and was reflected in a front page article in 2009.

17. It has been stated in the papers that Governor is giving back some state aid to districts that froze teacher's salaries. Since Montclair was only able to negotiate a freeze for those making over \$75,000 at Central Office and teachers making over \$90,000, where does this leave the district? Metuchen froze all teachers salaries and was able to avoid teachers layoffs, why wasn't the district more aggressive in negotiations with the union.

Mayor Fried responded that the step that the staff took with freezing their salaries were historical. He saluted the MEA, Dennis Murray, the teachers and the workers that were a part of that freeze. This is the reason why other districts are coming to Montclair is because they would like to emulate what was done here.

18. Several items in the March 29 budget book include negotiated salary increase or estimated salary increase, what are the increases in this environment?

Mrs. Sullivan responded that accounts shows increases because there are a number of teachers and staff that are getting increases. The differences between negotiated and estimated is the groups that have contracts show as a negotiated increase and the others will show as an estimated increase. Also, the reductions were made just in several different accounts and adjustments will be made come July 1. She stated she couldn't determine necessarily where the people at the top were that weren't getting the increases.

19. Why are the principals going to accept increases when both Central Office greater than \$75,000 and the MEA are not?

Dr. Alvarez stated that the principals met with Dr. Patterson this afternoon and it is hoped that they will make some changes as well.

20. Is it really about working with the individual principals to make changes in their buildings as was commented last meeting?

Dr. Alvarez stated that he did mention that there will be some flexibility if principals wanted to negotiate something in their own schools as long as it involves the same dollar amounts when speaking about trading some staff positions.

21. Does the large decrease in instructional aides include pupil services aides?

Mrs. Sullivan responded that the line item being referred to is for just instructional aides which are not special education aides. Special education aides may be restructured by the District Management Council. There may be reductions in special education aides based on recommendations but they are not showing in that line as of yet.

23. In light of the obvious importance that counselors play in the schools what are other scenarios to take to keep them on a full-time basis.

Dr. Alvarez indicated that they are leaving ½ - day SAC in each elementary school. There will be a full-time SAC at Hillside because it's the largest elementary school.

24. How can you rationalize retaining the Mandarin language teacher at Nishuane but eliminating Spanish teachers at Northeast- the Global Studies Magnet?

Dr. Alvarez stated that the Board committed to a new initiative two years ago. The Board agreed to commit to continue to funding that program.

25. Is Mandarin being maintained at Hillside and Nishuane and if so what is the rationale for this as a world language especially since it is so expensive? Do all three middle schools have Mandarin.

Dr. Alvarez responded that it truly is not that expensive because it is the cost of hiring a teacher and some material. He stated that Hillside will retain 1.6 world language positions and language at middle schools will remain. Mr. Chiles will determine with his staff whether to keep Spanish or French.

25. Regarding world language, why can't you write your plan down and email it out so that people could understand your plan. Communication is key at this point and will help to ease people's concerns.

Dr. Alvarez responded that each principal would be allowed to help formulate that decision with their staff and school community. The plan now is to have the discussion with principal at the school level when they are determined and will go through school review.

26. When will the Board of Education hold public/town hall meetings that allow people to suggest innovative ways to save funds and at the same time maintain the integrity of education/curriculum?

Mayor Fried responded that the appointments of the board members are mayoral appointments and he feels that vigorous dialogue between the Board of Education and the community is really important. The Board of Education is available at meetings to have discussions about any issues from the community. It will be important to have discussion about budgets moving forward.

27. What is the increase allocated proposed for the 2010-2011 Business Office budget? Is there no cut there?

Mrs. Sullivan responded that there will be a cut in maintenance which is a part of her department. When looking at the line item for the Business Office, there are no cuts.

28. Do the Board of Education and the Board of School Estimate think this budget process works effectively and for the betterment of the Montclair community? If yes, why does this process continue to polarize neighbors and schools? Can there be a change?

Mayor Fried responded that he thinks that so far this year it has been a very constructive process.

Mrs. Lombard indicated that this process is painful due to the anxiety of finding out about the loss in state aid at the very last minute. It has really been a compressed process.

Mayor Fried commented that the base of this budget was at a 1% increase and all the cuts made that number increase.

Dr. Alvarez stated the district is also \$2.4 million below the current operating budget for the upcoming school year.

Ms. Grill spoke about people being interested in the past because the past should not be the issue. Cuts are being made, housing values are declining, people are losing jobs and money has now become an issue. The Board's goal was to come up with a budget that was affordable. So they began to do things to achieve this outcome.

29. Who is involved in creating the school budget? Does the Board utilize consultants, professionals, volunteers from the community to prepare the budget and if not, then, why not? Are you looking at other ways to outsource services like other towns?

Mayor Fried responded that there are always opportunities for the Board of Education to involve people in budget processes. The process this year was too horrendous because of the cuts. He added that he's unsure that it would've made a difference.

30. Was a more dramatic restructuring of administration considered? For example, consolidation of principals; one for elementary schools, one for middle schools, and one for the high school?

Dr. Alvarez responded that they had not reached that point.

31. Montclair and West Orange has similar costs per pupil so why are class sizes so much greater in Montclair?

Dr. Alvarez stated that data from the school report card calculates the student to certified staff ratio. That is a very different number than the class size.

31. Has the BOSE given the principal's any understanding of these cuts? If so, what are they?

Mayor Fried responded yes the principals do have an understanding and this question has been answered in previous meetings and earlier this evening.

32. If Governor Christie caps the property tax increase at 4%, clearly more cuts will be necessary. What process and principles will be used to determine the next round of cuts and where they will come from?

Dr. Alvarez responded that the budget is good at this point because of the provisions in the law that because of loss in state aid allows the budgets to go beyond that 4% CAP.

33. The decision you make will make have a domino affect on immediate and future lives of children. What can you do or say to the community that you are mindful of the impact of the achievement Gap at Edgemont and Renaissance?

Dr. Alvarez responded that the Board is focused on what happened in the classroom and they were not trying to impact the actual instruction of students within the classroom.

34. Can any costs be reduced through an investment in technology and, if so is this a worthwhile endeavor for fund raising by the PTA's?

Dr. Alvarez responded yes and the Board always welcome fund raising and yes there may be other efficiencies through technology. This would have to be thought out very carefully and need to be discussed with the professionals before recommendations are made.

35. What is the rationale for cutting programs for students at risk specifically the community tutorial/STARS program? Are not these students that have the greatest need? What are we going to do about a replacement?

Dr. Alvarez responded that the talked about doing some of the community tutorial programs similar to the Writer's Room program which relies on volunteers rather than paid staff. He added that they are looking at ways that perhaps through the local churches that sponsor

these programs. There may be a way to do something through a volunteer core that will continue those programs.

35. Can you explain what the salary increase for 219-104 Salaries Job Coaching from \$26,000 to \$236,000 entails?

Mrs. Sullivan responded that job coaches are at the high school level that work with students that are transitioning from school to careers.

37. Will substitutes be affected?

Dr. Alvarez responded that they are trying to keep costs related to substitute down as much as possible and this is tracked on a monthly basis.

39. Are taxpayers getting the best teachers for the \$90,000 plus that are being paid? Do teachers have any merit base payment and is it possible to negotiate?

Dr. Alvarez responded that the district has some of the best teachers in the profession and there will be a number of people that will be retiring this year. Senior teachers are not the first to get rid of. There's a lot of talk about performance and merit pay and it is the direction that the state and federal governments are moving towards. This is not up for discussion now but will be in the future.

40. When everyone is drastically asked to reduce non-mandated salary expenditure, why is the Business Office and Personnel Office salary expenditures increased? Why is there no leadership in belt tightening here?

Dr. Alvarez responded that there have been some cuts in terms of the business office. In terms of Personnel Office there is one certificated person and five secretary clerical persons to accommodate over 1200 employees. It is truly not a huge amount of staff to support what is being done in the district.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that the majority of people in those departments are not making over \$75,000 so there are estimates for their increases for next year.

41. Why is the DLC supervisor considered central office staff and not principal?

Dr. Alvarez stated that it is not a principal's position it is considered part of the central office administration. It's an individual that oversees 60 plus students and maybe between 11 and 15 staff members— a very highly qualified individual.

Mrs. Sullivan indicated that the district is required by the State of New Jersey to charge to account numbers so where this is seen in the budget books that is because it is mandated to charge certain portions to certain places.

42. Is there a coordinated effort across the district to fight these decreases in state funding?

Dr. Alvarez responded that there is going to be some county wide efforts to fight these and there is some discussion on a class action lawsuit on behalf of school districts.

43. The after school STARS program has been in operation for 14 years, well before the Nia Gill \$1 million, how will you close the academic achievement gap without the components that are required such as IMANI, STARS, and tutoring? What will be the impact on cuts in the affirmative action profile of district employees?

Dr. Alvarez stated that some of the IMANI programs in some cases were duplicates of some the efforts that the district was doing and they were essential in supporting some of the students that had specific needs. In terms of the minority student achievement gap, there has been significant progress in this area.

44. Why can't we bring in efficiencies like the private sectors and not cut teachers in critical educational components? It seems like the state aid cuts are being used as an excuse.

Ms. Grill responded that education is a labor intensive business. Several items have been outsourced and that is as far that this could go. Cuts made in corporate America do not apply to children in the classroom.

46. Research says that summer support is critical for helping at risk students. How on earth could Montclair consider reducing summer programs?

Dr. Alvarez responded that there were things that were no longer effective and then there are other programs that are still available.

49. Nishuane doesn't have a magnet coordinator but has extra teachers for physical education and music. Why is that?

Dr. Alvarez responded that this is due to the size and also because of the extensiveness of their SNAP program and how it is utilized.

50. Bradford is not much smaller than Nishuane and has no extra teachers. Shouldn't they keep a full-time student assistance counselor?

Dr. Alvarez responded that all cuts are equitable and not everyone will agree with them but he stands by the recommendations.

51. You said that if we wanted to smaller class size then to go to Nishuane, go to Hillside for a full-time SAC. What will be the draw back for the other elementary schools?

Dr. Alvarez responded that all schools have their own uniqueness that speaks to its theme.

Mayor Fried thanked everyone for coming out and showing their support during this budget season.

At **9:14p.m.** Mayor Fried stated that the Board of School Estimate will take an 8 min break but will return with comments from the public.

At **9:21pm** the Board of School Estimate returned to the meeting.

V. RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC CONCERNING THE PROPOSED 2010-2011 SCHOOL BUDGET

1. *Sue Weintraub* of 14 Heller Drive stated that she love the town and schools and supports magnet system. She spoke on behalf of Northeast School and expressed her concerns about cuts being equitable throughout the district.
2. *Tessie Thomas* of 202 Inwood Avenue spoke on behalf of Nishuane parents and made a few points about the budget and how the cuts are painful.
3. *Claire Walls* of Upper Mountain Avenue commended the Board and Dr. Alvarez on the budget this year. She also expressed her concerns about the world language programs at Nishuane.
4. *Matt Troyer* a resident in Montclair expressed his concerns about everyone advocating to reduce the cuts, areas where transparency could be made clear, and how strengthening the magnet themes rather than weakening them by reducing world language really effects the district.
5. *Rachel Spalding* of 41 Melrose Place addressed her concerns for education for inclusion students and how teacher assistants, psychologists, and social workers are essential to students. She asked that the Board view the DMC's recommendations as well thought out choices and not slashes.
6. *Peter Vaughn* resident of Montclair expressed his concerns about transparency. He stated that information needs to be given to the public at the building level in a timely manner. It is important to be very clear on the magnet themes and clear with the principals.
7. *Joanne Dedovitch* expressed her concerns about the services that are provided for the DLC. And spoke in support of Linda Colucci being considered a principal. She stated that she can't imagine that programs will function without good leadership.
8. *Robert Scheinbaum* echoed comments from Ms. Dedovitch. He stated that here might be more cuts to the special education after the review of the DMC's evaluation.

9. **Mark Kunkin** spoke about the elimination of the DLC supervisor and how he doesn't see it as an efficiency but a short-sighted move that will increase costs down the line.
10. **Norman Rosenblaum** Chairman of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council stated that what the district had done in bringing students back into the district has saved money. He stated that Montclair does the best with bringing students back into the district allowing them to be included among the regular education students.
11. **Dennis Murray** thanked everyone for their kind words for special education. He spoke about 'Pay to Play' activities and tuition fund and he suggested that the Board eliminate one position from the cops in schools program.
12. **Lynda Lendman** a resident of Montclair expressed her concerns about what SACS do at the elementary level.
13. **Dave Lagasse** complimented the Board of School Estimate on the budget and thanked the Teachers for freezing their pay. He stated that he is very unhappy with property taxes and urged the Board to cut deeper and said that Senior Staff should take deeper cuts.
14. **Gerthy Agard** suggested that the Board take a closer look at cuts at Edgemont and how without teacher assistants it distracts away from the Montessori theme.
15. **Gail Prusslin** of 138 Buckingham Road spoke on behalf of the arts in the schools.
16. **Cathy Vandervont** of 35 Watchung Avenue expressed her concerns about the cutting teacher assistants distracting from the magnet theme.
17. **Bette Chamberlin** spoke on behalf of the Health and Wellness partnership. Many parents have found important free health services for themselves and their children.
18. **Jessica Henry** of 42 Oakwood Avenue spoke about cuts in the world language program and how it is mandated by the State of New Jersey to teach world language in k-8.
19. **Mike Byrne** of 142 Gordonhurst Avenue thanked the Board of School Estimate for their efforts. He expressed his concerns about the school funding formula not being equitable. Montclair needs to take the lead and be dependent on the Education Law Center for guidance.
20. **Joanne Pezzano** of 100 Wildwood Avenue expressed her support of Linda Colucci maintaining her position at the Developmental Learning Center.
21. **Kathleen Fitzgerald** of 137 Buckingham Road shared a portion of the letter sent to Mayor Fried with the Board of School Estimate members and public about the cuts.

22. **Renee Beachler** thanked the Board of School Estimate for their hard work. She expressed her support about the Health and Wellness program and how this brought over \$1million dollars into the district since it's been active.
23. **Martin Brumbach** of 111 Cooper Avenue thanked the Board of Education and Board of School Estimate. He stated that there seems to be a problem with transparency and Board members need to take responsibility for it.
24. **Tonya Johnson** of 245 Orange Road shared a letter she wrote to Joann Aidala about the cuts to the Health and Wellness Partnership with the Board of School Estimate
25. **Marybeth Rosenthal** represented **Julie Skolnick** of 34 Riverview Drive who encouraged the Board of School Estimate to join any other district that is willing to stand up against the Governor.
26. **Allison Robertson** of 690 Valley Road expressed her concerns about speech therapists teaching 2 to 3 children at a time. She admonished the Board of School Estimate to reevaluate why there are not cuts being made in personnel and the business office.
27. **Claire Walls** of 392 Upper Mountain Avenue asked the Board of School Estimate to review the cuts in special education summer programs. She commented about the Health and Wellness program being an integral part of children learning and educates the Montclair community.
28. **James Harris** representative of the N.A.A.C.P. expressed his concerns about cuts to programs that are designed to close the academic achievement gap. He stated that volunteers will not make the STARS program work. He suggested that the Board build support services into the main budget and make sure diversity is still achieved. He added that the budget should not neglect the diversity issue.
29. **Amy Pretto** of 65 Cambridge Road stated that she doesn't understand how the Board could cut the Health and Wellness program that brought in \$1.6 million into the district. She asked the Board to please reconsider cutting this program.

30. *Joanne Aidala*, representative of the Health and Wellness Partnership spoke on behalf of the activity and funding that this partnership was able to bring to the Montclair Pubic School District and Montclair community.

VI. COMMENTS FROM BOARD OF SCHOOL ESTIMATE MEMBERS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:53 p.m. *Mayor Fried* moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by *Mrs. Lombard* and approved by a vote of 5-0.