Board of Education Nutley, New Jersey

November 27, 1995

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley, New Jersey was held in the Radcliffe School Gymnasium, 379 Bloomfield Avenue, on Monday, November 27, 1995 at 8:08 p.m., with Mr. Sam P. Battaglia, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING:

Mr. Battaglia read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), proper notice of this Regular Meeting was provided in the Annual Notice of May 1, 1995. Said Notice was:

- 1. Posted at the entrance of the Board Office.
- 2. Mailed to The Nutley Sun, the Star Ledger, the North Jersey Herald & News and the Nutley Journal.
- 3. Mailed to the Nutley Township Clerk.

"Formal action will be taken."

FLAG SALUTE:

The meeting was opened with Mrs. Russo leading the Board members and citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

CALL OF ROLL:

The other members present at roll call were: Mrs. Michele Fleitell, Mr. Charles W. Kucinski, Jr., Mr. Franklin J. Patterson, Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, Mr. Robert J. Rusignuolo, Mrs. Maria Russo, Mrs. Rosalie C. Scheckel and Mr. Robert Schweikert, Jr. Approximately 375 citizens were present.

<u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES:</u>

Copies of the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 23, 1995 at 8:05 p.m. being in the hands of each member, reading of same was dispensed. Mr. Kucinski moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mrs. Russo and unanimously approved by the Board.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS:

Dr. Fadule noted that from time to time the Board has the opportunity to honor young people who have distinguished themselves, their families and schools in various areas. He indicated that tonight we would be honoring students who had distinguished themselves in the area of music, adding that we are very proud of our young people. Dr. Fadule then introduced Mr. John Vitkovsky, Music Coordinator, Mr. John Jacone, principal of Nutley High School, and Mrs. Kathryn Peterson of the Music/Humanities Department.

Mr. Jacone commented that it was a pleasure to be here to honor four young ladies, three of whom are present, who distinguished themselves in the music area. He noted that they are among the leaders of the school, academically outstanding and participate in many extracurricular activities. Mr. Jacone, on behalf of the student body, expressed the pride felt for these students. He also thanked the Board for having this honors presentation this evening. Mr. Jacone then introduced Mr. Vitkovsky.

Mr. Vitkovsky thanked the parents for their presence this evening and for all they do in support of music. He thanked the Board, Dr. Fadule, Dr. Votto and Mr. Jacone for their sponsorship and support of the All State students. Mr. Vitkovsky then gave background information on the award recipients.

Mr. Kucinski then presented the following awards:

Lindsay Kim 1st year 1995 All State Orchestra (11th grade)
Patricia Olivo 3rd year 1995 All State Chorus (Senior)

Mrs. Peterson introduced the recipients and Mr. Kucinski presented the following awards:

Caryn Jones 2nd year 1995 All State Chorus (Senior)
Cynthia Tomm 1st year 1995 All State Chorus (11th grade)

Mr. Jacone congratulated the students for their achievements, as did Mr. Battaglia on behalf of the Board.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Sincaglia presented and read the following communications:

- 1. A letter from Frederick J. Scalera, Fire Official, and David A. Wilson, Fire Inspector, Township of Nutley, regarding their evaluation of district fire procedures and their finding that all of our schools excelled in the performance of their evacuation plans.
- 2. A letter from the Radcliffe School P.T.A. regarding its annual Santa Sale to be held on December 7, 1995.

- Mr. Sincaglia added that this is a very worthwhile event.
- 3. A thank-you note from Don Tobey and family for the Board's expression of sympathy upon the loss of his grandmother.
- 4. A thank-you note from Sam Battaglia and family for the Board's expression of condolence upon the loss of his mother.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Mr. Sincaglia presented the Report of the Secretary as of October 31, 1995. (See attached report.)

Mrs. Scheckel moved that the Board accept the Report of the Secretary, seconded by Mrs. Russo. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mr. Sincaglia presented the Report of the Treasurer of School Moneys as of October 31, 1995. (See attached report.)

Mrs. Scheckel moved that the Board accept the Report of the Treasurer of School Moneys, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Fadule presented and read the following report:

"Elementary parent-teacher conferences were conducted on Wednesday, November 15 and Thursday, November 16.

"Report cards for the first marking period were distributed on Friday, November 17.

"Third Half Club Fall Sports Awards Dinner December 7, at 7:00 p.m.

"Spring Garden Holiday Musicale - December 12 at 7:30 p.m.

"Nutley High School Yuletide Observance - December 14 at 7:30 p.m.

"Attached is the student enrollment chart as of October 31, 1995."

FIRE DRILL REPORT:

Fire drills held during the month of October were as follows:

Oct.	3	Franklin School	1:30 p.m.	1 min. 45 secs.
Oct.	3	Radcliffe School	10:07 a.m.	1 min. 17 secs.
Oct.	6	Lincoln School	2:02 p.m.	1 min. 13 secs.
Oct.	10	Franklin School	1:45 p.m.	1 min. 51 secs.
Oct.	10	Washington School	9:32 a.m.	1 min. 38 secs.
Oct.	11	Radcliffe School	1:05 p.m.	1 min. 20 secs.
Oct.	12	Nutley High School	8:34 a.m.	2 min. 9 secs.
Oct.	12	Spring Garden School	1:10 p.m.	1 min. 27 secs.
Oct.	12	Yantacaw School	9:35 a.m.	1 min. 25 secs.
Oct.	13	Lincoln School	9:08 a.m.	1 min. 39 secs.
Oct.	16	Nutley High School	10:15 a.m.	2 min. 25 secs.
Oct.	16	Washington School	2:13 p.m.	1 min. 42 secs.
Oct.	17	Franklin School	1:30 p.m.	1 min. 55 secs.
Oct.	24	Spring Garden School	2:34 p.m.	1 min. 45 secs.
Oct.	24	Yantacaw School	2:08 p.m.	1 min. 20 secs.

CAFETERIA REPORT:

Mr. Kucinski presented the cafeteria report as of October 31, 1995 showing a 1995/1996 budget of \$613,621.00, contractual orders to date of \$194,955.57, leaving funds available of \$418,665.43.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

HEARING OF CITIZENS (Resolutions Only):

None

CERTIFICATION OF MAJOR ACCOUNT FUND STATUS:

Mr. Kucinski presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That, pursuant to NJAC 6:20-2.13(e), the Nutley Board of Education certifies that as of October 31, 1995, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (Appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge no major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.13(b) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. (Major accounts are General Fund and Debt Service.)

BILLS AND MANDATORY PAYMENTS:

Mr. Kucinski presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education authorizes the payment of bills and mandatory payments in the total amount of \$3,258,909.41 as per the attached Schedule A which have been audited by the Business Office.

REQUESTS FOR USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:

Mr. Schweikert presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski and unanimously approved by the Board:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education approves the requests for the use of school buildings and grounds (Schedule B), provided they conform to the rules and regulations set by the Board of Education.

APPOINTMENTS - Teacher Substitutes:

Mr. Schweikert presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the teacher substitutes listed on the attached Schedule C be approved for the 1995/1996 school year.

APPOINTMENTS - Substitutes:

Mr. Schweikert presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the following substitutes be approved for the 1995/1996 school year:

Clerical/School Aide

Linda Boyle

School Aide

Michele Serio

Cafeteria/School Aide

Angela Carell

Bus Aide

Christine Rizzi

Secretary/Clerical

Mary Sheridan

EXTRA COMPENSATION:

Mrs. Russo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Pelaia. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the following personnel be paid extra compensation in the amounts indicated for services rendered:

Curriculum Development Committee Meetings

Chemical Health - SDFSCA Grant -
October 28, 1995

Total \$1,523.76

Science - IKE Grant - October 14, 1995

Rita Alfaro	\$ 123.88
Lori Ann Cassie	123.88
Pamela Conry	123.88
Susan Dingwell	123.88
Patricia Fischer	123.88
Elizabeth Foote	123.88
Janet Frikert	123.88
Linda Gilroy	123.88

Science - IKE Grant - October 14, 1995 (contd.)

\$ 123.88
123.88
123.88
123.88
123.88
123.88
123.88
123.88
 <u>123.88</u>
\$

Total \$2,105.96

Grade Reporting K-3 - October 28, 1995

Total \$1,796.96

Language Arts K-8 - October 28, 1995

Rita Alfaro	\$ 123.88
Pamela Batchelder Mitchell	123.88
Alexander Conrad	165.80
Rachel Daly	123.88
Cynthia DeBonis	123.88
Dianne DeRosa	186.52
Rosemarie DiGeronimo	186.52
Loretta Douglas	123.88
Patricia Fischer	123.88
Jainine Gambaro	123.88
Linda Gilroy	123.88
Patricia Griffin	123.88
Marilyn Hannon	123.88
Judy Hardin	123.88
Geraldine Intiso	123.88
Catherine Kinney	123.88
Paul Kocum	123.88
Jacqueline Meloni	123.88
Noreen Mickey	123.88
•	

Language Arts K-8 - October 28, 1995 (contd.				
Walter Murray Deborah Schop Patricia Sloan James Vivinetto		\$	123.88 123.88 123.88 165.80	
	Total	\$3	,058.36	
Public Information - O	ctober 28,	<u> 199</u>	<u>)5</u>	
Lucy Anello Beverly Apple Donald Baumann Florence Carpenter Elaine Karsnak Paula Lee Tracy Kempczynski Angela Maguire Melissa Palm Linda Scarola Carol Shepherd Jenifer Wilson		\$	186.52 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88	
	Total	\$1	,549.20	
Self Esteem - October	28, 1995			
Lottie Alama Kathleen Bimbi John Calicchio Lori Ann Cassie Denise Cleary Scott Keena Anne Marie Kowalski Maureen Lazur Laura Love Lisa Maniscalco Beverly Masullo Eileen Mattone Anita McDonald Rae Nardone Rebecca Olivo Eileen O'Mara Theresa Petti Gail Reilly Valerie Sautter Elizabeth Stolfi John Walker Joseph Zarra		\$	123.88 123.88 165.80 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88 123.88	
	Total	\$2	,872.84	

World History - Octob	World History - October 28, 1995				
John Jacone Andrew Linfante Marianne Marcantonio Brian McGinley Gregory Rhodes Mary Frances Simmo		\$165.80 123.88 123.88 161.08 123.88 123.88			
	Total	\$822.40			
Primary Academic Ta	lent (PAT)	- October 24, 1995			
Suzanne Hagert Barbara Hirsch Rebecca Olivo Niki Vlasakakis Carol VonAchen		\$ 46.46 69.95 46.46 46.46 46.46			
	Total	\$255.79			
Fall In-Service Course Into Macintosh Computer - Oc November 1, 1995					
Rosemary Clerico Camille Lofrano Stephen Parigi Lorraine Restel Carol Van Wagenen		\$ 402.70 402.70 402.70 402.70 402.70			
	Total	\$2,013.50			
Central Detention Coverage	ge - Octob	er, 1995			
High School					
Carol Shepherd Nicole Errante Tracy Albanese		\$251.85 16.79 16.79			
Franklin School					
Rosann Capalbo Jennifer Neri		167.90 151.11			
	Total	\$604.44			
Saturday Morning Suspensions - October, 1995					
High School					
Carol Shepherd Nicole Errante		\$ 70.17 _140.34			
	Total	\$210.51			

SYETP Training Program - June 22, 1995 - August 18, 1995

Carmine D'Aloia

\$3,316.00

SAT Review Classes - October 19, 24, 25, 26, 31 and November 3, 1995

Ronald Bonadonna John Suffren

\$ 557.46 557.46

Total

\$1,114.92

Preparation of Grant Information - Learn and Serve America: School-Based Program - October 2, 12, 13, 16 and 17, 1995

Gregory Catrambone Robert O'Dell

\$ 449.07 601.03

Total

\$1,050.10

LONGEVITY PAY:

Mrs. Russo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Pelaia. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the following longevity payment be authorized:

Nancy Greulich

\$1.307

Eff. Dec. 1, 1995 (16 years)

PLACEMENT OF OUT-OF-DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT:

Mr. Patterson presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Pelaia. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education approves the placement of an out-of-district Special Education student from the following district in the following classification for the 1995/1996 school year:

District	No. of <u>Students</u>	Classification	School	Effective Date
Belleville	1	NI	Spring Garden	11/1/95

JOINT TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT:

Mr. Patterson presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Pelaia. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Nutley Board of Education approves a joint transportation agreement with the Belleville Board of Education to provide transportation for one Special Education pupil from Belleville to Spring Garden School, Nutley, NJ on Nutley bus route #2, effective November 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996 at a cost to the Belleville Board of Education of \$10 per half day. (Subject to approval of the County Superintendent of Schools.)

TEXTBOOK APPROVAL:

Mr. Pelaia presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education approves the use of the following textbook:

College Prep Accounting

Meigs and Meigs
Accounting: The Basis for Business Decisions,
10th Edition
Glencoe Publishing Company, New York, 1995

COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT/AUDIT:

Mr. Pelaia presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, the district has prepared the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the 1994/1995 school year, and

WHEREAS, the audit of the financial records of the school district for the 1994/1995 school year has been made, according to the requirements of Title 18A, by the firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP, and

WHEREAS, copies of a synopsis of this audit have been made available to the public,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education accepts the 1994/1995 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the report of the independent auditors.

TRANSFER OF FUNDS:

Mr. Rusignuolo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That transfers in the 1995/1996 General Fund be confirmed as follows:

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>	
Account 11-110-100-101 Account 11-140-100-101 Account 11-204-100-101 Account 11-205-100-101 Account 11-230-100-101 Account 11-999-100-562 Account 11-999-100-566 Account 11-999-290-890 Account 12-999-400-450	\$ 19,000 6,000 18,000 43,000 50,000 20,000 60,500 186,757 3,900 \$407,157	Account 11-130-100-101 Account 11-201-100-106 Account 11-212-100-101 Account 11-213-100-101 Account 11-215-100-101 Account 11-217-100-101 Account 11-218-100-101 Account 11-999-218-104 Account 11-999-260-800 Account 11-999-270-514 Account 11-999-270-515 Account 12-999-100-730 Account 12-999-240-730	\$ 60,000 15,700 700 68,800 1,000 7,300 6,100 1,400 186,757 34,000 21,500 3,200 700
			\$407,157

ACCEPTANCE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING - Chapter 192 - 1995/1996 School Year:

Mr. Rusignuolo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education accepts additional funding for Chapter 192 for the 1995/1996 school year in the amount of \$9,373.

ACCEPTANCE OF NOTIFICATION OF GRANT AWARD - ESEA Title I - P.L. 103-382 - FY 96:

Mrs. Fleitell presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education accepts notification of grant award for ESEA Title I, P.L. 103-382 for FY 96 in the amount of \$134,845.

ACCEPTANCE OF PROGRAM AWARD - Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education 1996- Secondary Funds - 1995/1996 School Year:

Mrs. Fleitell presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education accepts program award for Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education 1996-Secondary for the 1995/1996 school year in the amount of \$8,428.

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION - I.D.E.A.-B Carry-Over Funds - FY 95:

Mrs. Scheckel presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education approves submission of application for I.D.E.A.-B, FY 95 carry-over funds in the amount of \$7,876.

APPROVAL OF TAX SHELTER INVESTMENT FIRM:

Mrs. Scheckel presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the investment firm of F.I.A. Capital Group, Inc. be approved to offer salary reduction agreements to employees pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:66-127.

MEMORIAL:

Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Konarski

Mr. Kucinski presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Russo and unanimously approved by the Board:

WHEREAS, it is with a sense of deep sorrow and regret that the Nutley Board of Education records the death of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Konarski on October 28, 1995, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Konarski was employed as secretary to the Director of Special Services for a period of nineteen years, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Konarski won the admiration, respect and friendship of her co-workers and those she came in contact with.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley extends deepest sympathy to the members of her family, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be made a part of the minutes of this meeting and a copy sent to the members of her family.

Dr. Fadule noted that he speaks for many people who knew Mary. He indicated that she was an employee of the district for a long time and was a fine, friendly and sensitive person who did her job well. He added that she would be missed.

APPROVAL OF 1996-1999 PROGRAM PLAN - Special Education:

Mr. Kucinski presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education approves the 1996-1999 Program Plan for Special Education.

ADOPTION OF POLICY NO. 424 (4219) - Commercial Driver Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use Testing (First Reading):

Mrs. Scheckel presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kucinski. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education adopts Policy No. 424 (4219), "Commercial Driver Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use Testing" (first reading) as per Schedule D.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Dr. Fadule noted that he thinks it is wonderful that so many people are present this evening and the main objective is the grading system. He explained that about 18 years ago the Board asked him to go into the community and staff and find curriculum issues which were of concern and he found one of the most burning questions was the absence of letter grades. Dr. Fadule indicated that people were not happy with that for many reasons. A committee of teachers was formed because this could only be done by recommendation of the Superintendent and a committee. The question was studied in depth through the curriculum development system. Dr. Fadule stated that this system has proven to be very effective because teachers and principals are involved every step of the way.

Dr. Fadule continued by noting that the committee recommended that the letter grades be instituted but recently, requests have been

made to eliminate the letter grades and go back to the system of years ago. He indicated that many of the top districts in the state do not use letter grades and many of the poorest districts do not use letter grades. Dr. Fadule mentioned that our experience has been with using and not using letter grades and he believes in the system of using letter grades.

Dr. Fadule noted that the second issue is using numerical equivalents to letter grades, adding that we have also studied that. He explained that the main factors in college acceptances are class rank within your school and the SAT's. He added that we have studied this and are absolutely sure we are not hurting our children in any way; we believe we are helping them.

Dr. Fadule indicated that districts vary all over and we know what our experience is. He added that he is a firm believer in our principals and teachers; he trusts them completely and believes in them and knows where they stand on this matter. Dr. Fadule also stated that there is no question in his mind that they would never do anything to hurt our children; they want the best for our children. Dr. Fadule further noted that this comes down to a matter of standards - if you eliminate the letter grades in the primary grades, 1-3, that is lowering standards; if you lower numerical equivalents, that is lowering standards and he is totally against that.

Dr. Fadule also stressed that he believes in the curriculum development system and believes in our principals, teachers, staff and Board who have supported this all these years. He concluded by stating that he believes in staying with the grading system as it now stands.

Mr. David Grossman, 410 Prospect Street, indicated that he would like to publicly state that he supports the grading system K-12 and the people he has spoken with in town agree that they want to keep the standards high. He explained that they have not come forward before because they are happy with the grading system. He indicated that he has corresponded with Dr. Fadule when he saw something that needed fixing and was thanked for bringing it to his attention. Mr. Grossman stated that the grading system does not deserve attention and requested that the Board not take lightly the parents who agree with the Board.

Mr. Grossman indicated that our students are being accepted to lvy League schools and our local colleges are filled with our students and stressed that the parents would not let their children's education be compromised with this mediocrity.

Mrs. Tina Nocera, 66 Union Avenue, noted that she had heard about the issue concerning self-esteem and feels that is her job as a parent. She indicated that she expects her children to go to school to get an education and has never had difficulty getting a teacher conference when there was a problem that had to be addressed. Mrs. Nocera further noted that she is in favor of the grading system so she can see how well her children are doing. She thanked the Board for Nutley's

educational system and added that she would take the responsibility of dealing with self-esteem.

Mrs. Tracy Scheckel, 22 Newman Avenue, read the following statement:

"With four children in elementary school, I am quite concerned about the situation with the current grading system. Before I go on, I'd like to clarify a few things, firstly, is the ad hoc committee currently in place studying only the K -- 3 grading criteria? That being the case, is it correct to assume that the only thing that may change based on the committee's recommendation is the grading system for K -- 3? I think it's important for the public to be aware of that as we are bombarded with paid advertising lobbying about issues that aren't currently being studied. It's sad that paid advertising -- which doesn't necessarily have to be factual -- may misinform the public and serve to confuse the issues being discussed. I would like to think that each of the three issues on the table will get individual attention and thorough, objective investigation.

"Since the only issue up for discussion now is grading for K -- 3, and since the discussion has gone beyond the ad hoc committee and turned into an all out advertising campaign, I feel it's time to speak out rather than wait for a committee recommendation.

"To eliminate a five point grading system in the lower grades would be a mistake, children and parents need a clear concise method to gauge progress. The competition and pressure that some associate with the report card currently in place is a product of the attitude displayed by the parent or guardian -- not by the letter grades on the card. Children should be rewarded for doing their best, with the grades being merely the indicators of that effort.

"I also feel that self-esteem doesn't come from a report card but from parental supervision, guidance and encouragement. Given that self-esteem seems to be such an issue, why would we even consider lowering our standards. Such an action would certainly undermine the self-esteem of every child in this town. Imagine sending the message that 'you are just not bright enough to make the grade, so we're going to make it easier for you.'

"In a fast paced competitive society such as ours, we must prepare our children to face life's challenges, and yes, competitions. Our current system of high standards combined with a parent's commitment to be a responsible parent is the best way we can prepare our children to succeed in their future endeavors.

"I do not think we should change what is so obviously the best system for our children.

"For anyone interested, there is a petition circulating that reflects the opinion to keep the K -- 3 system just the way it is. There are several of us actively seeking signatures, however, family and professional commitments have slowed our efforts. We are continuing to reach out to supporters of the Nutley K -- 3 grading system.

"To reiterate my position and that of those signing the petition as well as the many teachers and parents, throughout the district, who privately gave their support, we are completely satisfied with the current K -- 3 grading system in Nutley and do not wish to see it changed."

Mr. Alex Conrad, 504 Prospect Street, stated that he was an English teacher and vice principal at Nutley High School and was presently the Lincoln School principal but tonight would speak as a parent of two sons who have gone through the Nutley School System and been served well by the system. He noted that in college, his sons were well prepared to compete academically with the best students our country prepares for higher education. He stressed that Nutley's grading system did not harm them, it enhanced their academic achievements. Mr. Conrad further noted that as parents, he and his wife had developed their sons' self-esteem.

Mr. Conrad also stated that it is the school's responsibility to instruct the three R's and to foster high expectations. Academics are at the heart of the learning process. He stated his opinion that parents are to reinforce things - give praise and support and you will receive high rewards.

Mrs. Gail Kline, 28 North Spring Garden Avenue, noted that everyone had heard the often-repeated statements of the administration and Board of Education - "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," and also heard all about the Nutley grading system. She indicated that Nutley students are performing quite well when they are compared with students in the same socio-economic group, but they do not compare favorably with high achieving, wealthy districts.

Mrs. Kline made mention of Mountain Lakes and other districts which consistently improve standards. She expressed her feeling that if we, as a district, do not adopt a standard of education, we will not compete in the 21st century and, further, modifying the grading system will not lower standards but will give our children an equal opportunity when competing with other districts. Mrs. Kline expressed her feeling that we must not short-change our children by allowing the administration and Board members to blindly promote the status quo when overwhelming evidence requires change. She questioned why our children would be unable to perform to the best of their abilities if a numerical grading system was adopted.

Mrs. Aileen Hresko, 50 Valley Road, stated that modifying the grading system in Nutley from 94 to 90 would begin the slow process of eroding student performance as students would have to learn less material to achieve the same grade. She said it would be meaningless if we did it in the name of fairness or self-esteem because as standards decline, so will student achievement and giving high grades for mediocre work would bring about the collapse of the grading system in Nutley. Mrs. Hresko further noted that Nutley parents and students would wallow in a sea of content-free "A's" which would provide an illusion of success.

Mrs. Hresko compared this possibility to the decision of the College Boards to adjust SAT scores whereby a higher test score will result with no more effort by students. She noted that students will be awarded more points for the same work and in future years, people will forget about the free 24 points and this lower standard will be considered normal. She added

that this is effectively what will happen in Nutley because if we tell the students they only have to learn 65% instead of 70% to pass, this will become the norm and our children will be expected to learn less. She noted that this is a disservice not only to the students but to the entire community. Mrs. Hresko mentioned that the more students know, the better.

Mrs. Hresko further indicated that she can see this slow erosion of academic success invade Nutley. She noted that in the school setting those that achieve should be rewarded. She added that even if lower standards is the newest trend in education, she proposed that we do not follow this in Nutley. She proposed that instead of changing the grading system, we re-double our efforts to raise achievement levels and continue to acknowledge success without lowering expectations.

Miss Maria Andriola, 11 Ryerson Avenue, stated that she was a 1993 graduate of Nutley High School and while at college read negative comments about the Nutley grading system. She noted that she was a hard-working "B" student in school and the system made her work hard to attain her grades. She also noted that Nutley has an exceptional competitive reputation at her college. Miss Andriola further indicated that in college, the system is easier for her because of her background in the Nutley School System.

Miss Andriola mentioned that she feels she would not be an outstanding student if the standards in Nutley had been lowered, adding that Nutley has a high grading system and excellent reputation and she supports the present grading system 100%.

Mr. Scott Ashley, 18 North Spring Garden Avenue, indicated that he had attended an orientation meeting at Georgetown and his daughter was concerned about her grade point average above 4.0 and was concerned about a misunderstanding. He noted that the admissions officer said Nutley is not the only town in the country that has a non-standard grading system and the college can deal with this.

Mr. Ashley stated that some points of the ad hoc committee are worth considering. He said that modifications should be based on the effects on the child and not done merely for the convenience of parents, teachers, administrators or Board members.

Mr. Ashley further noted that he disagreed with the ad published in The Nutley Sun on November 16 and disagreed with the advertisement running in the paper before the committee has had a chance to complete its work and make whatever recommendations it will to the Board of Education. He added that to many this has the appearance of a political campaign, and if it is, people should put a candidate forward at the next election and see if the townspeople agree. Mr. Ashley indicated that there is an existing system within which one should work. He suggested that people support the candidates with whom they agree by going out and voting but do not use inflammatory material. He concluded by stating that the people of Nutley should be allowed to decide.

Mr. Charles Williams, 36 Newman Avenue, stated that he moved to Nutley 18 years ago because of the educational system, adding that his

son went through the system without any problems but now that he is a senior, he failed to obtain a scholarship because of the lack of numerical grading. He noted that the grading system pushed his children and made them better and with the way the world is today, our children need every advantage and if the Board thinks the higher grading system will do it, keep it even though his son did get affected.

Mr. John Calicchio, 12 Taft Street, indicated that after reading and hearing about the grading controversy, he felt compelled to speak in support of Nutley's grading policy. He stated that after completing college and getting married, he and his wife, both of whom were from Nutley, purchased a home in this town because of its traditional values and high academic standards. He added that these standards continue to challenge their children, but he and his wife will help them deal with self-esteem. He added that hard work always prevails and urged the Board not to lower the standards for his children.

Mr. Charles Slicklen, 36 Hampton Place, asked what was the status of the survey dealing with lacrosse. Mr. Pelaia responded that he was informed by Mr. Jacone that the survey had been disseminated and results were expected very soon. Mr. Slicklen then questioned why Nutley is the only district to have its numerical grades what they are, adding that he doesn't feel it would harm anything to reduce them a little.

Mr. John Walker, principal of Yantacaw School, noted that he had been in the district for many years and had been principal of Yantacaw School for 23 years. He indicated that during that time an excellent staff and administration has been maintained through the years. He explained that high standards of living have been consistent in Nutley as well as a good quality of life, and he added that he did not know of any teacher or administrator that would institute anything that would hurt children because the children come first here.

Mr. Walker stated that many hours are spent thinking about what is good for our children and he feels that the Saturday curriculum meetings are one of the most productive things we have done and Dr. Fadule gets credit for that.

Mrs. Catherine Rempusheski, 525 Kingsland Street, stated that she found all the testimonials and prepared statements very entertaining. She noted that for 14 months she has asked for written research and documentation upon which the district based the keeping of the present grading system. She added that she is once again asking for this information as she would like to read from the research on which the grading system is based. Mr. Battaglia informed her that whatever material the district has would be given to her.

Mrs. Rempusheski noted that she was bothered by the fact that the grading issue and newspaper ad were viewed as attacks. She mentioned that she agreed with the man who spoke about lacrosse when he stated that all the teachers and parents are what help the children to achieve. She added that it is not the grading system that helps them

to achieve, it is what is taught in the classroom. She further stated that she did not feel the higher socio-economic districts would do something so wrong in giving children a standard grading system.

Mrs. Rempusheski also asked why the grades of the Nutley Achievement Test are posted numerically on report cards as opposed to using the present grading system. Dr. Fadule responded that when the Nutley Achievement Tests were developed through the curriculum development system, the question was raised as to how we should do this, but the way of reporting grades became a tradition with that particular test. Mrs. Rempusheski noted that it seems to her that when parents see the numerical grades on the achievement test they are pleased because they have a true idea of what is happening.

Mr. Douglas Eisenfelder, 51 Enclosure, indicated that he had two daughters graduate Yantacaw School and both were there during the "S-I-N" period, adding that at the end of the fourth grade many parents were surprised when their "S" students became "C" students while neighbors' students became "A" students. He added that the parents had not known what the "S" meant but the students knew who the smartest kids were. He further added that it was the parents who received the surprise.

Mr. Eisenfelder emphasized that he would never want to see a school system go back to "S-I-N" because to him that would be a sin. He also noted that colleges look at class rank and SAT's, the quality of courses, the number of honors courses and AP courses. He added that colleges also look at extracurricular activities and at how well other students from a high school did at the college. Also, where you live in relation to the college is important as well as what percentage of those accepted actually came. He summarized by saying that many things get a person into college and one of the least important is grade point average.

Mr. Eisenfelder further indicated that he is glad the administration and Board are studying the grading issue and when the study is finished will be interested in hearing the reasons for staying the same or changing. He added that he feels the decision will be that it is best to remain as the grading now exists.

Mrs. Coleen Williams, 36 Newman Avenue, indicated that she feels the entire discussion this evening is missing an important point - lowering the grading system does not mean we are going to hell; that is an insult to our teachers. She added that the grading system gives an overall view of how everything is going but the numerical system shows you where it is.

Mrs. Williams mentioned that she feels the grading system is hurting the ability of students to receive scholarships and also, she knew of a student who did not get into an honors program in college because of our grading system. She added that she does not feel our system will fall apart if we lower the grading system and she would like to see numerical grades on the high school report card because that way there is no confusion. She asked the Board not to penalize the high school students.

Ms. Kathy McBride, 158 Coeyman Avenue, noted that she feels an outside consulting firm should be evaluating this issue because the Board and administration are too firmly entrenched in their position on the issue. She expressed her feeling that many parents are afraid to speak out for fear of retaliation. She added that she is in favor of a numerical grading system but believes that our teachers are doing an excellent job.

Ms. McBride questioned how old are the IOWA tests the district uses, to which Dr. Votto replied 10 or 11 years old, adding that it is state regulated and the district is within the code. Ms. McBride mentioned that she had heard a comment that the more children that are in basic skills, the more money the district receives and asked if that were true. Mr. Sincaglia responded emphatically in the negative, adding that the at-risk money is based on the number of students in the free lunch program.

Ms. McBride asked what would happen if money is taken away from the districts under the proposed school funding reform. Mr. Battaglia replied that the Board addresses that problem every year during the budgetary process, adding that funding from the state has been going down for at least the last five years. Mr. Sincaglia noted that the biggest problem is that our costs will continue to be low but the state will not be doing its job with additional revenue.

Ms. McBride then questioned if the district was considering other candidates than Dr. Votto to replace Dr. Fadule when he retires. Mr. Battaglia replied that the Board will be addressing that issue but Dr. Fadule is the Superintendent until June 30, 1996. He added that the Board will take appropriate action.

Mr. Vincent Moscaritola, 482 Prospect Street, indicated that he has two children in the school system and looks forward to seeing the curriculum committee's report on the grading system, adding that he has the utmost respect for the members of the committee. He mentioned that recent events convinced him he must speak on this issue. He noted that healthy inner competition results when children strive to do more and our system allows this. He added that our children must be prepared for the real world and tampering with the grading system would send an incorrect message to our children. He indicated that children must be challenged to grow and the Nutley grading system positively sets high standards.

Mr. Moscaritola stated that he had heard that the grading system has a negative effect on self-esteem but he does not believe our children are being hurt by the Nutley grading system. He noted that stress or low self-esteem comes from mixed signals sent by parents. He concluded by stressing that he supports the grading system as he believes it is in the overall best interest of the students of Nutley.

Mrs. Joan Rubino, 48 North Road, noted that she has attended Board of Education meetings for over 20 years and asked to see a show of hands as to how many people present are not employed by the Nutley Board of Education. She added that these other people were ordered

to attend this meeting and if this were truly an open forum it would have been advertised in the local paper so everyone would have had an equal opportunity to attend, and not just the employees.

Mrs. Rubino mentioned that she had been told many times by Board members and administrators that Nutley is one of the best school districts in the state if not the nation. She added that when she read the New Jersey Monthly article in September dealing with the 45 best high schools in New Jersey, she was surprised that Nutley was not listed. She noted that she brought this up at last month's Board meeting and Mr. Battaglia had informed her one of the problems was the gambling situation. Mrs. Rubino stated that she called New Jersey Monthly and read the following reply she received from the Editor:

"Regarding your call to me, Nutley High School did participate in our 1995 school survey. I can also say for certain that the high school was judged solely on the materials it presented to us for consideration. The gambling incident was not a factor in the judging."

Mr. Battaglia clarified that when he responded to Mrs. Rubino last month he had given his own opinion and had not spoken for the Board. He noted that at that time he had also said we were frustrated and disappointed but people still move into our town so we must be doing something right.

Mrs. Rubino then questioned why Dr. Fadule was taking a leave of absence with pay. Mr. Kucinski responded that he had answered this question at the October meeting, adding that the Board negotiated a contract which allows for his retirement, sick time, vacation time and a 2.5% increase in pay this year. Mr. Kucinski noted that the entire Board had voted for the contract. Mrs. Rubino stated that she felt it was an irresponsible action on the part of this Board, adding that she feels the Board members should be removed from their positions.

Ms. Diane Lewis, 39 Church Street, indicated that she agrees that parental support starts at home but she was disturbed by Dr. Fadule's statement that he is concerned that some of us wish to eliminate the letter grades. She wondered how standards were lowered by eliminating letter grades in K-3. Ms. Lewis indicated her belief that the grading should be adjusted, adding that it should be just as difficult to attain an "A" at 90 as at 94.

Miss Sally Boland, 34 Warren Street, noted that self-esteem is a parental right, not a school obligation and questioned whose esteem we are worrying about - the children or the parents. She added that when children go to college they receive letter grades and do not go to the college board and say they want the grading system studied. Miss Boland remarked that she had read the newspaper ad and was very upset by it, adding that her understanding was that the curriculum committee is studying grading for K-3 but tonight a great deal of concentration was directed at the high school grading. She further noted that after having read the ad it appears to her that one person on the curriculum committee has already made a decision and so should no longer be allowed to participate as a member of the committee.

Mr. Joseph Zarra, 20 Fernwood Terrace, stated that as a parent, teacher and administrator he knows that the district's high standards have motivated the students and any relaxing in standards will result in slackening of effort. He added that the higher the standards, the greater the expectations and the more prepared students will be to lead productive lives. He concluded by stating that he feels the standards are fine and urged the Board to continue them.

Mr. Barry Kozyra, 361 Chestnut Street, noted that he is a Radcliffe parent and had wanted to hear why we should change the current grading system, adding that he had listened all night and had not found a good reason why it should be changed. He indicated that he knows that SAT scores and class rank are what count when applying to colleges, not grade point average. Mr. Kozyra commented that the Board's job is to make sure our students receive the best education possible within the limits of the budget it is given and while upholding the laws of the state. He felt that changing the grading system would promote mediocrity, adding that he feels the current grading system promotes performance and not just attempts in a classroom.

Mr. Kozyra continued by stating that the current grading system shows our students right from the beginning of their education to start dealing with the reality of life. He added that pass-fail did not promote any positivism in education and if we are only here for self-esteem, we should go to a strict "A" or "F" grading system. Mr. Kozyra further indicated that he hoped the Board would be guided by the educators on the committee who will give a full report, adding that is what they were elected for and he was sure that is what they would do.

Mrs. Barbara Hradil, 125 Hillside Avenue, noted that the K-3 curriculum should stay the way it is because if it were changed, the children would be disappointed. She indicated that from grade 8 the report cards are on the child's record for the rest of their lives. She commented that her experience with the Nutley School System has been wonderful, adding that her son got into the college of his choice because of his guidance counselor, adding that grade point average does mean something.

Mrs. Hradil indicated her feeling that K-8 the system is fine but high school students should be receiving a numerical grade because the "C" student is the one who is hurt by the system.

Mr. Kevin Coughlin, 247 Whitford Avenue, indicated that the fact that people express their views is why he moved to Nutley. He noted that he was not in favor of going to an "S-I-N" program for any child in the school but would ask that the Board give open-minded thought to going to a numerical grade. He added that there is nothing wrong with change - it is the only constant thing in life. He further stated that a numerical grade would be raising standards; simply because something is in place does not mean it is the best way to do it.

Miss Rose DiGeronimo, principal of Washington School, indicated that she has been a member of the Nutley School System for 32 years as a reading specialist and learning consultant and then principal and has seen many children going through trying times. She noted that the "S-I-N"

system did nothing for the children, adding that we have a good system. Miss DiGeronimo commented that she had been in many communities and talked to many people and they say keep the standards we have in Nutley, they are great.

Miss DiGeronimo noted that our teachers work very hard and the children come first. She concluded that she supports the current grading system and would back it 100% as would the teachers.

Miss Florence Carpenter, 205 Centre Street, stated that she came with an open mind, noting that we are not adversaries with the places mentioned in the ad in The Nutley Sun; we have nothing against their systems or how they mark their children. She noted that in coming to work in Nutley, she found a community which cared about its children and a community that worked in harmony because we cared about making it a wonderful town and a good school system for our children.

Miss Carpenter indicated that when committees meet all sides are heard. She said that a State Education Department spokesman said that skills are set by each district. She further noted that she had come to Nutley when the "S-I-N" children reached the fifth grade and she had to face the parents. She indicated that it was not a good system and the parents and teachers requested that a change be made, and this was done through the curriculum system. She explained that the committee investigated and came to a consensus that to reflect high standards we should have a high score of marking.

Miss Carpenter stated that we get good value in Nutley. She noted that the idea of hiring a consultant has its pros but she feels she is very experienced. She added that parents are needed to increase the self-esteem of the children. She also added that no one had told her she had to be present tonight, but she had come willingly.

Mrs. Ursula Brylinsky, 410 Chestnut Street, commented that it is good to hear the different opinions on how the educational system is viewed. She noted that in Dr. Fadule's opening comments it was mentioned that parents were not pleased with the grading system then in place, but she added that 18 years have passed and many things have changed including people, ideas, philosophies and educational beliefs. She hoped that within this 18 years things have changed with the nongraded system to make it more appealing. She implored everyone to look at the issues openly, honestly and objectively and decide what is best for our children. Mrs. Brylinsky added that she would like to shelter her children from the world for a little longer because for the rest of their lives they will have to work hard.

Mr. Gerard Adubato, 70 Hastings Avenue, commented that we are competing with the world and are not scoring too high. He noted that we are training children to work at the highest possible standards and as a Nutley school teacher, he hopes the standards stay the same.

Mr. Carmen Marzella, 16 Daily Street, commented that he has no children and does not work for the school system and so is uniquely positioned to answer if it is an effective program and does it work.

He noted that the answer is yes, it makes us work harder and does not make us work at a disadvantage. He also indicated that in Nutley you work for the grade and yourself and the grading system puts a strain on the students that they need because that is how it is in college. He urged the Board not to change the system since this is a program that works.

Mr. John Jacone, principal of Nutley High School, indicated that if he has learned anything here this evening it is that there is no perfect grading system but he is concerned about lowering standards since he thinks Nutley students are better than that. He added that it was his understanding that the committee that met and is meeting was going to concentrate on K-3, and he also thought when that was done we would be concentrating on the upper grades. He indicated that we don't have a committee meeting yet on the upper grades.

Mr. Jacone further commented that the people who have a problem with the upper grading system have made their feelings known and when the current committee returns with its recommendations, he would think we will go on to another committee dealing with the upper grades. He commented that we all want what is best for our children and someone long ago said a house divided can not stand, adding that we seem to be heading in that direction. He questioned why we can't work together, accept one another's views and differences and work for the betterment of our kids because that is what we are here for.

Mr. Vincent Trunciletto, 14 Hazel Terrace, stated that he supports the Board of Education on the existing K-3 grading policy but he objects to how our students' performance is conveyed on the application process for college. He noted that this has nothing to do with standards or self-esteem but he advocates a numerical grading system rather than letter grades and urged that this issue become part of what a committee will address. He indicated that in the interim he feels damage is being done to our students.

<u>Dr. Anthony Baratta</u>, 38 Oak Street, stated that he was very impressed with our meeting this evening. He noted that the most difficult professional task a teacher has is to assess and evaluate and in a way, we are attempting to tamper with that very important professional privilege. He commented that he had five children who came through the public school system and were all well served. He stated that as a citizen, he objects very strenuously to placing any other community in a prejudicial circumstance in comparison to any system. He also objects to our high school being excoriated as unsuccessful and being negatively compared with other systems. He stated that he happens to think Nutley's system is outstanding. He noted that he was very proud of the Board members because of their not succumbing to very intense pressure of a very minority group.

Dr. Baratta noted that if there is one problem in education today it is the inflation of grades, adding that it is very easy to give "A's." He stressed that the district must maintain standards. He told Dr. Fadule, on the eve of his leaving, how much he appreciates what he has done for the school system. He added that Dr. Fadule was strong in having sub-

jected himself to all of this nonsense year after year and meeting after meeting. He further noted that tonight's meeting was symptomatic of some of the negative things because this meeting was not about your salary; this meeting was about the grading system, but we take every opportunity to try to violate people.

Dr. Baratta told the Board members that he appreciated their strength and applauded them and asked them to keep up their good work. He concluded by saying that the Board is at the top of the heap because it had the courage to maintain its standards.

<u>Dr. Paul McCarthy</u>, Nutley High School Director of Guidance, stated that he was certain the guidance counselors would not condone any of our students being at a disadvantage when they apply to college. He noted that he has letters from college admissions people who evaluate transcripts and they look at class rank no matter what the grading system is. They also look at how you compare to your peer group. Dr. McCarthy stressed that the department knows these people and they are not out to put our students at a disadvantage.

A citizen stated that she had moved to Nutley because of the reputation of its education system but thinks the current grading system is unfair and wants equal grades for equal work.

<u>Dr. James Vivinetto</u>, principal of Franklin School, stated that he came to Nutley over 25 years ago because of its reputation and high standards and the years have passed but the reputation is still there and the standards still exist. He noted that all around us there is an erosion of standards but Nutley has held firm, adding that we expect excellence, have cultivated it and achieved excellence in competitions with other towns outside of our district factor group because of our standards. He further commented that if the district lowers standards he is afraid we will see a lackadaisical manner towards excellence and our children will suffer, adding that our children have prospered. He stated that if we lower standards we will harm the children.

Dr. Vivinetto further noted that the curriculum committees in Nutley have highly qualified people and we do things the right way, practicing an effective management theory that is talked about in the business world which utilizes staff empowerment. He added that we take the experienced people on the front lines and work with people who have an investment in the children, the community and their careers and we get a meaningful investment and a commitment to the curriculum. Dr. Vivinetto stated that he supports the school system and wholeheartedly endorses the grading system and high standards and he hopes that we maintain our reputation.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion made by Mr. Pelaia, seconded by Mr. Kucinski, the meeting adjourned at 10:41 p.m.

President

Secretary

Dec 22, 1995

Date