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MAINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Limited English Proficient Students in Maine:
An Assessment of Equal Educational Opportunities

FACT-FINDING MEETING
June 3, 1997

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
University of Maine at Ft. Kent
Cyr Hall Conference Room
25 Pleasant Street
Ft. Kent, Maine 04743

DR. BARNEY BERUBE - Chairperson

THOMAS PELLETIER

KENNETH F. MORGAN

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TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 9:00
- 1) Welcome, Introduction of Committee and Guests
 - Dr. Barney Berube, Chairperson, Maine Advisory Committee
 - 2) Background on Project, Administrative Procedures
 - Fernando A. Serpa, Civil Rights Analyst,
U.S. Commission On Civil Rights
 - 3) A State House View on Programs for Limited English Proficient Students
 - State Senator Judy Paradis
 - 4) Experiences of Limited English Proficient Students
 - Moderator: Gerry Talbot, Maine Advisory Committee
 - Jan Dumond, Parent of an LEP Student
 - Carol Roy, Parent of an LEP Student
 - Anne Marie Guerrette, Parent of an LEP Student
 - 5) Implementing Programs for Limited English Proficient Students
 - Moderator: Clair Sabattis, Maine Advisory Committee
 - Lester Michaud, Principal, Wisdom High School
 - Cleo Ouellette, ESL Teacher, Frenchville High School
 - Dave Raymond, ESL Teacher, Wisdom High School*
 - Guy Roy, ESL Teacher, Gateway Elementary School
 - Frank McElwain, ESL Coordinator, Caribou School District
 - Claire Chasse, ESL Migrant Coordinator, Caribou School District
- 11:30 - 12:30 LUNCH
- 12:30
- 6) Administration of Programs for Limited English Proficient Students
 - Moderator: Ken Morgan, Maine Advisory Committee
 - Clayton Belanger, Superintendent, Van Buren School District
 - Thomas Scott, Superintendent, Madawaska School District*
 - Jerry White, Superintendent, Grand Isle School District*
 - Sandra Bernstein, Superintendent, Ft. Kent School District
 - Gilbert Albert, Director, Bilingual Programs,
L'Acadien du Haut St-Jean

7) Community Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Support Programs

Moderator: Dr. Barney Berube, Maine Advisory Committee

- Percy Thibeault, Board of Education Member
- James Lavertu, Board of Education Member*
- Mary Michaud, Board of Education Member
- Mary Ann Gauvin, Retired ESL Teacher
- Beurmond Banville, Board of Education Member
- Manzer Belanger, Board of Education Member

8) Open Comments from Members of the Audience

3:30 p.m. 9) Conclusion

- Dr. Barney Berube, Chairperson, Maine Advisory Committee

* Due to scheduling conflicts may appear elsewhere on the agenda

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1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: This meeting could come to
2 order, fact-finding meeting.

3 Welcome. My name is Barney Berube. I chair this
4 committee, which I'll tell you about in a couple of
5 minutes.

6 But, first, I'll allow my colleagues in the
7 committee to introduce themselves.

8 MR. TALBOT: Jerry Talbot and I am from Portland,
9 Maine. Thank you very much.

10 MR. SERPA: I'm Fernando Serpa, I'm with the U.S.
11 Commission on Civil Rights in Washington, DC.

12 MR. MORGAN: My name is Ken Morgan, I'm from
13 Bangor, Maine.

14 MR. PELLETIER: Tom Pelletier from Fort Kent. I
15 recognize many of you, and I'm the new kid on the block
16 here. I haven't got a nameplate yet.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: He's waiting to be confirmed
18 by the Commission in Washington.

19 A significant caveat for openers. We are a
20 committee, I believe, of eleven of us and almost all of
21 the others are women. I just thought I would share that
22 for a moment.

23 It was really not even the luck of the draw. The
24 entire committee could have come to Fort Kent, but we
25 have four hearings, and this is one of four. And those

1 who opted to go to particular hearing sites opted to go
2 to those, and these are the individuals that opted to
3 come to this one. Some of us are going to all of them,
4 some of us are going to some of them.

5 So, it's rather glaring that there's not a -- there
6 is not a gender balance in front of the room, but I just
7 wanted to say that that was by no means deliberate.

8 A couple of notes of introduction about who we are.
9 Every state in the nation has an advisory committee to
10 the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The U.S.
11 Commission on Civil Rights essentially takes, if you
12 will, a snapshot of civil rights issues state by state on
13 the experiences of people within those states on the
14 basis of either race, sex, national origin, disability,
15 or age.

16 Each state from time to time initiates projects in
17 any one of those protected class areas. We in Maine have
18 covered all of them over the years.

19 This time, it is about the national origin
20 population, and particularly national origin as it
21 relates to second languages. And we will be holding four
22 hearings; this one, of course, here; tomorrow we go down
23 to Calais with particular energy given to the Wabanaki
24 population; from there we go to -- I think Auburn is
25 first -- Auburn next week, which covers that part of the

1 state, central Maine and a little bit of the western
2 Maine; and then from there, the following day, over to
3 Portland to cover Cumberland County and the southern end
4 of the state for that language-minority population.

5 It's a way of trying to be a little bit closer,
6 geographically, to those who may be proverbial
7 stakeholders. So that's, essentially, what we do.

8 And we try to get as much input as we can from as
9 many persons as we can who could lend some insights as to
10 what the experiences are, in this case, of students
11 K thru 12 whose first language may not be English.

12 We have tried, in inviting persons over to get as
13 much of a balance on those issues as we can, again, for
14 all of the four sites.

15 Unlike the Office of Civil Rights, this not a
16 committee that is regulatory. It is a fact-finding
17 committee. It's often called the eyes and ears of the
18 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

19 And so we merely give them a snapshot that we get
20 of the state, and that is put together in a report --
21 that will occur in several months -- that will go to the
22 United States Commission on Civil Rights, who in turn
23 will provide that to the President, to the Congress, and
24 it gets wide spread public attention.

25 So, that's kind of the -- essentially, who we are

1 and what we do. I'll let my colleague, Fernando Serpa
2 from the office for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights,
3 to provide a perspective from that office.

4 MR. SERPA: Thank you, Barney. First of all, I
5 would like to, on behalf of the Commission and the
6 commissioners in Washington, I would like to extend our
7 appreciation to everyone for attending as we begin our
8 efforts here in Maine to undergo these fact-finding
9 meetings.

10 I also would like to thank the members of the
11 committee for coming up here, and all of the effort
12 they've put in preparing for these meetings. A lot of
13 work has gone into this, and we all look forward to
14 productive meetings and the end results that will come
15 about.

16 As Barney said, the Commission is an independent
17 bi-partisan agency with a state advisory committee in
18 each of the 50 states, plus the District of Columbia.

19 The state advisory committee duties are to report
20 back to the Commission on areas which they feel civil
21 rights needs to be looked at; areas of concern, problems,
22 or potential problems, which brings us to the reason why
23 the committee has chosen to look into this issue in the
24 state.

25 In 1995, the committee put out a report called

1 Civil Rights Issues in Maine, a briefing summary on hate
2 crimes, racial tensions, and migrant immigrant workers.

3 And one of the findings from that report was a
4 recent home survey that found approximately 3000
5 school-age children reported that they speak a language
6 other than English at home.

7 And, according to the report, only 1713 students
8 were reported by schools as needing extra assistance
9 because of their limited English proficiency.

10 And since most Maine schools receive some type of
11 federal funding through the departments of education,
12 school superintendents are required to submit assurances
13 that they are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil
14 Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based -- in
15 educational programs, based on any of the federally
16 protected groups, including national origin.

17 Yet, in spite the protections accorded to LEP
18 students, data collected by the Maine Department of
19 Education found that in 1994-95, of 72 public school
20 districts that enroll children of limited English
21 proficiency, only 26, or about a third of them have
22 established policies for equal access for LEP students.

23 Of the 14 -- 14 of the state's public schools
24 reported no support services for LEP children, or
25 actually assigned them to inappropriate programs for

1 students with limited learning disabilities, both
2 processes which are illegal.

3 Finally, the office of Civil Rights for the
4 department of education requires that qualified personnel
5 be provided for LEP children. And given that Maine does
6 require a state certification for ESL teachers, 35 of
7 Maine's public schools enrolling LEP children do not
8 employ teachers who meet the full ESL qualification
9 requirements, and so on.

10 So, given these findings from the report in
11 '95-'96, the advisory committee has decided to look
12 further into this issue and target four areas around the
13 state; as Barney said, starting here in Fort Kent, Calais
14 tomorrow, Auburn and then Portland.

15 We're basically trying to gather information,
16 experiences of the students, of the superintendents, of
17 the principals, of the ESL teachers on how the programs
18 are working, how they can be improved.

19 We also want to hear success stories of how they
20 have helped the children, and any other stories that you
21 care to contribute.

22 Since we are a federal agency that's acting under a
23 federal hospices, there are certain procedures that must
24 be followed.

25 When you give your statements, you must -- and let

1 me make sure to read the exact wording. Let's see.

2 We are prohibited from engaging in any activities
3 that may be degrading or defamatory of any individual or
4 organization.

5 So, when you give your statements, please refrain
6 from defamatory or degrading statements. That does not
7 mean that you cannot criticize an organization or a group
8 or an individual, but please make that fact-based, not
9 just name calling or anything like that. We are looking
10 for facts, and that's what our report is going to be
11 based on, not just any stories.

12 So, with that I'll turn it back over to Barney.

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: There's one other item. If
14 there was something, even in writing, that you had wanted
15 to bring or to leave with us, and didn't bring it now;
16 comments from you, or from anyone else for that matter,
17 may be submitted up to, in the case of this particular
18 hearing, to July 3 -- or July 2, whatever 30 days from
19 today. So, that is also available.

20 Mail them to me or to Fernando. His address is on
21 the top of the agenda. And most of you probably know
22 that I'm with the department of education, if you need to
23 access me.

24 So, I guess unless someone has a pressing need to
25 be out of order, as in out of chronological order, we'll

1 follow the agenda, but we'll do the best we can to honor
2 any requests if someone needs -- because of other
3 commitments. And I think we already have --

4 MR. SCOTT: Yeah, I've got to be in Madawaska by
5 1:30.

6 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Be sure to -- we may
7 need to be reminded. Anybody else? Yes.

8 MS. ROY: I need to be back to work. So, if you
9 can, hopefully by 10:30 --

10 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Are you among the --

11 MS. ROY: -- parents.

12 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Well, that will be
13 following the next group, so I suspect that we'll be able
14 to do that. Thank you for sharing that.

15 Okay. A State House view on programs for limited
16 English proficient students, the perspective from, as it
17 were, the Legislature and obviously a community person
18 right here, Senator Judy Paradis.

19 SENATOR PARADIS: It is indeed a pleasure for me to
20 be here today, considering we just got out of session,
21 and I was hoping -- you never know about the last days.
22 We're a month early, and so we were afraid there was a
23 lot of boycotts, and there were a lot of things that
24 seemed to impede our ability to be able to end and come
25 home.

1 I'm Judy Paradis, I'm a state Senator from
2 District 1, which is 47 communities in Aroostook County.
3 My district goes all the way from Allagash to south of
4 Houlton. So, I have a very varied population that I
5 serve, with a mixture of Native Americans, Swedish,
6 French.

7 I was quite shocked ten years ago when I showed up
8 at the Legislature and somebody whispered to me, a fellow
9 legislator; my name is Garcelon.

10 And I figured, why is she whispering. Because,
11 apparently still, we were not allowed to be -- admit
12 publicly that we were Francos in this beautiful state of
13 Maine that has such a large population.

14 I was one of these students who felt very strongly
15 the law that had been passed in 1922, when we had a very
16 racist Legislature that justified the elimination of
17 French from the face of Maine, and how we were to do that
18 is to do some major damage to the children, make sure
19 that they didn't -- they weren't able to use that part of
20 them at all.

21 What it did for my classmates is, half of us
22 dropped out of school because school was such a hostile
23 atmosphere.

24 And we were -- I never was on that particular
25 playground. But we had other similar things where -- we

*anti
franc*

1 called it the silent playground. When people from the /
2 state -- and we knew, in a small town like St. Agatha who
3 the strangers were.

4 And when this particular car with men who we did
5 not know would drive up, the kids would stop speaking on
6 the playground. They would go quiet because -- cannot
7 make a mistake and be caught speaking French.

8 Also, once at the Legislature, I noticed that there
9 was something that was not quite right. And then I found
10 out that it was the cultural difference. People -- other
11 people from other parts of the State thought very
12 differently than I did, for example. And when I was able
13 to put a name on it, I was able to use it to my
14 advantage.

15 I would say, well, in my culture, this is how
16 people behave, or this is how people would do things.

17 And they would say, oh, yeah, that's true up there.
18 It was a very, very positive thing.

19 But -- so, that's how I was able to try to turn the
20 atmosphere. Ten years of work later, this year, we had
21 -- to give you an example of what's happening today in
22 the Legislature -- we had six pieces of legislation this
23 year that had to do with Franco-American something. We
24 are part of -- we were chosen members -- Maine has been
25 chosen as the center for -- in the country -- for

1 Francophone business -- Francophone is a fad. And so
2 there was all types of pieces of legislation.

3 At the end, they decided that everybody --
4 everybody would role there legislation to mine. We would
5 just come to the committee on business of economic
6 development once, and say, this is what is really needed.

7 In other words, finally using the ability to speak
8 French and communicate in French as a very positive thing
9 for the state.

10 I gave my testimony. I was -- a legislator raised
11 his hand on the committee and said, you offend me, you
12 insult me; my very presence in the room, bringing an
13 issue of anything that was not anglophone was offensive
14 to him.

15 And then he went on to say that the reason why he's
16 saying that is because he went to Quebec once and they
17 didn't like him in Quebec, and they hated his wife.

18 And so you can imagine, when you have wall-to-wall
19 people in that room that were here to testify on an
20 issue, that it didn't set very well.

21 Unfortunately, what happened is, that a lot of
22 people felt that they had to respond to that -- to this
23 type of assault. His committee members, however, did
24 come and say, well, this is not Quebec, this is Maine.
25 You know, these are French people from Maine, there's a

1 whole different attitude.

2 But, it just goes to show that at the State House
3 it's not one issue. As long as we don't bring up any
4 issue, then we're allowed to operate without being
5 insulted. But, if you openly admit to anything, it's
6 still -- it's still a problem.

7 We have, historically, done a major disservice to
8 our children in Maine by not using that ability. We are
9 different, and the fact that we were not taught to know
10 what the difference -- that, you know, why did I have to
11 go to, at my age, to find out my differences, should not
12 -- should not be something that is negative. We should
13 have been taught how to -- the language, first of all,
14 because the spoken language is one piece there's other --
15 we need to write, we need to know our history a little
16 bit better.

17 So, I'm not going to go on much longer, but we are
18 -- now the fact that there's such a large multi-ethnicity
19 group -- in the Portland area, for example, is giving us
20 a little bit more strength. It -- it's very
21 disconcerting to me that we were never -- as large a
22 population of Francos that we are -- we were never able
23 to get the attention that is now being paid, because
24 there other groups that have now come forward who are a
25 little bit more aggressive than we are.

1 But, we have not -- we have not won the battle. I
2 think we have turned the corner. I think it's absolutely
3 marvelous that now we have an immersion program, for
4 example, in St. John Valley.

5 My little godchild, who's going to be a second
6 grader next year, informed her parents at the dinner
7 table this week that she wanted to join the immersion
8 class.

9 And so we are -- that is the biggest hope. We are
10 continuing to work at the Legislature, making sure that
11 there will be places for these children -- in terms of
12 the development of work and where they can be plugged in.

13 So, again, I can't express to you how appreciative
14 I am that you are here. It's my first time that I have
15 ever experienced this. It's been a very lonely battle.
16 And the thought that Washington -- there is such an
17 advisory group represented by some of our own people,
18 that we will never go back to the bad old days, and we
19 can turn the corner and use and allow -- the biggest
20 thing, I guess, is that you can beat it out of a child,
21 and they did out of us as much as possible, so that --
22 the fact that a lot of my colleagues said, well, I'll
23 never put my child through this, and he's going to become
24 an anglophone.

25 So, he's got this beautiful French name, and that's

1 all he's got. Their institutional memory, too, I cannot
2 tell you how important -- so much of our tradition was
3 oral that we got -- that we received from generation to
4 generation that kept us strong.

5 And we're not passing that on. And we are going to
6 be less as a country for not using that resource.

7 Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: I know, obviously, Judy, since
9 your jurisdiction -- residence is very heavily in the
10 St. John Valley, but you represent all the way down to
11 Houlton --

12 SENATOR PARADIS: Hm-hmm.

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Including Houlton?

14 SENATOR PARADIS: South of Houlton, on the other
15 side, not Houlton.

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: The reason I'm raising that
17 is, are there concerns -- given that the Houlton band of
18 Malisetts is at that end, do you get issues that come to
19 you for your advocacy or concern, whatever they may be,
20 on behalf of that native population?

21 SENATOR PARADIS: They have two Native Americans
22 who are serving in the Legislature, and a lot of the
23 things are going through their representatives. And it's
24 -- it's a help.

25 Matter of fact, Canada sent a task force here to

1 study how we -- how we incorporated the Native Americans
2 into our law-making piece. They've had a seat there for
3 25 years, I believe, that John Martin had -- that is
4 something that he had done to give them a voice.

5 Unfortunately, they have been assimilated even more
6 than we have. And it's unfortunate that we are losing
7 that incredible tradition that they have. They could
8 teach us so much, and they've been marginalized.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Just one last thing.

10 Given your -- the energy that you give as -- I know
11 you've been a long-time advocate for the language
12 minority population, particularly the populations here in
13 the Valley in your service to the Legislature, and some
14 others on the Legislature do similarly.

15 However, over the years, when bills that would
16 appear to benefit limited English proficiency students in
17 Maine schools come before the Legislature, they have a
18 way of dying, usually, at the committee level. And this
19 year, apparently, is no exception. This time it was a
20 bill for funding of LEP students -- another bill related
21 to multi-culture education as a requirement preservice of
22 the teachers -- I'm not sure where that's going.

23 My question is, what do you attribute the sense of
24 -- other than money, resources -- of the Legislature not
25 lending more support to those kinds of issues? On behalf

1 of that, presumably, disenfranchised population?

2 SENATOR PARADIS: I think it's basically ignorance.
3 We're asking people to support something they don't
4 understand. They see it as anybody who's not exactly
5 like they are, un-American.

6 It's very hard to make the case that you are
7 getting double your money when you're assisting a child
8 to be -- with respect.

9 You're absolutely right. I'm sorry I didn't bring
10 it up. But, we had on this multi-cultural teaching --
11 making educators sensitive to the multi-culturalism that
12 is there in front of them, in their classroom.

13 We were given 1996 examples, '97 examples of how
14 fortunate are the Native Americans, are the Franco-
15 Americans -- how their culture treats -- they behave in a
16 certain way. And it's usually very non assertive, non
17 aggressive.

18 But, principals would admit that they use very
19 aggressive -- for example, a Native American is taught
20 not to look you in the eye, to an adult. It's out of
21 respect.

22 Look at me, this principal said. He was forcing
23 children. Look into my face. And he would yell at the
24 child for not --.

25 And totally, unbeknown to him, that what he was

1 doing was totally contradictory -- and you can hear my
2 French accent come out -- to what the child had been
3 taught at home.

4 And it doesn't cost any money to be respectful.
5 And my whole thing in everything I do as a legislator
6 is, we have to treat people with respect. And we're not
7 treating these children, and as a result we're not
8 getting the best of them because it's not an
9 atmosphere --.

10 And we can take language out of the child, we've
11 done that very well. It's only taken 20 years to take
12 the language out of the child, but you cannot -- the
13 culture takes a hundred years.

14 So, you can keep trying to break his faith and make
15 him be who he's not. You can't. It's too much -- it's
16 hard to change.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Ken?

18 MR. MORGAN: Yeah. I have a question, Judy. I
19 live in Bangor now, but I grew up in Old Town, and went
20 to school in Old Town where there's a considerable Franco
21 heritage and population.

22 And I was just curious as to whether, you know, in
23 the last 10 to 15 years that you've been involved
24 particularly in trying to bring about a renaissance of
25 French culture and involvement in it, if you in the

1 St. John Valley are getting support from other Franco
2 communities in the state?

3 I mean, there are other areas even more than
4 Old Town; like Biddeford and Lewiston, for example, and
5 Waterville.

6 And are you still feeling relatively alone in this
7 mission?

8 SENATOR PARADIS: Indeed. We have a large
9 number -- and I don't know what the numbers are this
10 year, because we did a -- we do a tally, but we have so
11 many new members.

12 The Francophone is such a new experience for me --
13 we're looking for a center, and there's all of this --
14 everybody's fighting for the center. The Augusta, the
15 Biddeford, the Lewiston area -- they're coming forward.
16 Look at all the people we have. They're bragging about
17 their people. And I think that is a major change this
18 year, that we've felt that people wanted to raise their
19 hand and say, look at us, we're here.

20 And you want to say, where -- it took them a while
21 to get there. I don't care how long it took. They're
22 here now, and they're hopefully -- they're going to do
23 like what we're doing, to make sure that the children who
24 are going through the school system now are getting the
25 training so that they can use their bilingualism in a

1 professional way, in a way that will pay money.

2 You know, we put a lot of value -- we want to show
3 cash for anything that we do. We can show cash for
4 treating -- for teaching our children the verbal and the
5 written and the ability to communicate in another
6 language, their native language, essentially.

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Jerry?

8 MR. TALBOT: Let me just ask a question -- and you
9 may have answered that question.

10 But, do you think that the Legislature has changed
11 or is in the process of changing when it comes to
12 cultural concerns?

13 SENATOR PARADIS: The problem is, we have a 30 --
14 and we're going to -- with term limits, we're going to
15 have a large turnover.

16 We have to keep retraining. We have new people
17 coming in off the street every day.

18 One of the things that has been very effective is,
19 we brought them -- we put legislators on the bus and we
20 bring them up to the St. John Valley.

21 And I'll give you a quick story. The last time we
22 did that, we were -- we were received here at the
23 University for dinner. And we put on a feast. Like we
24 are very good at receiving people and everything else.

25 So, this gentleman said to the young woman serving

1 him, he says, Miss, my soup is cold.

2 She said, Sir, it's vichyssoise, it's supposed to
3 be cold.

4 And I said, whoops, did we over -- maybe.

5 And they're always amazed. Legislators have
6 incredibly -- you know, before they come here, you know,
7 they see poverty, ignorance, isolation, ruralism, they
8 see all that. And when they come here they see that it's
9 totally different, and they're always absolutely shocked
10 by what they find here.

11 But, until we can do that, we have to labor with
12 their preconceived attitudes when we are asking them to
13 respect these other traditions.

14 MR. TALBOT: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Fernando?

16 MR. SERPA: Senator, what do you see on the agenda
17 for the next session, any new initiatives or --

18 SENATOR PARADIS: Well, I see us continuing that
19 effort, to -- it's crucial that we, through the --
20 because, children all go through their -- through our
21 educational system. And when we want to affect change or
22 improve the situation, we have to do it there. And as
23 soon as possible, to stop -- making sure that our
24 educators realize that you just cannot keep denigrating
25 or disrespecting somebody's tradition and expect them to

1 be well preformed.

2 In other words, many children survive in spite of
3 -- because there's such a strong family life that --
4 major proud of who you were that we could counteract what
5 was happening at school.

6 But, more and more it's -- that's hard because
7 everybody has to work. And it's harder and harder for
8 the families to keep it together.

9 And so we need that -- that is the crucial piece
10 that we need to revisit. It doesn't cost any money to --
11 to treat people with respect.

12 And -- and we're going to continue with that major
13 effort with the Francophone Act, and give it a
14 legislative push.

15 I'm also involved in a lot of the -- we have a
16 French speaking parliamentarian that -- that's -- I don't
17 know how many Francophone countries. But, when we come
18 together as a -- all of these parliamentarians from all
19 over the world, we're usually a couple of hundred people
20 in the room. Our meeting was in Quebec last year.

21 And so we've come back with that, that it's a
22 global -- for example, French is a global language that
23 -- they are fascinated by seeing a state that is as
24 French as Maine is.

25 MR. SERPA: Okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Other questions or comments?

2 Okay.

3 Thank you, Senator.

4 SENATOR PARADIS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: And I guess at this point I'll
6 turn moderating over to Jerry.

7 MR. TALBOT: When we are concerned with experiences
8 of limited English proficient students, we would like to
9 welcome on behalf of them Jan Dumond, who's a parent of
10 an LEP student; Carol Roy, parent of an LEP student; and
11 Anne Marie Guerrette, who's also a parent of an LEP
12 student.

13 Is Jane here?

14 Okay. She's not here. We can -- maybe we can get
15 back to her.

16 Is Carol Roy here? Carol, would you come up and --
17 we would like to hear your comments.

18 MS. ROY: I want to thank you for the opportunity
19 to listen to what we have to say up here in this area.

20 Boy, have I got a lot of stuff to mail to you.
21 Mine is not a success story, unfortunately; mine pretty
22 much is a disaster as far as I'm concerned.

23 Our school two years ago identified some of the
24 children in the school --

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: I'm sorry. What school?

1 MS. ROY: This is Dr. Levesque School, SAD 33,
2 Frenchville.

3 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you.

4 MS. ROY: -- identified the students who were LEPs.
5 I have four sons; one is in high school and graduating,
6 the other three at Dr. Levesque School in first, second,
7 and third grade. All of them are identified as LEP.

8 So the school then went ahead and wrote to
9 Washington for a grant, to address the LEP program, which
10 is the immersion program we have now. It's actually a
11 two-way bilingual program.

12 I was very excited about it, because I was
13 presented all types of information. I looked up
14 information, tried to educate myself on just what an LEP
15 student is, what disadvantage they have.

16 I did receive some information from schools on MEA
17 test scoring which showed children who spoke only English
18 versus children who spoke the two languages, and how they
19 scored.

20 And there was a major difference in the scoring,
21 with the LEP being definitely scoring lesser than the
22 single-language child. So, I knew that my children were
23 at a disadvantage.

24 Now, the grant did come in. After some revisions,
25 it did come in. However, when the parents heard about

1 the program, they were not so enthused because there was
2 a lot of misconception.

3 People were told that your child would have to be
4 in this program. It will be 100 percent French all day.
5 And it turned many people away.

6 So the school board was four against, and three
7 for. So that didn't go well for us either.

8 So, I tried to get some information together to
9 present it to the school board and educate them on just
10 what this program could do; where, rather than hinder the
11 children, it would increase their conception of language
12 and actually make them much more proficient in their
13 English as well as in their French.

14 Now, my children all spoke French as a first
15 language. When my oldest one started school, he spoke
16 not a word of English. The same with the second one, the
17 nine year old, not a word. And when he went to
18 kindergarten registration, I was told by the speech
19 therapist that he's definitely got a language problem.
20 He does not have enough mastery of the English language
21 to speak full sentences in English.

22 He had been to nursery school for one year, and --
23 I have videotapes at home when he started nursery school,
24 he spoke not a word of English. By Christmastime, on my
25 videos, he speaks not a word of French.

1 So, in three month's time he learned that language,
2 enough to be able to get by, but was not speaking in
3 complete sentences.

4 Now, this program would have provided to my
5 children what they needed. However, parents met with the
6 school board and it was very hostile. I think because of
7 our background, because I was in that generation also
8 with the silent school yard, and --. But, I did not stay
9 with that, I suppose, because I always thought my French
10 as being something very important and special.

11 When I went to college, I went to Portland and --
12 obviously, I'm a nurse. And doctors would say, get that
13 French kid there, you know. They liked it, those that
14 could speak French, wanted the French people around.

15 Also, they would have people from France who would
16 come in as patients. Nobody could speak to them. So, it
17 was -- so they would get the French kid.

18 It was never a disadvantage for me to speak the two
19 languages. If it was, I didn't know it.

20 And this is something that I want for my children.
21 But now not only are they saying that my children are
22 LEP, the school board voted down the grant in our school,
23 and there was transferred -- well, actually, it was not
24 transferred. The other schools who had applied with our
25 school for this grant chose to keep it, but our school

1 dropped it.

2 Now, what I did is, I wrote to the commissioner of
3 education in the state of Maine. Unfortunately, what
4 happened is that the one who was in office at the time
5 was completing his term. The one who was coming in was
6 not in yet, and so they had an acting, interim
7 commissioner. So, he did receive my letter and he looked
8 at the information, and he said he did conduct a type of
9 investigation at school, and that -- what he was told was
10 that the school would provide a French curriculum program
11 for these children.

12 However -- that was supposed to be in effect last
13 fall. And it's June, and there is no curriculum.

14 There were four French major teachers at our school
15 who could have taught this French bilingual program, and
16 were very much for it. However, some of the other
17 teachers were not for this program.

18 My children are not receiving any special programs
19 because they are limited English. They are not receiving
20 anything.

21 They have some French. They have a half hour of
22 vocabulary French twice a week, which is definitely not
23 going to teach them to read, write, or speak.

24 And what's happening with my younger one is that
25 the third son speaks some French, but not too much. He

1 understands. When I tell him to go to his room, he knows
2 what I'm talking about.

3 The youngest one speaks no French. My husband and
4 I speak only French to each other in the house. It's
5 very uncomfortable for us to speak English to each other,
6 it's French.

7 So, my children are exposed to French all the time.
8 My children were not -- I could not transfer to them to
9 the neighboring town, Madawaska, where they were going to
10 incorporate the bilingual program.

11 So, my children are missing out. And I don't think
12 it's fair that they should miss out.

13 Now, out of this grant, even though the school
14 turned it down, \$5,000 was given to the school in October
15 to purchase French material, either to place in the
16 library or in the classrooms.

17 Nothing has been spent. There has been no new
18 books with the money. Was it sent back, was it spent on
19 something else, is it sitting in a corner? I don't know.

20 But, my children have not received anything new.
21 The textbooks that are in school I can tell you from the
22 -- from speaking to teachers, they're 22 years old. We
23 need something new. We need -- we needed the 1.2 million
24 dollars grant, and it was turned down for personal
25 prejudices.

1 That denied my children the education they need.
2 Not just what I want here, but what my kids need.

3 And I guess -- I didn't write anything because I
4 thought I was going to be listening to a board, not being
5 a board, so I didn't have anything written. But, this is
6 the information I've gathered.

7 I have school board minutes, where the school board
8 voted to apply for a grant, where they voted to accept
9 the grant, and where they voted to deny the grant. It was
10 a voluntary program. It was set up so that it would not
11 interfere with the traditional English student, and with
12 the multi-age program that is still brand new in school,
13 it would not have interfered with these programs. It
14 would have been a totally separate program.

15 There were half of a kindergarten, first and second
16 grade students who had signed up for this program. So,
17 we deny -- or they denied the students this program.

18 I would like to know, is there something we can do?
19 If our children need a program, if they are identified
20 LEPs, what do we do? How do we get them the education
21 that they need, or do we leave them at a disadvantage?
22 Is there something that can be done, I want to know?

23 MODERATOR TALBOT: Are there any questions?

24 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Oh, yes. I'm not sure that
25 our position here is to necessarily advise you, because

1 you're really telling us of what's going on in -- or
2 trying to tell others what's going on.

3 Having said that, though, any person can file a
4 complaint with the office of Civil Rights. Their office
5 happens to be based in Boston, and they'll take it from
6 there finding the things that you raised. That's short
7 of getting your school committee to think differently, to
8 act differently, that may be an option that you want to
9 consider.

10 I have a couple of questions. Someone told you
11 that -- that under the bilingual program that had been
12 approved under the then grant, instruction was going to
13 be a hundred percent in French?

14 MS. ROY: No, I was not told that. I knew it was
15 50 percent. But the community -- the rumors went out in
16 the community that it would be a hundred percent French.
17 And so people panicked. They came to this meeting very
18 hostile and saying, no, we will not teach -- you will not
19 teach my children French 100 percent.

20 My kids are a hundred percent every day, and, yes,
21 I have a choice.

22 But, they did have a choice. And although we
23 presented the new material, re-presented it over and
24 over, the misconceptions were out and -- the majority of
25 the school was not supportive of the program. It failed.

1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You wrote, you said, to the
2 Commission -- the commissioner. Was it Commissioner
3 Mowatt at that time, was that the interim --

4 MS. ROY: I have his letter.

5 CHAIRMAN BERUBE: Well, it doesn't matter. I was
6 just curious to know who the commissioner was at that
7 time.

8 MS. ROY: No, that's not the name. Poulin.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Oh, Ray Poulin. He was
10 filling that capacity at that time. Okay.

11 MS. ROY: And he told me that he did do some type
12 of investigation at the school to see if the LEPs were
13 being serviced.

14 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: What year was that, do you
15 remember?

16 MS. ROY: Last summer is when we went through this
17 and pushed --.

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: And one other. And this may
19 be a question to your superintendent, I don't know.

20 But, the most recent date that the department has,
21 Department of Education, has of Frenchville, SAD 33, is
22 that there are 115 LEP kids.

23 And the question that all districts answer has to
24 do with what other programs are made available, because
25 there are several options that may be identified.

1 SAD 33 said that special education -- that's what
2 they mostly checked off -- is the only service. Is that
3 a fair picture of what is the presumable program for LEP
4 students in SAD 33, special education?

5 MS. ROY: That's right.

6 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: And nothing else. And
7 that's --

8 MS. ROY: Other than, as I say, they have a half
9 hour of French vocabulary twice a week.

10 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: But that's foreign language
11 instruction?

12 MS. ROY: That's right.

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you.

14 MR. TALBOT: Would you give me the ages of those
15 children?

16 MS. ROY: Seven, eight, and nine. Those are the
17 ones still in school.

18 MR. TALBOT: Thank you. Are there any other --
19 yes.

20 MR. SERPA: These seven-, eight-, and nine-year
21 old, they have gone through this last year in a regular
22 curriculum?

23 MS. ROY: Hm-hmm.

24 MR. SERPA: How do you think -- what has been their
25 experience? How has that affected them, do you think, as

1 opposed to going through what you wanted them to?

2 MS. ROY: The difference to me is that my children
3 would be speaking fluid French right now if they had one
4 year of 50-percent French in the classroom, plus all of
5 the exposure at home.

6 And, also -- the first year, as I understand it,
7 when they're in this program, they do not score higher on
8 their MEA test. From our understanding, they score lower
9 the first year or two, but then test scores start going
10 up.

11 We would have one year down, and we would be on our
12 way to starting to build up, and we're not. And we're
13 not going to unless we get some programs in there for my
14 children.

15 MR. SERPA: How have their grades been affected;
16 have they gone up or down --

17 MS. ROY: No, they've stayed the same. They do
18 well.

19 We kept them back a year. We kept them home an
20 extra year, so my children are really starting out late,
21 and -- so, they're doing well. They're older in their
22 classroom.

23 My older one, the nine-year-old, is doing very well
24 in French. The other two are struggling very much.

25 MR. SERPA: Okay.

1 MR. PELLETIER: Yes. I would like you to commend
2 you on your statement. I think it was very effective
3 that you spoke directly to the Committee rather than from
4 notes. I'm glad you didn't write it down.

5 You outlined something which, to me, is very tragic
6 that's happened. It's an unbelievable waste that
7 something good that was happening -- and what I'm trying
8 to understand, I guess is, you spent a lot of time trying
9 to nurture your children in French. And you're saying
10 that their early experience of school, just in the first
11 two or three years, totally defeated what you had tried
12 to do.

13 MS. ROY: I wouldn't say totally, because they
14 understand what we're saying.

15 But, the nine-year-old will -- speaks broken
16 French, versus completely integrated French that he was
17 speaking when he started school.

18 But, I was told when he went to kindergarten
19 registration that he's deficient in English, so you need
20 to concentrate on English and you should speak English at
21 home with him.

22 And so that's what we started doing, my husband and
23 I, speaking English to the children.

24 And that's why now -- they're only one year apart,
25 but one's speaking very well French and understands, and

1 the other one doesn't speak or understand.

2 MR. PELLETIER: Obviously, you're bilingual, fluent
3 in both languages.

4 What's your experience that allows you to or made
5 you become that way?

6 MS. ROY: I was raised in a French home. And
7 school was always English and -- we were always told we
8 could not speak French in school, so we obviously had to
9 learn the English language.

10 I did well at school, I always did. And -- but, if
11 you live in the valley, it's almost essential to speak
12 the two languages.

13 As a nurse, working in a nursing home, I need to
14 speak two languages because all of the elderly are only
15 speaking French. Very few of them speak English.

16 But, when I was away in the city, there was never a
17 disadvantage that I know of, except one time that I can
18 remember that I was at a disadvantage, and it was in
19 college. And I had this one teacher and -- you know, she
20 consistently gave me poor grades on my paper.

21 Gee, I researched and done such a good job on it.

22 And finally I just got upset with her and said,
23 what's wrong with my report.

24 And she said, you write in English, word it in
25 French.

1 I reversed phrases.

2 MR. PELLETIER: Senator Paradis mentioned that
3 there's sometimes a disconnect between the spoken
4 language that we have in the valley and the academic
5 reading and writing part of it.

6 Did you have normal reading and writing?

7 MS. ROY: I did when I was -- in French?

8 MR. PELLETIER: Yes.

9 MS. ROY: I did from sixth grade on -- actually,
10 seventh grade on. But, before that, no, there was no
11 French.

12 When I reached seventh grade, they had this
13 grant -- I believe the title -- I don't remember seven or
14 -- Judy was my teacher.

15 MR. PELLETIER: Okay.

16 MS. ROY: I today read, write, and speak French.

17 MR. PELLETIER: This might -- I just have one more
18 question. This might be hard for you to articulate.

19 But, aside from the rumors and the misinformation
20 that was out there, what was the basic argument of people
21 that opposed the acceptance of the --

22 MS. ROY: The world is English, and we're going to
23 have English-speaking children who will survive very well
24 in the world. That was --

25 MR. PELLETIER: Okay.

1 MS. ROY: However, French is the second-most spoken
2 language in the world.

3 MR. PELLETIER: And this grant wouldn't have
4 interfered with that -- wouldn't have interfered with
5 English, would it?

6 MS. ROY: No, absolutely not. There would have
7 been three track in the school. There would have been
8 the bilingual students, the traditional, and the
9 multi-age.

10 I think what happened, the multi-age was new. And
11 because of the small population in the school, I think it
12 was a fear that it would eradicate the multi-age program.
13 And this was like the baby, you know. And parents were
14 made to feel that this was an elite program, but from
15 what I've studied, it's not an elite program.

16 So, I think it was a fear that it would wipe out
17 this program. And parents who had their children in this
18 program felt it was elite, and it was the threat that
19 this elite program would be removed from their children.

20 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. ROY: But, there are many, many articles too,
22 and many interviews that have been done and -- and I have
23 paper clippings -- where they talked to the people in
24 town and said, you know, we were penalized for speaking
25 French, and our children are not going to be penalized.

1 They're not going to go through what we did.

2 I know. It's sad. And it's denying my children an
3 education.

4 MR. TALBOT: Are there any more questions? If
5 there aren't any more questions, you may bring those
6 letters up here and give them to our chairman.

7 MR. SERPA: Or I can make copies or you can make
8 copies --

9 MS. ROY: I can give you what I have as copies, and
10 what is not copies I can put into a separate file maybe
11 and present it.

12 I didn't have time. I only received the letter
13 yesterday.

14 MR. SERPA: Really?

15 MS. ROY: Yes. That the board was actually meeting
16 and, like I said, I thought I was listening to a board,
17 not being the board.

18 I didn't separate this all last night, I just
19 didn't have the time.

20 MR. SERPA: Well, whatever you have will be fine.

21 MS. ROY: So, I'll separate them and bring them to
22 you.

23 MR. SERPA: Okay. Thank you.

24 MR. TALBOT: Thank you very much. Is Anne present?
25 She's not present either? Okay.

1 Are there any other parents from any other
2 districts or any towns that would like to speak?

3 If there isn't, then I would again return it to our
4 chairman, Barney.

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: And it turns out -- we didn't
6 mention this in the opening. It turns out that
7 Clair Sabattis was on this committee, who heads the
8 Houlton Band of Maliseets in Houlton, is not here, and
9 was to have been. So, I don't know what may have
10 occurred.

11 So -- okay. Hearing from the educators as it were,
12 with regard to the education of LEP students, there were
13 -- I don't think any of you on this list had asked or
14 needed to be away quickly. I think I'll just take them
15 in order.

16 Is Lester Michaud here? Okay. Not here. I see
17 Cleo Ouellette. Cleo?

18 MS. OUELLETTE: Okay. I'm Cleo Ouellette. I'm a
19 retired teacher from SAD No. 33. I taught at the high
20 school, Wisdom High School. It's not Frenchville, it's
21 Wisdom High School. I taught for 29 years, and I taught
22 two years before that.

23 I was considered the ESL teacher at Wisdom. And I
24 have a great success story, and then I have some other
25 stories that are not so much success stories.

1 I'm a product of the system that punished people
2 for speaking French. And, you know, for a long time we
3 were -- wherever we went we kind of felt we were below
4 everybody else because we had an accent, and because
5 we -- we were told that we didn't speak either English or
6 French.

7 The French we spoke was a degraded French, the
8 English we spoke was a sub-culture English. And so, it
9 was very discouraging.

10 But, I must be one of the stubborn ones, because I
11 decided that I was going to learn to speak French and
12 English. And I went to college and -- I took French as a
13 major and really worked hard at it.

14 So, I came back and started teaching. The first
15 year of teaching was French. And then I taught -- I
16 taught French. It was at Limestone High School. And
17 after I got married I didn't teach for a little while and
18 then went back to teaching, and I taught -- the only
19 opening was English, so I taught English.

20 And they told me that as soon as there was a French
21 opening that it would be -- that I would be teaching
22 French. But, I taught English for 25 years. And
23 openings came up and at first they were not offered to
24 me, and then I -- I had taught English for so long that I
25 stopped looking at the French openings.

1 And then about seven or eight years ago, when the
2 French teacher left, then I was asked to take over the
3 program and I have been teaching French there ever since.

4 All this time I was taking courses. I was
5 attending ESL conferences and brushing up on my ESL,
6 simply to be able to deal with the students better than I
7 felt they had been dealt with before.

8 My success story is about a family that moved into
9 our -- our area, St. Agatha. And they had two daughters
10 who spoke -- one didn't speak one word of English and --
11 she was thirteen. And the other one spoke a limited
12 amount of English, mostly French.

13 So, their uncle called me and said, I have two
14 nieces here and they just don't want to go to school
15 because they don't know English.

16 So, I talked to my principal at the time and asked
17 if it was okay if I went over to the house and tried to
18 talk to them.

19 So, I went over and talked with them in French and,
20 after much coaxing and advice, I -- one of the girls, the
21 13-year-old, asked to go to school. The other one was
22 seventeen, so it wasn't -- by law she probably wouldn't
23 have to go to school.

24 So, I concentrated mostly on the younger one. And
25 I brought her to school with me, and we worked a little

1 while with my classroom. And all this time we were
2 talking French.

3 And finally I was able to convince her mother that
4 this girl had to come to school, and we would -- I said
5 that I would do what I could for her. So, we sat up a
6 program for her.

7 And she would attend school and -- we made sure
8 that all of her teachers were bilingual. She -- every
9 day she would take the bus that went to the Tech Center.
10 She would take that bus and go to the superintendent's
11 home, where his wife taught her, just conversed with her,
12 and taught her the basics in English. And she spent a
13 great deal of time with her.

14 And then she would take the bus back, when the bus
15 came up again, in about 45 minutes -- although, I think
16 she stayed about an hour at the superintendent's home
17 with the superintendent's wife.

18 At school, she would be taking one class of English
19 with me on a one-to-one while I was teaching an
20 individualized French class. So I was teaching her in an
21 individualized English class. This lasted for a year.

22 All of her teachers -- all of the teachers she had
23 were bilingual, and they used -- they would give her the
24 information. They would teach their class and give her
25 the information with a specialized vocabulary in French.

1 We got textbooks from -- I think it was Edmunston
2 where we got the textbooks, Guy Albert, the bilingual
3 director.

4 And so, her first year -- the end of her first
5 year, she was fairly proficient. She made friends with a
6 girl who spoke both French and English.

7 And so, after the first year, she went into the
8 regular program, but always with some -- with somebody
9 there who would teach her, giving her the French program
10 -- French words for the material that they were learning.

11 And then, even one of her classes, the teacher had
12 the whole class make posters about the plants. It was a
13 science class, I think. And there was a section on the
14 human body and --

15 So, they had all these posters with everything
16 labeled, both in French and English. So, anyways, this
17 girl; very intelligent girl, but who had been put -- who
18 had no way of communicating what she knew, when she
19 graduated last year she graduated with honors.

20 And she now speaks, you know -- of course, she
21 spoke French fluently. But, she speaks English very,
22 very well. So, I feel this is a great success story as
23 far as this one case.

24 Her sister was -- went to a vocational school
25 because she elected to do so. And there, also, she

1 learned quite a bit more English, and so --.

2 But, the younger girl's story is really a great
3 success.

4 I also have quite a bit of a feeling of success --
5 or not so much success with some of the children that
6 come from parents who were punished when they were young,
7 and so who don't feel that French is very, very
8 important.

9 I was one of those people who was really pushing
10 French programs, the bilingual program, as it was
11 supposed to be put in by the grant that was -- the grant
12 that we received from the federal government, because I
13 felt very strong that to start teaching French when you
14 get to high school is not worth very much.

15 The time to learn the language is when you start --
16 is to start at birth, really. But, you had all these
17 people out there feeling that they -- the French that
18 they had was not -- was worthless, and would hinder them
19 in their English. And I think that feeling is still
20 around.

21 I went to a board meeting in Van Buren this spring.
22 And there was one person there who kept saying, we've got
23 to get them to spend more time on English, this French is
24 bothering their English.

25 And I was able to convince that person that, when

1 you learn one -- an extra language, it makes it easier
2 for you to learn. If you have two languages, you -- if
3 you can think in one language, and you can have the
4 concept there you can put it in two different languages,
5 that means that you have mastered that concept. It's not
6 just repeating words that you hear.

7 So --

8 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You're close to the --

9 MS. OUELLETTE: I beg your pardon?

10 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You're close to the time
11 limit.

12 MS. OUELLETTE: My time comes up?

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Well, if you could make some
14 closing comments just to --

15 MS. OUELLETTE: Okay. I think there's a great fear
16 about speaking a different language. I think they fear
17 that it will interfere with their English, and I think
18 there are a lot of people still with that -- are still
19 bothered by that.

20 And one of the things that I would like to mention
21 here is that, after one of the meetings, a monolingual
22 English person told me that she felt discriminated
23 against when job descriptions asked for bilingual
24 applicants.

25 So, it's still there. Why is French -- why learn

1 French, it just bothers everybody else.

2 So, I'm going to leave with that. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you. Questions? None
4 at all? Okay. Thank you very much, Cleo.

5 Dave Raymond?

6 MS. OUELLETTE: He said he was coming this
7 afternoon.

8 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. We'll catch up with him
9 then. Thank you.

10 Guy Roy?

11 MR. ROY: Thank you, Mr. Serpa, for inviting me. I
12 prepared something. The only thing that -- I did not
13 receive the agenda until this morning, so I don't know if
14 my comments are completely or directly involved with
15 my -- but, you know, it has something to do with it, what
16 we're trying to do.

17 MR. MORGAN: Excuse my ignorance. But, may I just
18 ask where Gateway is?

19 MR. ROY: Gateway is in Van Buren.

20 MR. MORGAN: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. ROY: I've been teaching French -- well, my
22 name is Guy Roy. I've been teaching French to students
23 in the St. John Valley for the past 24 years. Most of
24 these students have French names and French backgrounds.
25 But, most have become less and less proficient in the use

1 of the French language.

2 During the past few years, I have also been
3 involved as a part-time curriculum coordinator for the
4 bilingual program in the Van Buren school district.

5 I am also a parent who values our French language
6 greatly. My wife and I speak French to our children at
7 home. Next year, two of our children will participate in
8 the bilingual program in the Madawaska school district.

9 In light of what I have just stated, I will speak
10 to you both as a parent and educator. First, as a
11 parent.

12 During the past few years, an effort has been made
13 in the St. John Valley to preserve and promote our French
14 language and culture. However, I feel that we have only
15 scratched the surface.

16 Nonetheless, we have already seen a change in
17 attitude for the better in our children concerning their
18 French language and culture at home.

19 Our only regret is that our older children will
20 never benefit from the bilingual program presently in
21 place. You know, we feel that precious years have been
22 lost.

23 As an educator and after reading the handout sent
24 to me by your committee, I realize even more that our
25 greatest problem is our lack of information and

(

1 understanding concerning our limited English proficient
2 students.

3 Through no fault of theirs, many of our educators
4 have no clue to what an LEP student is. Before I became
5 involved in our bilingual programs, I myself was one of
6 those individuals.

7 So, we need to start at the bottom in regards to
8 education. As mentioned in your handout, a school
9 committee approved LAU plan that works, updated from time
10 to time is also a must.

11 Another of the potential questions to consider in
12 your handout referred to teacher endorsement in bilingual
13 education. As previously mentioned, I have been teaching
14 French to our St. John Valley students for 24 years. I
15 hold a master's degree in teaching of French, and also I
16 have taken most of the courses sponsored by the bilingual
17 programs during the past few years.

18 Yet, I have been unable to receive an endorsement
19 in bilingual education. The last time I was in contact
20 with the Department of Education in Augusta -- that was
21 last year -- I was told that I still needed nine credit
22 hours of course work. I am somewhat puzzled by this
23 situation.

24 Hopefully we can do something on this, because the
25 colleagues that are teaching with me, you know, are

1 trying to be endorsed, but it seems to be very difficult.
2 I think we've gone from one extreme to the other. So,
3 I'm not sure exactly why.

4 Since then, our present bilingual program has
5 provided me with the opportunity to take a few more
6 courses -- I've taken one this year. Without these
7 bilingual programs, courses for bilingual endorsement
8 would be extremely rare. So, I think we're fortunate to
9 have the bilingual programs and we are able to take the
10 course.

11 Finally, even if my comments have been more on the
12 negative side, I feel that with the proper training and
13 education we can continue to progress in the right
14 direction. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you, Guy. Given that
16 you made your compelling arguments to support what
17 Van Buren is doing -- and Van Buren has been, either
18 alone or as consortium, working on developing and
19 enhancing its own programs for a few years now.

20 But, the grant, as I understand it right now is
21 supporting K through 2 or K through 3 this year, or K
22 through second -- first and second?

23 MR. ROY: Right.

24 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: That's the grant, that's on
25 the grant side.

1 MR. ROY: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: My question is, why then,
3 given that whatever you understand, and so many others in
4 the district understand about these successes that Van
5 Buren has had over the years, aren't more grades directly
6 involved in the programs since things are doing so well?
7 K through 3 is a very, very small chunk of the whole
8 district.

9 MR. ROY: Well, this is the first year of the
10 program. So, it's K through 2nd. The next year we will
11 be moving up to the 6th grade.

12 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Yes. But, I'm wondering why
13 it has to depend on the grant to do that. Why wouldn't
14 it be happening anyway?

15 MR. ROY: Oh. Well, I think certainly the question
16 of money, you know, would be one issue.

17 You mean, why --

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Why isn't bilingual education
19 going on right through, or almost right through all the
20 grades?

21 MR. ROY: Well -- yeah, it's a good question. But
22 -- in my case, I've been teaching French as a core course
23 -- a core program. The students before -- before we
24 began developing the program, the students in Van Buren
25 up to third grade would receive one period of French a

1 week, and the third, fourth, and fifth, twice a week.

2 So, you know, you're very limited. I was the only
3 one teaching French, let's say, through -- K through
4 sixth. So, you know -- that's the only time I had to
5 teach it. I didn't have any more time to give it. It's
6 certainly -- you know, it's just a -- it's very minimal.

7 Now, the program, of course, as you know, is a
8 voluntary program. Parents who volunteer to put their
9 students in there virtually will be receiving a lot more
10 French. Now --

11 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: But, as I understand it --
12 let's get this right.

13 A majority -- probably a majority of the teachers
14 at Gateway speak French. Is that a fair assumption?

15 MR. ROY: Yes, I would say --

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Most persons speak French.

17 MR. ROY: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: The it isn't -- again, help me
19 if I'm not getting it right.

20 It isn't really a staffing, because teachers are
21 already fluent in French, are pursuing training in
22 getting all of the other pieces that go with state
23 certification and so on -- then the staff is already
24 there and trained, and -- or training is underway. Then
25 it's only a matter of what language should be used to

1 conduct instruction; will it be French, will it be
2 English, will it be both.

3 Why -- maybe it's a question that we can deal with
4 later. But, couldn't that be happening right now?

5 MR. ROY: Well, see, for the first few years, those
6 members who have taken courses, I feel, already
7 understand the situation, you know, of what we need to
8 do. And those who would need the information, would need
9 the education, have kind of shied away from the courses.
10 So, they're not -- you know, they may be bilingual, they
11 might be able to -- they might be able to understand
12 French and speak it, but they're not necessarily trained
13 and they don't quite understand the situation. So, not
14 everybody's taken the courses, yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Not all of them have been
16 engaged in -- in the same level of --

17 MR. ROY: No. So, to me, you know, that's a big
18 point. We need to certainly educate our staff members.
19 And, like I said, even if you go back three or four years
20 ago, when I became involved with the bilingual program, I
21 myself did not really understand -- did not understand
22 what an LEP student was.

23 So, we still have a lot of work to do as far as
24 informing, you know, staff members and everybody.

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you. That's helpful.

1 MR. SERPA: How many children do you have at
2 Gateway who would be considered LEPs?

3 MR. ROY: Oh, probably -- probably Gil would
4 have --

5 MR. ALBERT: I'm not good with figures, but it's
6 86 point something -- it's 25 percent out of 340 kids.

7 MR. SERPA: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Any other questions or
9 comments?

10 MR. PELLETIER: What do you do to deal with the
11 people that you identify as LEPs? How do you teach them
12 differently, or how do you handle that differently than
13 the others?

14 MR. ROY: Well, before we had the bilingual program
15 that -- I don't think anything was done. They would come
16 to me for French twice a week. I didn't know if someone
17 was LEP or not. So, I don't think -- the introduction of
18 the bilingual program has certainly made a greater effort
19 to identify them and do something for them.

20 MR. PELLETIER: So they're taught other subjects
21 beside French in French?

22 MR. ROY: Yes. The objective is to teach some kind
23 of areas in French, as much as we can, you know. And,
24 you know, this year is the first year, and we're not
25 where we want to be, but hopefully we will increase every

1 year.

2 Yeah, that's the objective, to teach the content
3 area in French.

4 MR. PELLETIER: For how long? What's the goal to
5 transition them?

6 MR. ROY: Well, the goal is to -- okay. Just give
7 you an idea from the -- let's say the first and second
8 year, first, second, and third grade, hopefully to bring
9 them up to 70 percent French. And then you decrease to
10 50 percent by the fifth and sixth grade.

11 So, hopefully, they will be completely bilingual by
12 then, and you try to continue to foster both languages to
13 the twelfth grade.

14 CHAIRMAN BERUBE: Clayton wanted to add something.

15 MR. BELANGER: Yeah. I wanted to comment on one of
16 the questions you asked, what do you do if you have
17 somebody who's totally French.

18 I was the principal at Gateway school. And we
19 would hire tutors. And we would get some from Canada --
20 who were basically Canadian. And we would hire
21 one-to-one tutors to teach.

22 The last time was two twins. Remember?

23 MR. ROY: Oh, yes.

24 MR. BELANGER: And what happens with these people,
25 they tend to stay for a short time and then they move

1 back to Canada and do something else. But, we hired
2 tutors.

3 MR. PELLETIER: I have one last --.

4 You said in the last 24 years you see less
5 French?

6 MR. ROY: Oh, yes.

7 MR. PELLETIER: Is that fair, amongst the student
8 coming in?

9 MR. ROY: Yes.

10 MR. PELLETIER: And what factors do you attribute
11 that to?

12 MR. ROY: Well, I think the comments that have been
13 made here previously, too, that simply -- you know, the
14 importance of our language and culture has been set aside
15 and considered differently, you know, from the English
16 language. So that people are kind of ashamed to use it.

17 MR. PELLETIER: Okay.

18 MR. ROY: Hopefully, with the introduction of the
19 bilingual program, I think we can see -- we can turn that
20 around.

21 As I mentioned here, I've seen already the
22 beginning, and I've seen a change in attitude, you know,
23 as I go through the school.

24 So, hopefully, we can continue in that direction.

25 MR. SERPA: A question back to endorsement. What

1 type of support or encouragement do you get from
2 administration to pursue ESL endorsement?

3 MR. ROY: Well, it's --

4 MR. SERPA: Or is it up to --

5 MR. ROY: No. It's basically up to us. You know,
6 the administration is certainly supporting us. And, of
7 course, the big push has been the bilingual program.
8 With the funds of the bilingual program -- you know, they
9 sponsor some courses right here in the area. And I've
10 taken -- you know, it's an opportunity for us.

11 And, otherwise, I don't know where we would go.
12 You might take a French course here at the university, or
13 you might have taken something in Presque Isle. But, you
14 wouldn't have something geared for Van Buren without the
15 bilingual course. That's my experience.

16 MR. SERPA: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Other questions? Thank you so
18 much, Guy.

19 I guess we'll shift over to another district.
20 Frank McElwain? Is it assistant superintendent and
21 Curriculum Coordinator?

22 MR. MCELWAIN: Just Curriculum Coordinator.

23 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Curriculum Coordinator.
24 And Claire Chasse, Migrant Coordinator of Caribou. Good
25 morning.

1 MR. MCELWAIN: Good morning. I am Frank McElwain,
2 regional director, and also responsible for the ESL
3 program. Claire Chasse is our ESL Migrant Coordinator
4 part time, as well as Migratory Inspector the other part
5 time.

6 I wanted to start this morning and give you a brief
7 overview of our ESL needs and program at Caribou. It's a
8 little different than the French need up in this area.

9 In Caribou, we've been having an increase in a new
10 crop to our area of broccoli. And with that production,
11 it began with utilizing local workers to provide the farm
12 labor.

13 But, in the past several years, the farmers have
14 been leaning towards migrant population to meet those
15 needs. Specifically, migrants come from Texas and from
16 Mexico.

17 So, what that has brought in is a new language to
18 our system and into our area that we don't have a lot of
19 experience with. Of course, that's Spanish that's been
20 brought into our school system. And we've been working
21 at meeting those needs for the past few years.

22 The yellow sheet, or the buff-colored sheet that
23 you have indicates that, based on our state reports of
24 our LEP students -- you can see that -- early in the '90s
25 we basically had very little need for LEP -- meeting

1 their needs. And that has increased through the years.

2 The other sheet, the grey sheet, indicates another
3 uniqueness of our population because it's a different
4 language, is that the population doesn't stay through the
5 entire school year.

6 What happens is, during the planting season,
7 usually from Memorial Day on, a percentage of the workers
8 will come to assist in that portion of the work, and
9 bring with them their families.

10 So, about a third of our migrant-speaking
11 population comes then and stays on through.

12 And then in July, another two-thirds of the
13 population will come and help with the summer work and
14 the beginning or harvest, and stay through November.

15 Which means that, for a school year, you have, in
16 the fall, a fairly large amount of Spanish-speaking needs
17 to be met that end quite abruptly with the cold weather
18 in November. And through the long winter months and
19 early spring, you have very little need. And then -- and
20 then you have a smaller need come May -- May and June.

21 So, in the middle there's almost none, and then the
22 two ends of the school year we have it a little bit
23 different.

24 Well, we've been attempting to meet that need,
25 working with Claire. Claire is primarily our migratory

1 teacher, and has been working towards her certification,
2 full certification, under ESL. She's been working under
3 conditional certification and will, this summer, or early
4 fall, finally, after a long hard road, complete her
5 formal ESL certification.

6 In addition to Claire during peak time, especially
7 in the fall when we have -- what did we have last year,
8 in the fall, Claire, over 70 --

9 MS. CHASSE: Yes, close to 80 students.

10 MR. MCELWAIN: -- students that had various degrees
11 of LEP needs. Claire works with one or two aides -- we
12 had two aides last year that helped support her and her
13 efforts.

14 We have had a LAU plan in place and approved by our
15 school board since 1994. And, in fact, it's up for
16 review tomorrow night at our school board meeting.

17 Our LEP program is primarily a pull-out program
18 where Claire, and/or the aides, would work with students
19 that have been identified, either during their study
20 halls, if they're at that level, or maybe during their
21 English language arts periods to reinforce their language
22 arts -- their English-speaking skills, as well as
23 reinforcing their curriculums during those times.

24 How often Claire or the aides work with these
25 students would be based upon the assessment of their

1 needs; working more frequently or for longer periods of
2 times based on their degree of proficiency.

3 The difficulties that we have for ESL needs in our
4 Caribou school system have evolved as our population has
5 evolved.

6 One problem, of course, is not being able to
7 exactly forecast the extent of those needs. How much is
8 going to be planted, how much harvested, and how many
9 workers are going to be -- are going to come in, and what
10 kind of student population they're going to bring with
11 them is somewhat of an unknown.

12 What we have seen is the population has continued
13 to come back to Caribou. In other words, the same
14 students -- unfortunately, they come and begin some
15 English language support, and then they go back many
16 times into more of a Spanish-speaking environment, and so
17 don't get the continuation of those skills like we would
18 like to see.

19 But, we do have the same students coming back. So
20 -- when we first started, most of our students seemed to
21 be centered as elementary or younger students. And now
22 we have those students spread out through all of our
23 school system, including high school students.

24 Which is good to see that they enjoy coming back
25 and continue to contribute to the area. The difficulty

1 for us is that, rather than having Claire working at one
2 or two schools with multiple students, now her efforts
3 are spread out throughout the system in four school
4 buildings, which makes it more difficult and, of course,
5 more difficult in meeting the range of age-level needs.

6 Another difficulty is the lack of Spanish
7 resources, because we don't have a Spanish-speaking
8 population, really, besides the migrant population that
9 comes in for a short period of time. To have people
10 available for translation support, to have people to hire
11 that would have that bilingualism that you might want to
12 have for the aide position or other support positions,
13 it's difficult to find.

14 And, in fact, in our high school curriculum, we
15 would prefer to have Spanish as one of the second
16 language offerings. But, because of the lack of finding
17 a teacher with that expertise at this point, our
18 second-language offerings are French and German. But
19 we're still in hopes that some day we would have Spanish,
20 especially where we have our population that comes in
21 that has that language.

22 Another difficulty we've had is, as we've had
23 students move to the high school is with transfer of
24 credits between us and Texas in particular. And we've
25 attempted to address that issue with our state person,

1 Pam Gatcomb, and also through John Baldacci's office, our
2 representative.

3 What apparently is happening, according to the
4 students, is that they'll come here and begin their work
5 in our high school in the fall, and then transfer in
6 November to the Texas school system. And the students
7 are telling us that their work isn't -- isn't accredited.

8 And so now they're behind several months in
9 whatever, junior or senior year, and they have difficulty
10 graduating. So, they become frustrated in our school
11 system. Why should I come to school, you know. And
12 attendance problems crop up because my work is not going
13 to be valued, and -- when I go back to Texas.

14 In researching it, our guidance department,
15 communicating with Texas, part of the problem seems to be
16 with the evolution of what we call block scheduling.

17 If you're aware of that, that's where high schools,
18 many of them across the country, have gone to a longer
19 period of time for students to engage in curriculum
20 areas, to the point where you might -- instead of taking
21 English for a full year, you take it for a half year and
22 get the credit, rather than over the whole year.

23 And in Caribou we're not in a block system. So, a
24 student will come, take English based on a full year, for
25 a couple of months; go to Texas where it's a more

1 compressed time schedule, and because they've not only
2 have not been there, they also have not kept pace because
3 they've been on a curriculum that's more spread out.

4 Texas tells us that they have a special program to
5 accommodate students who do transfer, and it allows them
6 to make up that time or to catch up or whatever. And I
7 don't know if that's another hurdle for them, but
8 students are still telling us that they're frustrated by
9 -- by that extra difficulty in transferring credits. And
10 it's still an issue that's somewhat unresolved.

11 Another difficulty is, the bilingual needs are
12 fairly new to our staff in Caribou, and getting them to
13 understand the nature of our ESL support that we can
14 provide. Many of them would like to have -- once they
15 have a student that has limited English-speaking ability,
16 they would like to have a person right there to provide
17 the translation services for homework and translating for
18 the teacher one-on-one, as the previous speaker
19 mentioned.

20 But, with 70 or 80 students, that would be pretty
21 unlikely that we would be able to provide that.

22 So, to have the staff understand or appreciate the
23 kind of services that we're able to provide, and the
24 support that we're able to provide, is something that
25 we're working on.

1 We've talked with staff and tried to meet some of
2 their needs, and some of the goals we have for ESL,
3 including providing some workshop experiences to help
4 them appreciate the culture of the Spanish migrant
5 students.

6 They've requested to have a course, either adult ed
7 or a workshop, where they can learn some phrases that
8 would at least help them break that barrier when a
9 student first comes into a class. We call it Spanish for
10 teachers, but some specific language that would help
11 them with those students.

12 We've had a little difficulty, because, in Caribou,
13 we have -- our high school starts earlier than the rest
14 of our school system because of the potato harvest. And
15 where we're just now getting Spanish-speaking students
16 going to the high school, we need to adapt our personnel
17 for ESL so that they cover both calendars. Because, we
18 work under two calendars that overlap somewhat. But, we
19 found last year that there was a need that wasn't being
20 met, initially the year before Claire was -- Claire has
21 been primarily on an elementary school calendar.

22 We're also interested in pursuing computer software
23 that might help the student, and/or teachers, and work
24 them. We have had Spanish software to try to interpret -
25 - help us interpret or translate documents that we need

1 to send out to parents and whatnot, and have found that
2 to be quite lacking and to be mistranslated to different
3 degrees.

4 That's pretty much it. Claire, do you have
5 anything you want to add?

6 MS. CHASSE: No.

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You said you were going to be
8 sending your LAU program to the school committee or
9 whatever, and you made some changes. Any significant
10 changes in direction?

11 MR. MCELWAIN: Not really. Just a reclarification
12 and -- just kind of a schematic of a flowchart of how
13 that's laid out is going to be streamlined or improved
14 upon so it's more easily understood.

15 There is a plan that we utilize, that Claire and I
16 talk about and say, okay -- or she tells me, we're on
17 this plan, and --.

18 It's -- also, part of it is to bring it to the
19 board's -- it's really not changing much of it. The
20 bigger part of it is to orientate the board to kind of
21 what you're being orientated to, and to what a LAU plan
22 is, and what we do in our Caribou system. It's more
23 educational than anything for them.

24 MR. MORGAN: Could you describe for us how the
25 migrant students are received by their fellow students

1 and by the community?

2 MR. MCELWAIN: Maybe Claire can give more
3 information as to that.

4 MS. CHASSE: Well, when they leave in the fall and
5 then come back in the spring, they have people that say
6 to them, we're glad you came back, oh, good, you came
7 back, we were afraid you weren't going to come back.

8 The staff is happy to see the students come back,
9 especially if they had those students in the fall, and
10 have the same students return to their classroom in the
11 spring so they can see the growth or, you know, what the
12 students have gained.

13 And, overall, I think it's a positive feeling.
14 It's taken some time and some work, but it's a positive
15 feeling to have the students return.

16 MR. MORGAN: Good.

17 MR. TALBOT: I think you were saying something
18 about the difficulty you were having because you weren't
19 having the Spanish-speaking minorities? Is that what you
20 were saying?

21 MR. MCELWAIN: Can you restate that for me? I
22 guess I don't understand what you're asking.

23 MR. TALBOT: In your discussion, you were saying
24 you didn't have the -- insofar as, I guess, the ESL
25 students, you did not have -- for the benefit of those

1 children, or those classes, the Spanish-speaking or
2 Spanish minority, insofar as the schools were concerned?

3 MR. MCELWAIN: As far as in our community?

4 MR. TALBOT: Yes.

5 MR. MCELWAIN: Yes.

6 MR. TALBOT: Is there anything you're doing to
7 alleviate that, to get around that, to do something about
8 that?

9 In other words, from what I understand, by not
10 having that, that can be -- that can be a difficulty you
11 were talking about. Are you doing anything to alleviate
12 that, or get around that, or --

13 MR. MCELWAIN: Well, we've talked about -- I think
14 mentioned about having teachers learn about the cultures
15 of the Spanish-speaking students so they can embed some
16 of those things into the curriculum so that all of the
17 students in the school would have an understanding about
18 Spanish-speaking students, and where they come from, and
19 what are some of their cultural --

20 MR. TALBOT: So they're taking something from that
21 course?

22 MR. MCELWAIN: Yes. It will be integrated within
23 the regular curriculum. And some teachers are already
24 doing that, but we would like to promote more of that to
25 be occurring.

1 MR. TALBOT: And that would be a benefit to all of
2 the students.

3 MR. MCELWAIN: Oh, yes.

4 MR. TALBOT: Okay.

5 MR. SERPA: You said you had a French teacher and a
6 German teacher.

7 MR. MCELWAIN. Yes.

8 MR. SERPA: How does that break down into the
9 actual population of the community, French -- the number
10 of French people there and German people?

11 MR. MCELWAIN: We have very -- I don't know. We
12 have very few German-speaking people in the Caribou
13 population.

14 We would have a percentage of French-speaking
15 people. Not quite as high as up in this area, but a fair
16 amount in the Caribou area.

17 We had -- for a long time, we had just French as a
18 second language, and we were interested in adding another
19 option. And we were most interested in having Spanish to
20 be that option because -- we perceived that as being a
21 good one to have.

22 But, we didn't have the staff -- a staff member
23 that was capable, and we did happen to have a staff
24 member that was capable in German, so we offered German.

25 And it does give students an option.

1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Some students, particularly
2 teens that you are seeing fewer of -- you have a strong
3 presence of these Spanish students at the elementary
4 level, particularly. And my sense is from age twelve,
5 and certainly the high school, you don't see many. In
6 the middle schools you have some, but in the high schools
7 you have almost none.

8 And I guess my question is, to what do you
9 attribute that? Are they out in the field, working,
10 unwelcome? What is the issue -- what other the issues,
11 Maybe some mixed, I don't know. Maybe they just don't
12 exist, at the older grade level.

13 MS. CHASSE: I think truancy is a problem at the
14 older level. We're not sure what the problem -- where
15 that comes from. I don't know if it's the transfer of
16 credits to Texas, to the school system they return to, or
17 students get discouraged. I don't know.

18 We've tried to analyze that back and forth, and
19 have tried to problem solve and come up with some
20 solutions to try to meet that.

21 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You do know that they exist --
22 if I may put it so blunt -- that at the high school there
23 are so many 16-year-olds or 15, or 17, or whoever may be
24 of school age. You may not ever get to see them come
25 through your doors, but you know they exist.

1 MS. CHASSE: Hm-hmm. And some students tell me,
2 when they come in the fall; gee, I wouldn't be here.

3 And I give them a look, and they say, well, I
4 wouldn't be here. I came up here with my family because
5 my dad thought I would work in the fields.

6 But, our laws in Maine are such that you have to be
7 at a certain age before you can be out of school and work
8 in the fields.

9 And our farmer does not support that. Our local
10 farmer does not support that practice.

11 So, the students are in school, when they're not
12 playing hookey.

13 But, some of the reasons that the family's do come
14 -- they have older students, and they think they'll be
15 out in the fields working.

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: So is that a continuing issue,
17 that the school department is indeed working to try to
18 resolve, to get those teens, as it were, to come to
19 school?

20 MS. CHASSE: I believe --

21 MR. MCELWAIN: Yes.

22 MS. CHASSE: -- we're working on it, yes.

23 MR. MCELWAIN: We have a transition team that
24 comprises all of the stakeholders, all of the people
25 involved with trying to help with the Spanish migrants

1 come in and comfortably move into the community and move
2 on.

3 And we work very closely with -- broccoli is grown
4 in Caribou with a few major growers, and they have
5 students that are involved in the school, and they are
6 very cooperative in supporting with us in trying to solve
7 a number of issues, but this one as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Just for the benefit of
9 the committee -- and it may be a minor detail -- thank
10 you for the graph here. The LEP students that are on one
11 sheet, and the ESL students -- I'm not sure you make the
12 distinction -- that a distinction needs to be made.
13 What, if any, is there? I assume the ESL students are
14 the students that are receiving ESL support.

15 MR. MCELWAIN: That's right. They were taken from
16 two different sources, I guess is one reason I left the
17 titles different. The yellowish one is from -- is from
18 your source, and the other one is really from Claire's
19 assessment of students and the information she has
20 provided over the last three years.

21 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Did I see a hand go up
22 somewhere? Okay.

23 MR. MORGAN: Do you have any French-speaking LEP
24 students, or are they entirely Spanish-speaking?

25 MS. CHASSE: We don't have any French-speaking LEP

1 students. We do have a few Asian-speaking students,
2 five, I believe, in our system, and the rest are
3 Hispanic, Spanish-speaking.

4 MR. MORGAN: Okay. How do you deal with the
5 Asian-speaking students, in a similar way that you just
6 described?

7 MS. CHASSE: Yes.

8 MR. MORGAN: Okay.

9 MR. MCELWAIN: The only difference is, they would
10 be here year-round.

11 MR. MORGAN: They are here year-round?

12 MS. CHASSE: Yes.

13 MR. PELLETIER: I guess, Claire, I would ask you,
14 practically, on a given day, you have 53 students in your
15 school system that don't understand what's going on.
16 What do you do? How do you spend your typical day?

17 MS. CHASSE: My schedule is based on a priority-
18 needs basis. I usually try to work with non-English
19 students that are just learning basic classroom
20 vocabulary first; how to go to the bathroom, how to get a
21 drink of water, ask for things they need to have, just to
22 survive throughout the day.

23 I just start out with my non-proficient --
24 non-English proficient students and work on the limited
25 English as the schedule allows, and then, with the aides

1 -- the aides also do that, or the educational technicians
2 that are hired to help me.

3 And that's how the scheduling is based. And within
4 non-English proficient students, we spend more time with
5 them, or try to spend more time with them.

6 Whereas, with somebody who's almost fluent in
7 English, we probably see them once or twice a week or --
8 you know, a minimal amount of time.

9 MR. PELLETIER: Have you been able to acquire any
10 Spanish-speaking education materials -- education
11 materials in Spanish that you can give them to read?

12 MS. CHASSE: Yes, we have been able to acquire some
13 materials. The difficulty comes in -- I know two
14 languages. One of them is not Spanish. So, it's how to
15 translate what the students do.

16 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You have two aides. You only
18 have those two aides during the season the migrants are
19 there, or are they with you all the time?

20 MR. MCELWAIN: That's on an as-need basis, based on
21 the population that moves in and out. And we didn't even
22 anticipate the need for them. And it became obvious, as
23 Claire has spelled out here, that it runs pretty thin.
24 So, we hired one, and then the need became even greater,
25 and we hired a second one. And one had Spanish-speaking

1 ability, which was a great asset.

2 And at the same time we were working with staff,
3 and -- of course, based on teacher's demand -- we've had
4 teachers demand or ask for textbooks -- as I say, if I
5 had textbooks, and Claire's support -- you know, if I had
6 textbooks in Spanish, that would work.

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Do you get the sense that the
8 parents of the LEP students that you have are in fact
9 generally satisfied, they're happy with the kid's
10 experiences in school? Or are you getting complaints,
11 you know, other than these little complaints that you get
12 sometimes or something, but -- is the quality of the
13 educational program satisfactory, from what you may be
14 hearing, or --

15 MS. CHASSE: We just went through our language
16 assessment committee meetings last week, according to our
17 LAU plan, and the parents that did come were very
18 supportive and very happy, very appreciative of our
19 efforts. And they were happy to see that their students
20 have adjusted well -- their children have adjusted well
21 in our system.

22 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Nobody's running down to Pine
23 Tree Legal, as far as you know?

24 MS. CHASSE: As far as I know, no.

25 MR. SERPA: If you could send me a copy of your LAU

1 plan, I would appreciate it.

2 MR. MCELWAIN: I have a copy with me.

3 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Other comments,
4 questions? Okay. Thank you so much.

5 Okay. I think I'm going to take the liberty of
6 pulling in the testimony of Tom Scott, because of
7 scheduling this afternoon. Or, actually, Ken, you're on.
8 I'm sorry.

9 MR. SCOTT: Mr. Serpa, Dr. Berube, members of the
10 advisory committee, good morning. Thank you for your
11 indulgence in changing your schedule to accommodate me.

12 We've been involved in developing a pulp and paper
13 technology program for our vocational students. This
14 program has been developed in conjunction with UMFK,
15 Northern Maine Technical Center -- or Northern Maine
16 Technical College, and Fraser Paper, and today we sign
17 the paperwork on that at 1:30. So it's a big day for us.

18 My name is Thomas Scott. I am superintendent of
19 schools in Madawaska. We are a school system of 828
20 students, over 600 of whom come from a minority-language
21 background.

22 We have two schools, a K thru 5 elementary school,
23 and a grade 6 to 12 middle/high school.

24 As one of the original participants in the St. John
25 Valley bilingual education project, the Madawaska schools

1 have been involved in bilingual education since 1970.

2 We have, through the years, tried to maintain
3 programs which meets the needs of our limited English
4 population. This population is overwhelmingly of French
5 decent. It is comprised of some first generation
6 Americans with the majority coming from families of long
7 standing in this country.

8 Our staff is predominantly bilingual and have been
9 able to meet the needs of our local students and of
10 students coming in from Canada who do not have -- who do
11 not speak English.

12 As these teachers begin to reach the age of
13 retirement, however, we have an increasingly difficult
14 time finding bilingual staff to replace them.

15 We do have a LAU plan in place, and it has been
16 used most often to develop language acquisition plans for
17 the transfer students described above.

18 These plans have utilized the services of classroom
19 teachers, guidance counselors, our speech therapist, and
20 tutors.

21 Recently our LAU plan and bilingual program
22 encountered a real test when two students directly from
23 China enrolled in grades 2 and 4.

24 With the training and materials available through
25 our bilingual program, we have been able to meet the

1 educational needs of these students.

2 Most of our students come from a bilingual
3 household. Through the years our focus has been to
4 validate the students' use of their native language and
5 to validate the language itself.

6 French has been part of our elementary curriculum
7 since we began in the Title VII project. It has been a
8 required course of study for all our students.

9 In the early '90s, concerned about what Professor
10 Rodrigue Landry has described as subtractive
11 bilingualism, we began exploring what options we may have
12 to both enhance our French language program and to
13 improve the English language skills of our students.

14 Our solution has been to apply for and implement a
15 two-way bilingual program. Our program has provided
16 training and best practices in bilingual education and
17 language acquisition. This training has been made
18 available to all staff regardless of their participation
19 in the project. And I would commend our staff for their
20 dedication to these training programs.

21 They have required a tremendous time commitment on
22 the part of these teachers. The program has also
23 assisted us in acquiring materials to be used in our
24 program. There is a real shortage of French language
25 materials for elementary students in this country.

1 Mr. Albert's office has been relentless in its
2 efforts to track down age and interest appropriate
3 materials in Canada.

4 This year the program served students in grads K
5 thru 2. Next year the program will expand to grades 3 to
6 5, and into the middle school the following year. Mr.
7 Albert and the building staff can speak more fully about
8 the classroom activities of the program.

9 I would say that I am disappointed that neither
10 parents nor staff from the Madawaska school have been
11 invited to participate in these presentations.

12 We have also applied for a second grant which would
13 allow us to expand the program through grade 12. We
14 expect to hear from OBEMLA in the near future.

15 Our two-way program is in its first year of
16 classroom practice. By all reports it has been very
17 successful. With the assistance of UMFK and the Acadian
18 Archives, we are increasing the cultural component of the
19 program.

20 On a side note, we opened our new elementary school
21 in Madawaska in 1995. The percent for art project
22 included a ceramic mural retelling the story of the
23 Acadians, and our school sign will proclaim, Ecole
24 Elementaire Madawaska Elementary School.

25 I think it is clear that we have the will and the

1 current capacity to carry out these types of programs we
2 see as necessary for our Franco-American population.

3 Unfortunately, in the long run, we will see fewer
4 teachers trained in Maine capable of teaching in these
5 programs. If we are to continue minority language
6 programs, there must be a commitment at the university
7 level to train teachers to take their place in such
8 programs. These programs must exist even though they may
9 never enroll a large number of students. Without this
10 commitment our programs are doomed to wither on the vine.

11 Our community is supportive of our efforts, our
12 parents are as well as evidenced by the enrollment in
13 these brand new high-risk programs.

14 I have no doubt that we will be successful in
15 developing a model program that will not only reverse
16 subtractive bilingualism, but will also provide our
17 students with an education that is the envy of the state.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Just a comment about the point
20 that you made about the parents, and maybe Fernando can
21 also comment.

22 An effort was made to get to all parents of the
23 effective districts. The realization was made, perhaps
24 too late now, was that, because of work schedules, many
25 said that during the day they couldn't come. Not only

1 here, but other sites, too. So that is with 20/20
2 hindsight, so there's no parents in that way.

3 The second question, the Van Buren and Madawaska
4 projects -- and I know it's going well and so on. My
5 question is, given that it's a sizable grant -- the one
6 you're filing an application for right now, we don't
7 know. But you're in the second year, I think, of five.
8 In another three years, let's assume, worst case
9 scenario, federal funds are gone, it's not going to
10 happen. Where do you see the program going?

11 MR. SCOTT: I see it continuing. The purpose of
12 the federal grant is to build capacity. I think we will
13 be -- as I mentioned, I think we will be very well set at
14 our elementary schools. Our capacity at our high school
15 level may be somewhat restricted because of training
16 opportunities and whatnot, but I -- I think our intent
17 and that of our school committee is, once the grant's
18 gone, this program will continue.

19 I mean, we made a commitment to the students and
20 the parents, we must do so.

21 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay.

22 MR. PELLETIER: Tom, how does the grant that you
23 have in your -- and that you are operating under, how
24 does -- how is it similar or different from what Mrs. Roy
25 told us about a while back, if you know?

1 MR. SCOTT: The grant that Mrs. Roy was referring
2 to is the grant we're currently operating under. The
3 original application involved ourselves, Van Buren, SAD
4 24, SAD 33, and Grand Isle.

5 MR. PELLETIER: Was there any communication between
6 the school district, SAD 33, and your school district,
7 when this program was ongoing, about whether to accept or
8 reject the grant? Did you hear from them?

9 MR. SCOTT: No, I was never asked for comments by
10 the -- by SAD 33. I mean, all three districts accepted
11 the grant. We had accepted the grant in the fall of
12 1995.

13 The issues arose in SAD 33 in the winter and early
14 spring of 1996. And that was pretty much an internal
15 issue for them. We were never really involved with it,
16 with those issues. Our population was always very
17 supportive of our efforts.

18 MR. MORGAN: You did not experience the existence
19 in Madawaska that we're hearing of that happened in other
20 communities?

21 MR. SCOTT: No. No, we did.

22 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You were not in a position
23 then of extending -- you know, maybe you would have
24 needed to be asked to -- accepting tuition as it were,
25 from SAD 33 for those parents who would be insisting that

1 their problems have a -- that your program as Madawaska
2 would have.

3 MR. SCOTT: We have said that we would accept those
4 students on a tuition basis, or even accept them on a
5 superintendent's agreement.

6 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: But that decision lays with --

7 MR. SCOTT: That decision lays with SAD 33, not
8 with us.

9 MS. ROY: I would like to comment. We did apply to
10 transfer our children, and the school would not accept
11 that. We would have had to have paid \$4,000 per child
12 per year to transfer them to Madawaska, which is \$12,000.
13 That's why our children are not in the program that we
14 want.

15 MR. SCOTT: I would just like to -- just a point of
16 clarification. When she says -- when Ms. Roy said the
17 school would not accept that, it was SAD 33 that would
18 not accept it, not Madawaska. Let's make that clear.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Is that dead? Is that issue
20 dead, any kind of a partnership with Madawaska and SAD
21 33?

22 MR. SCOTT: We're open to it, Barney. I mean, it's
23 a local issue in another community. We're not going to
24 get ourselves involved in that.

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. PELLETIER: What's the idea behind subtractive
2 bilingualism? What's that whole idea?

3 MR. SCOTT: I think I would defer that to Mr.
4 Albert, who can probably address that much better than I
5 can.

6 MR. ALBERT: Generally, speaking, subtractive
7 bilingualism is having a bilingual program for the -- the
8 major purpose is for the students to learn English. And
9 as soon as they're competent in English, we eradicate
10 their former language and instruct only in English.

11 So, it's to develop the English skills, and using
12 the minority language only to the extent that is feasible
13 to make the transition to English. Transitional programs
14 were of that category, basically.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Like the current program is
16 two ways, French and English? Okay.

17 MR. SERPA: Can you just elaborate a little on your
18 two Chinese students and how they fit into the program,
19 or how the program was tailored to them?

20 MR. SCOTT: Our elementary principal, Ms. Redwine,
21 is here and she could probably give you more detail
22 later.

23 Essentially, when they come in, we -- we have a LAU
24 plan -- we developed a language acquisition plan, and
25 Gil's office has assisted us in finding computer

1 software. These -- this is very, very recent. I don't
2 know if it's been in our school for three weeks yet.

3 So, this is -- we're kind of looking at what we're
4 going to do next year. Some of the problems we'll face
5 are the same problems as Caribou faces with the Spanish-
6 speaking.

7 Ideally, we would have a native language speaker to
8 work as a tutor or something with these students.
9 There's not a whole lot of Chinese speaking people in
10 Madawaska. I mean, that could present a problem for us.

11 One of the issues that we face on the border is
12 that, while we may be able to find native Chinese
13 speakers in Canada, they can't cross the border and work,
14 unless you know, you know, through the civil rights to
15 get an exemption through the immigration law, which I put
16 a plug in for.

17 MR. MORGAN: Okay. Any other -- in my other life,
18 I'm not in the area of education, so much of this is
19 really somewhat new to me. But, I take it from what I'm
20 hearing that in the Van Buren system and in the Madawaska
21 system, there has been -- there is this commitment to the
22 development of bilingual programs. That this is not the
23 case in all areas of the St. John Valley. In fact, it's
24 just the opposite of -- at least one that I've heard of,
25 and there may be more that I don't know about.

1 I'm just wondering if you, or others who have
2 spoken, have any observations as to why there is
3 receptivity in some communities and not in others. I
4 know it's a hard question and --

5 MR. SCOTT: Yes, it is a very difficult question.
6 I think one of the issues that we deal with in Madawaska,
7 and maybe the same is true in Van Buren, is that I think
8 we have a higher incidence of cross-border marriage in
9 Madawaska than perhaps in some of the other communities.
10 We have a large number of our parents who have come in
11 from Canada from New Brunswick who are French speaking.

12 And, as a result of that, they may be more
13 supportive of the effort. That's the only fact that --
14 the only difference I can see in the community. Just
15 pure speculation on my part.

16 MR. MORGAN: Is there anyone else who has some
17 questions?

18 MR. TALBOT: In increasing the cultural component
19 of the program, with the assistance of the archives, can
20 you explain that?

21 MR. SCOTT: Part of our program is -- you know, the
22 name of the program is L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean. And
23 one component of it is looking, examining the cultural
24 history of the valley, the cultural history of the
25 Acadians.

1 Here at the university -- I'm not sure exactly how
2 many years ago, the Acadian Archives were established.
3 This year, for example, the director of the Acadian
4 Archives, Ms. Ornstein, has developed a tremendous
5 schematic unit around Evangeline. And she has
6 distributed that to the schools, all of the schools in
7 the valley, not just the program schools. And we're
8 using that now in our classrooms to look at culture,
9 cultural issues, and the Acadian issues that have come
10 up.

11 MR. TALBOT: So you're saying then the cultural
12 aspect is a very important component to the community --

13 MR. SCOTT: Definitely.

14 MR. TALBOT: -- and a very important part of it.

15 MR. SCOTT: We have -- we do middle schools, we
16 have Acadian middle schools.

17 MR. TALBOT: Okay.

18 MR. SERPA: We're also interested in your ideas on
19 how to improve programs. What would be your suggestion,
20 wish list, whatever, to --

21 MR. SCOTT: Well, one of my wish lists -- of
22 course, whenever you talk to a superintendent, it always
23 comes down to dollars, doesn't it? We would go back to
24 something that Dr. Berube mentioned earlier in speaking
25 to Senator Paradis.

1 Over the past number of Legislatures, bills have
2 been introduced to included limited English proficiency
3 as a category under our program costs. And this
4 particular bill has never succeeded, I don't believe,
5 it's never made it out of committee. That would be one
6 issue.

7 One of the major issues that we face -- and Mr. Roy
8 referred to it -- is getting appropriately trained
9 teachers for this program. I don't know if there's any
10 place in the state that actually trains people for ESL or
11 bilingual programs.

12 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Gorham.

13 MR. SCOTT: Gorham, USM?

14 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Yes.

15 MR. SCOTT: Which, of course, is a very easy
16 commute for people in the valley --

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: How many hours, ten? I don't
18 know.

19 MR. SCOTT: Eight or nine hours. That's going to
20 be one of them. And I suppose those are the two
21 concerns; the support for the bilingual education in the
22 schools, and being able to provide a -- a well-trained
23 cadre of teachers to work in these programs.

24 MR. MORGAN: I guess that's -- I was going to ask
25 you a question I guess you're just answering.

1 A couple places that you mentioned that you're
2 concerned about in the future is having the people to do
3 this work. I mean, on the one hand, right now, you have
4 been intensifying now the instances on creating a vibrant
5 energetic bilingual -- bilingual culture.

6 And, on the other hand, you're worried at the same
7 time that -- you seem to be saying that you're better off
8 right now in handling this, than you are going to be in
9 the future insofar as having teachers to conduct the
10 program, even though, presumably, the result of it all is
11 going to be many more bilingual people staying -- and
12 hopefully staying within this community itself.

13 MR. SCOTT: Yes, you're right. The long-term will
14 be many more bilingual people available in the community.

15 If you look at our -- we're beginning this year
16 with our two-way program, kindergarten students entering
17 this year, they will not be available for our teaching
18 courses for 17 years, at the minimum. A lot is going to
19 happen between now and then.

20 Mrs. Roy made mention of the teachers in
21 Frenchville who are French majors and capable of teaching
22 in this program. Most of these people received degrees
23 from this institution back in the late '60s and early
24 '70s when there was a French major here. Our teachers,
25 who are teaching in the bilingual --

1 MR. MORGAN: There's no longer a --

2 MR. SCOTT: I don't think there's a bilingual --
3 that there's a French major here anymore.

4 The teachers in our school, by the same token, are
5 graduates of some of the same programs. They're also
6 native French speakers who learned it as children, much
7 as the lady who spoke before me did. But, we're looking
8 at a generation that does not have that language
9 facility, and they're going to be the people coming out
10 and into the schools.

11 As we recruit teachers now, we have an increasingly
12 difficult time finding people that have a background in
13 bilingual or a French major that are able to come in.

14 Certification requirements can be very Byzantine at
15 times, it would appear, as Mr. Roy has made reference to,
16 having, you know, a French's Masters and teaching French
17 and unable to get certified.

18 So, these are all issues that I look at down the
19 road. We have a commitment to keep this program. But,
20 in ten years, if we are looking for staff to staff it,
21 where are we going to find them? And especially if
22 there's no commitment within the state of Maine to
23 provide this kind of training for incoming teachers.
24 We're doing it all now from -- through in-service. And
25 that's a tremendous commitment on the part of the

1 teachers that are in the field. When you consider the
2 teachers in our program this year, not only are they
3 implementing something brand new, doing something they've
4 never done before, they're also taking, you know, three
5 to six college hours of study each semester. It's a heck
6 of a commitment on their part.

7 We shouldn't have to be training people in the
8 field, they should be coming to us at least moderately
9 trained.

10 MR. MORGAN: Does anybody else have any questions
11 of Mr. Scott?

12 MR. SCOTT: I just have one comment, Mr. Morgan.
13 You had asked Senator Paradis if there was any
14 communication between the various bilingual, Franco
15 communities within our state.

16 And Professor Bishop, Jim Bishop at the University
17 of Maine, is working on developing a program which would
18 involve schools in Lewiston, Old Town, and Madawaska.

19 MR. MORGAN: I would just add that,
20 parenthetically, I did grow up in Old Town where Jim
21 Bishop did, actually, and he was my debate partner, so I
22 know him very well.

23 MR. SCOTT: Oh. Jim is working. I'm not sure how
24 far he's gone. He was looking to the development office
25 to see if he could find some resources to implement this.

1 He's been in France, so I haven't heard from him
2 recently.

3 MR. MORGAN: Well, I knew he went to France, and we
4 are supposed to have a lunch date when he gets back, and
5 I'll just relate some of this to him.

6 MR. SCOTT: Oh, excellent. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Was there anyone here
8 who had specifically asked only for in the morning
9 because the afternoon was not available? Sandy, would
10 you prefer --

11 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. This is Sandy
13 Bernstein, superintendent from Fort Kent.

14 MS. BERNSTEIN: Good morning. My name is Sandra
15 Bernstein, superintendent for SAD 27, which is Fort Kent
16 and six surrounding communities that encompasses the
17 university. We have four elementary schools and a high
18 school; three small elementary schools of less than 125
19 students located in St. Francis, Eagle Lake, and Soldier
20 Pond, and a large elementary school here in Fort Kent and
21 a high school here in Fort Kent that serves the whole
22 district. Our total enrollment is 1492 students as of
23 this October's enrollment report. And we are the area of
24 the St. John Valley that is the least French.

25 I think it's good you heard from some of the others

1 about their experiences in school, and I think it's good
2 you touched base a little bit on the history of education
3 in this area, because I think that lends -- informs a
4 little bit on the discussion.

5 Public schooling in this district did not begin
6 until the 1940s, which is a fairly recent event. And it
7 was -- the first public schooling was provided by the
8 Catholic Church. And you heard from other speakers that
9 the language of that schooling was in fact English. It
10 was not a total immersion program, and as someone said, a
11 punitive program.

12 The first generation to go through that schooling
13 were the people of my age. And it was not a pleasant
14 experience for many of them. A lot of them, after that
15 experience, made a conscious decision that their children
16 would speak English, so that when they went to school
17 they would not experience the same kind of persecution
18 that they had in school.

19 We are, I think, in a better place than that now,
20 in the sense that those children's children are beginning
21 to come into school and are beginning to realize the
22 benefits of the -- of being bilingual.

23 But, we really lost a whole generation of families
24 and people who did not have extended exposure to the
25 language except through conversations with grandparents.

1 There was some understanding, but very little facility in
2 speaking French with a lot of them, a lot of the
3 families.

4 I think there are a couple of different focus areas
5 that I would like to discuss here. One has to do with
6 the whole notion of cultural pride and cultural awareness
7 and bringing back to a community the feeling that
8 bilingualism is a good thing, and is a benefit for
9 families.

10 And I think that we are doing some good things in
11 that area, which I'll talk about in a minute. I'm not
12 sure, however, that that's a purview of where we are,
13 except that not having a sense of culture in Maine
14 provides for barriers for students and their willingness
15 to admit that they are Franco or to access that program.

16 And the other focus is -- has to do with students
17 who are truly limited English deficient. We do home
18 language surveys, as is required by the department, and
19 have done those for many, many years.

20 Initially, they were sent home to families. That
21 was not a good way to do the surveys, because I think our
22 parents -- many of them didn't know what the survey was
23 for, or the purpose of it.

24 We now do them as part of our kindergarten
25 registration, so that we can explain to families what the

1 purpose of the survey is and to let them know that
2 there's no negative to be associated with the fact -- in
3 fact, indicating that your child does have a French
4 background.

5 So, I think we're getting better data and we've
6 been doing that for the last eight years to collect the
7 data.

8 We have -- looking at the last surveys, we have 114
9 students out of that 1492 who, according to their
10 parents' report, are bilingual. That's less than ten
11 percent of our students of our total student population.
12 Out of that 114, 93 of those students are from grades 7
13 to 12. That gives you, I think, a pretty good picture of
14 what's happening to the facility in the language of the
15 children in this community.

16 In fact, less than three percent of those students
17 from grades K thru 6 are now telling us that the -- that
18 their children are, in fact, bilingual. So that's a very
19 different picture that we're hearing from the school
20 districts who -- I guess it's north -- our neighboring
21 school districts, anyway.

22 MR. MORGAN: Excuse me. You're saying that 114
23 students in the system --

24 MS. BERNSTEIN: -- are bilingual.

25 MR. MORGAN: -- out of 1492 are bilingual?

1 MS. BERNSTEIN: That's correct. And of that 114,
2 93 of them are in grades 7 thru 12. So we have 21
3 students right now in grades K thru 6 who are bilingual.

4 We've been -- we have an established LAU plan that
5 was initially approved in 1991, and was reapproved by the
6 board in 1995.

7 Over the years we have done some rather aggressive
8 testing of this population. In 1991, we tested over 60
9 students, using the language assessment scales. And this
10 past year the academic records of all 114 of those
11 students have been -- that have told us they are
12 bilingual have been reviewed by the committee. And 14
13 students were recommended for testing again as a result
14 of those -- a review of those students' records. And
15 that included reports from teachers, the grades, testing,
16 all of those kinds of typical things that you would do to
17 see if students are benefiting from their educational
18 program. Are they, in fact, making progress.

19 And so, just this last year we tested again 14
20 students, using the language assessment scales. And the
21 results of that testing -- as a result of that testing,
22 we have identified 7 students out of that 114 who are in
23 fact limited English proficient, who we feel need some
24 kind of special assistance in order to benefit fully from
25 the program.

1 If I could switch gears for a minute and just go
2 back to the cultural notion before I talk about those 7
3 students.

4 We have -- as I said, there's been increasing
5 interest in the community over the last three or four
6 years, particularly in bringing the language back and in
7 creating a more bilingual culture in the school system.
8 We have formal French instruction beginning in grade 7.
9 All grade 7 and 8th students receive instruction in
10 French as a language.

11 In grades 9 thru 12, French is our only second
12 language that is -- that is taught. The board right now
13 is talking about a two-year requirement for all high
14 school students before they graduate.

15 So, I think the most exciting thing that's happened
16 is that we have developed an integrated program for
17 students in grades K thru 6, developed by the teachers
18 that run a small elementary school. And that program
19 looks at integrating into the curriculum on a daily basis
20 instruction in -- in the routines of French, and making
21 the routines of the school French; lunches in French,
22 announcements are in French.

23 So that if their children have to, they go to the
24 bathroom in French -- a lot of their daily routines,
25 they're allowed to manage in a second language or, in a

1 lot of cases, a first language.

2 We're fortunate also that we have many teachers who
3 are bilingual. The teachers at that school developed a
4 program. They have put together instruction materials in
5 the forms of -- in the form of kids with lesson plans,
6 and tapes, and all kinds of aids, whatever, that they
7 have -- and they have trained all of the other teachers
8 in the districts now at their grade level. And that
9 program this year is being piloted in all the other
10 schools. It's being well received by the staff and by
11 the students.

12 Where we have teachers who are not bilingual, we
13 usually have an aide who is. And so, some of our
14 teachers are learning the French along with the students.
15 Part of the program also is a cultural arena of the
16 history of language in the area, and the benefits of
17 bilingualism.

18 So, I think we're doing -- we're certainly not at a
19 point where we have an immersion program or a bilingual
20 program, but I think that we're building support for
21 bilingualism. I can't predict now where that will go,
22 but I think that, based on this two- or three-year
23 experience we've had so far, I think -- I see us
24 continuing to move in that direction.

25 There are certainly some barriers in terms of

1 teacher's training that other people have talked to you
2 about. And I think there are some things that could
3 happen at the state level that could help us out with
4 that.

5 One is to proceed with the multi-cultural
6 preparation as part of teacher preparation as a part of
7 certification.

8 I also think that looking at the state's newly
9 adopted state-learning results, I was personally very
10 disappointed that the Legislature decided to make
11 achievement of the learning results, and not in the
12 classical languages, optional as a school district, or
13 to decide that they didn't have the resources to provided
14 those programs for students.

15 I think another step in teacher certification that
16 would help would be also a requirement that every
17 graduating teacher has a level of proficiency in the
18 learning results in a language. In our area, certainly,
19 it would be helpful if that proficiency were in French.

20 But, if students in these programs were required as
21 part of their preparation to pass a proficiency test --
22 if they could do it without taking course work, that
23 would be fine. But, if not, two years of good solid
24 preparation in a language at the college level would
25 allow those teachers going into education, students going

1 into education, to be able to meet those learning results
2 themselves and, therefore, to be able to support
3 integrated programs in the public school.

4 My personal opinion is that we're never going to
5 have resources to hire French teachers to do pull-out
6 programs in elementary schools in Maine. And I don't
7 believe that works anyway. I don't think that's the way
8 the students learn a language, they need to be integrated
9 into a program.

10 So, those are some long-term solutions that I think
11 all of us can advocate for and I think would be helpful.

12 Back to those seven students that we have right
13 now, who are, according to our LAU plan, are limited
14 English proficient. Two of them are deaf, and so their
15 language is American sign. And they are being provided
16 support. And probably our most successful ESL experience
17 involved a student a few years ago who came to us from
18 Germany, deaf, not speaking English, and not knowing
19 sign. She had been trained in oral programs for her --
20 because of her hearing impairment. So, we had a real
21 challenge in terms of programming for her, which we met.
22 We found a tutor for her in the language, and we taught
23 her -- actually taught her sign as the first step, and
24 then gradually worked with her in English. And she
25 graduated from our high school.

1 So, there are a continuum of challenges, but I
2 think that's probably at the extreme end.

3 The other students are served in a variety of ways.
4 We do have students who are served through our special
5 education program. And I have reviewed, in preparation
6 for this meeting, the folders of those students and feel
7 that they are appropriate placements.

8 We use a bilingual evaluator for -- who is very
9 familiar and, in fact, did a lot of our language
10 assessment testing when he was an employee of the
11 district. And our percentage of students in special
12 education of the bilingual population is in fact less
13 than the percentage of students that we have in special
14 education in our bilingual English program.

15 Because we have such small numbers, I think it's
16 difficult to make any projections about trends and large
17 scale conclusions about the program. As I look at what
18 we are providing to those students -- and we have done a
19 variety of things over the years. We occasionally would
20 have a student who would come to us from Canada, who does
21 not speak English, and we -- we bring in a tutor for that
22 student.

23 We have one of those students right now who is also
24 among that seven. And in investigating that student's
25 background, we -- one of the things that we found is that

1 they had difficulty in language learning the first
2 language, as well as second language.

3 So, I think we need to look at all of these
4 individuals. We do that. We can demonstrate that all of
5 them are making progress towards meeting our curricular
6 goals, and we feel comfortable with the way we're
7 providing for those students.

8 MR. MORGAN: Do any of the panel have questions for
9 Ms. Bernstein?

10 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Two questions, I guess. 114
11 students identified -- have a language other than English
12 as you indicated, of which 14 went through, I assume,
13 language deficit scales or some other measures --

14 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes, this year.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: This year. And the others,
16 what would have precluded giving some sort of language
17 proficiency testing --

18 MS. BERNSTEIN: Some of those students had been
19 tested before at the time in 1991 when we tested the 60
20 students. That's the 14 that we did this year. We also
21 looked at their level of proficiency in English as
22 reported by their teachers, how they were doing in
23 curriculum.

24 And the committee, looking at those 114 students,
25 felt the need to take a closer look again at those 14.

1 We could have tested -- have chosen to redo all 114.

2 But, the committee reviewed each one of those and --

3 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. So they all did have
4 some language deficiency testing, if not this year, a
5 previous year?

6 MS. BERNSTEIN: I can't say that all of them did.
7 I can go back and look at their records, but I know that
8 many of them did, yes. They were in that initial pool of
9 60 students that we did test, and they were determined to
10 be proficient.

11 Of those that we tested with the language
12 assessment scale, of those 14, they were all at either an
13 LEPC or and LEPD, which is the moderate level -- moderate
14 proficiency in reading and writing, and/or moderate to --
15 in listening to speaking, or -- moderate in listening or
16 speaking.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: And the point you made about
18 special ed -- I know it's a small percentage, but you
19 mentioned two were deaf. And I assume that they would
20 fall under the auspices of some measure of special ed for
21 that.

22 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You said that the
24 representation of special education of the second
25 language population was fewer, the percentage, than it is

1 for the monolingual -- monolingual English who are
2 special ed. Which is then to say that the monolingual
3 population of special education is greater than half.

4 MS. BERNSTEIN: No. I'm looking at --

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Four out of seven, I think --

6 MS. BERNSTEIN: I'm looking at comparing the --
7 looking at our total bilingual population, and the
8 percentage of kids in special education in the bilingual
9 population is less than the percentage of special
10 education students in the monolingual population.

11 I'm not looking at the limited English proficient
12 student, I'm looking at the bilingual compared to the
13 monolingual.

14 The others -- some of the others have a variety of
15 handicaps, some of them have multi handicaps.

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Out of the seven?

17 MS. BERNSTEIN: Out of the seven. They have
18 pervasive mental delays, in all areas, not just in
19 language.

20 MR. MORGAN: Any other questions?

21 MR. PELLETIER: I take it then you're not saying
22 that they're special ed because they're LEP.

23 MS. BERNSTEIN: No, they're definitely not in
24 special ed because they're LEP.

25 MR. PELLETIER: Okay.

1 MR. MORGAN: Do you have any evaluation of the 114
2 bilingual students, minus the LEP group within that
3 group, how they are doing compared to -- how they are
4 doing in school compared to all of the -- the very large
5 number in this system who are not --

6 MS. BERNSTEIN: As a group? No. Anecdotal
7 information through the teachers, and when they are
8 looking at those students and determining whether there's
9 a problem or not -- I mean, they're looking at that in
10 the context of the other students in their class. And
11 the criteria that's used by the -- by our committee looks
12 at the average range of achievement to determine that
13 they're doing -- that they're having access to these
14 programs while in school.

15 But, as a group, looking at those 114 across all
16 grade levels? No, I can't say that I do have any data on
17 that.

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Although, if I could just
19 indicate that you could pull up data from 4th to 11th --

20 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes. And right now we have none in
21 the 4th grade, and I think there are only a couple in the
22 8th grade, and maybe four or five --

23 CHAIRMAN BERUBE: In the bilingual population now.

24 MS. BERNSTEIN: That's right. That's just the
25 bilingual population. Again, the numbers are so small at

1 each one of those grade levels that I would be reluctant
2 to project any trends based on -- based on those numbers.

3 MR. SERPA: Could you just clarify something for me
4 since I'm not from around here? Why or what reason are
5 there 600 LEP students in Madawaska and 7 here? Is it
6 population, cultural --

7 MS. BERNSTEIN: It may have to do with definition
8 and the way other school districts -- the criteria they
9 use to identify students. I don't know what criteria
10 they use.

11 It also has to do with this being traditionally a
12 more English area. The university is here -- even when -
13 - I guess the language of commerce in this area, in the
14 Fort Kent area, has always been English. The power
15 language has always been English.

16 The lumber industry is controlled by people who
17 came in and spoke English. I don't know what impact that
18 has. My suspicion regarding the numbers has to do with -
19 - with the different definitions of what are considered
20 limited English proficiency.

21 MR. SERPA: Can you elaborate on that? Are there
22 different definitions --

23 MS. BERNSTEIN: Well, I think you have some
24 flexibility within your plan, within your language
25 acquisition plan, to look at what's considered limited

1 English proficiency.

2 I don't consider that all children who are
3 bilingual are limited English proficient. I think that's
4 contrary to the -- to the notion that being bilingual is
5 in fact an asset. We have children that come into school
6 who are bilingual, who are by no means limited English
7 proficient. And I don't know what other districts are
8 doing.

9 We look at that bilingual population, look within
10 that, and see which one of those students are not
11 proficient in English, and then ask the question, why are
12 they not proficient in English. That's the procedure
13 that we use.

14 So, I can't speak to the others -- the other
15 districts.

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Just one clarification, Sandy,
17 on your opening statement. You said something like 600
18 in Madawaska. Those are 600 bilinguals, there's only 214
19 LEPs.

20 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes. So, I don't know what they're
21 using for criteria. We look at that -- you know, anyone
22 who's in that middle group as not being limited on
23 achievement. The performance is within the average
24 range.

25 MR. MORGAN: I take it the total bilingual

1 population, most of which is concentrated in the upper
2 grades, is there -- again, you probably have not tested
3 for this. But, is there any sign that their fluency in
4 French, even within this population, diminishes as they
5 go up the scale in terms of grades?

6 MS. BERNSTEIN: I don't know. You're asking me if
7 -- of that 93 who are from grade 7 up, does their
8 proficiency diminish as they go through school.

9 I don't know. I think that a lot of that will
10 depend on what kind of support and communication they're
11 doing outside of school. Some of them are taking classes
12 in school, some of them are not. If they are in a family
13 like Ms. Roy's where their parents only speak French to
14 one another, I would suspect that their language skills
15 would be maintained.

16 If they're in a family where French is not spoken,
17 or in a family where the generation who speak French are
18 no longer living, as in grandparents and great
19 grandparents, then I would suspect that perhaps the
20 proficiency is decreasing. But, I don't know that.

21 Some of them at that level are also -- have part-
22 time jobs where their French is valuable; at the Rock's
23 or at another business, and they have an opportunity to
24 use the language. Those students, I think, would be
25 maintaining their skills more than the others.

1 Another reason why I think the language -- the
2 proficiency has declined, not only here but everywhere,
3 is the impact of television. You know, I'm not sure when
4 television came into -- into this area, but I think you
5 would find that most families who have preschoolers are
6 watching English television. And although most of us
7 have access to some French channels.

8 And so, children are growing up on English Sesame
9 Street when they come to school. So the home
10 environment, even though Mom and Dad may speak some
11 French, and the grandparents do, they're bombarded with
12 -- with English.

13 And the generations in the past where you didn't
14 have that influence of English on, what is now six or
15 eight hours a day in most homes, does have an impact on
16 the skills that the students are bringing to school.

17 MR. TALBOT: Are you saying that's taking place all
18 over the world?

19 MS. BERNSTEIN: Oh, yes.

20 MR. MORGAN: I had the very good fortune of doing a
21 lot of traveling by vehicle, and there's this
22 homogenization of -- in this country that's very
23 discouraging.

24 But, are there any other questions? Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: I guess we'll be in recess --

1 we'll be reconvening at approximately 12:30. I know
2 we're running late, and we'll adjourn now. Thank you.

3 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 and
4 resumed at 12:57 p.m. this date.)

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AFTERNOON SESSION

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CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. I guess we can come
back into session. This is, for anybody who just walked
in, the state of Maine advisory committee on the U.S.
Commission on Civil Rights. And there are folks speaking
on the topic of limited English proficient students in
Maine schools, this being one of four regional hearings.

I apologize -- or we apologize. We finished a
little late this morning and, actually, we're still later
coming back. So, those of you who have been waiting, our
apologies and thank you for bearing with us.

21

22

Okay. I guess I'm going to turn it over to Ken,
who's moderating this section.

23

24

25

MR. MORGAN: Good afternoon. My name is Ken
Morgan, I'm a member of the committee. I live in Bangor.
And we're doing a section this afternoon on the

1 administration of programs for limited English proficient
2 students.

3 Two of the five people that were scheduled to do
4 presentations actually gave their presentations for this
5 section this morning. They were Thomas Scott and
6 Sandra Bernstein.

7 So I know that Gilbert Albert is here this
8 afternoon. Is Clayton Belanger here? And Jerry White?
9 Okay. So we have -- both of you were here this morning,
10 so you know what the format is. Somewhere about a
11 ten-minute presentation, and then we'll ask questions and
12 have a dialog. So, if we could begin with Mr. Belanger.

13 MR. BELANGER: Thank you. I've got the agenda laid
14 out. I'm not sure what I would be talking about, and I
15 kind of wrote my minutes before I got the agenda.

16 Before I talk about my notes, there's about three
17 comments that were made this morning that I would like to
18 respond to, if I could. Can I do that?

19 MR. MORGAN: Hm-hmm.

20 MR. BELANGER: Okay. One of them was a parent,
21 Carol Roy. And -- she was talking about what her
22 experiences were with her sons. It brought to mind what
23 -- in our school system we have a French immersion
24 program. And one of the people who were deadly opposed
25 to this program was a teacher in my school system. She

1 has two grandsons; one's in the fourth grade and one's in
2 the first grade.

3 But the fourth-grade student has not participated
4 in the French immersion program. Both his parents are
5 French, and he speaks very little French.

6 The first-grader has seen the immersion program
7 this year. In the middle part of this year, he decided
8 upon himself as a first-grader that he was going to
9 participate in the program. He signed himself in and
10 he's speaking better French than his older brother who's
11 in fourth grade.

12 So, I wanted to make a comment on that.

13 And then another one was -- I think this was asked
14 by Barney, about why aren't you doing more -- when you
15 were talking to Guy Roy about staffing, and why aren't
16 you doing -- you know, why do you have limited in the
17 first and second grade.

18 I have discovered this year that, like in my school
19 system, the lines are really drawn between those who are
20 for the French immersion program, and those who are
21 opposed to it. And if they're not, in many cases -- I
22 have a divided staff, right down the middle, and we know
23 where everyone stands. Obviously, I'm for it. But,
24 there are many of the teachers in my school, in the
25 elementary school, who are opposed to it and are waiting

1 for it to fail.

2 And I know it's a problem. We all have to work in
3 our school system. I'm not sure if Frenchville has
4 something similar to that, but --. I have put my job on
5 the line several times to get the program through. It's
6 going to be a matter of time before I eventually lose it,
7 because I'm for this program. But, just to let you know,
8 that's why we were in the first and second grade.

9 And another one was -- you were talking about --
10 when you were addressing Sandy Bernstein about the school
11 system. And I was raised in a school system, SAD 27.
12 And I went to college in this very building. And it
13 strikes me as the attitude that this university expresses
14 has also the same attitude that they express in the
15 community in Fort Kent.

16 And one of the discussions we had -- not this very
17 room, but upstairs, for example, we were having in art
18 class. One of the instructors who was from Fort Kent
19 expressed to the students from Madawaska that they were
20 inferior because of their French background.

21 So, if the college expresses that, you can see
22 where a lot of the attitude is coming from.

23 Now I'll go back to my notes. What I'll do is,
24 I'll start reading from my notes and I'll deviate from
25 that point, because there's points that I want to stress.

1 It might seem like a strange type of thing that I'm
2 writing, but I'm a history person and I'm going to
3 relate, basically, what's happened to me, and what's
4 happening now in my school system.

5 My name is Clayton Belanger. I was born in
6 Van Buren, Maine, which is 50 miles southeast of here,
7 and raised in Eagle Lake, which is 18 miles due south of
8 here. So, one's due south and one's due east.

9 Both communities are part of the St. John Valley
10 with the same Acadian tradition with its rich traditions.
11 I have spent all of my life in this region except for a
12 short time in the military service. I think this would
13 qualify me to be a native of the St. John Valley.

14 Growing up in Eagle Lake -- now, remember, the
15 president of the United States was Eisenhower. Growing
16 up in Eagle Lake, English was considered the language of
17 instruction in the schools. French was the language that
18 was spoken with my grandparents, fellow classmates, and
19 in church. Mass was in Latin, but the sermon was in
20 French.

21 English was spoken in my home. No emphasis was
22 ever given to learn the French language. The official
23 school policy in the late '50s and early '60s was that no
24 or very little French be spoken in the schools, and so
25 little effort was made to accommodate the majority.

1 The understanding was that English was the official
2 language, and that French was the unofficial language,
3 and that was not encouraged. People of French ancestry
4 were somehow not quite up to the same par with the
5 English.

6 Remember Sandy Bernstein talking this morning about
7 in this area, where we have a strong lumber business, and
8 the lumber barons and stuff are English. And this was
9 also expressed in Eagle Lake.

10 And it was understood that the farmers and the
11 local lumbermen, along with the Irishmen -- you know,
12 that's where we stood. Businessmen were English.

13 Five years ago, as a principal in Van Buren, I
14 became interested in the subject of students whose
15 parents were French and who spoke French with their
16 grandparents, parents, et cetera, in the home and its
17 effect on school learning. I was able to determine that
18 the students fell into two groups.

19 The first group consisted of parents or significant
20 others who encouraged French to be spoken in the home and
21 took an interest in their child's learning. In many
22 classes -- my kindergarten teachers in the elementary
23 level were both bilingual. So what happens when the
24 student comes in is, they only understand French, they
25 speak French to that student in transition to the English

1 language.

2 These students tended to do very well in the
3 studies. It is interesting to note, by the time the
4 students were in the second grade, many of them refused
5 to speak French, not only in school but also in the home.
6 One member of the family in many cases came from Canada
7 and had pride in their culture and their language. Pride
8 was really, really important at that time.

9 The second group of students consisted of parents
10 or significant others who spoke French at home, but the
11 students and parents had the attitude that English is an
12 all powerful, and French is second to English. Like my
13 experience in Eagle Lake.

14 The same attitude which I grew under in Eagle Lake.
15 These students seemed to have poor self-esteem and do
16 very poorly in school. These students tend to be
17 retained more often, become special education students,
18 or get on the Title I rolls.

19 Most of the family members were often educated in
20 the Van Buren system and had little pride in their
21 language and culture. For example, many parents would
22 deny speaking French on the language survey sent home
23 every year because they didn't want people to know that
24 French was spoken at home.

25 If the parents came to school, they would speak

1 only English, even if they were more comfortable speaking
2 French. If they were spoken to in French, they would
3 respond in English.

4 Finally for the schools, it is interesting to note
5 that the federal government knows a problem does exist
6 with our language minority students. Every year we do
7 send surveys to parents on language acquisition in French
8 and English. Three problems exist with this approach.

9 First, parents will not acknowledge that they speak
10 French at home. Second, many of the parents cannot read
11 French because they were never taught it in school. I am
12 a good example of this.

13 Thirdly, the LAU plan that schools have adopted
14 simply, in my thinking, does not work. The LAU plan
15 calls for a group of educators to meet periodically to
16 develop a plan for each student.

17 The schools in the St. John Valley have too many
18 students that fall into this category. I have found that
19 in our elementary school we have a Student Assisted Team
20 -- SAT -- and this is a much better approach. I am not
21 saying that the SAT approach is the best for all schools,
22 but sometimes it is best to leave the ESL student issue
23 to the local regions. What works in the St. John Valley
24 will not necessarily work in the Lewiston area or in the
25 city of Portland.

1 Let me digress a little bit. SAT, the Student
2 Assisted Team, which is made up of educators,
3 administrators, and sometimes parents -- any -- what
4 happens is, the classroom teachers see there is a
5 problem, refers the student to the SAT. The SAT meets,
6 assigns a caseworker of one educator to follow that
7 student for the three or four years; meets with their
8 parents, meets with the educators, does his whole
9 curriculum, and works with that student until the problem
10 is solved.

11 If they need work on language acquisition, that's
12 fine. If they need special ed services, that's fine,
13 because that's why we have a special ed director on
14 board. If there's a home issues, we can handle that
15 also. Okay?

16 The parallels of Eagle Lake and Van Buren are
17 significant. In my eighth-grade class of 28 -- and why
18 do I know there are 28 students in my eighth-grade class?
19 Because, we had four rows of seven students in each row.
20 And I was in the fourth row, seventh seat in the back.
21 And the only job I had to do in my eighth grade was to
22 ring the bell for dismissal. So I knew there were 28.

23 Okay. Of 28, about half of them went to high
24 school in Fort Kent. In Eagle Lake we did not have
25 special ed, Title I, or other programs. My eight-grade

1 teacher simply encouraged me not to go on to high school
2 because I was incapable of learning, and people in
3 Fort Kent would make fun of me. Now we simply put
4 students in special ed, Title I, or retain them.

5 By the time my eight-grade class graduated from
6 high school, five to six students out of 28 made it to
7 their senior year. Many simply quit and went to work in
8 Connecticut or went in the military service at sixteen.
9 This was the case for my older brother.

10 Today in Van Buren, these students are kept in
11 remedial programs, special education, or retained. And
12 I'm sorry, I don't have the numbers.

13 In my experience as a resident of the St. John
14 Valley and as an educator, I would recommend that we look
15 at the people in the St. John Valley to develop a program
16 valley wide that builds on our strength.

17 We in this valley need to have good positive
18 attitudes towards school, home and our community. In
19 Van Buren, I think we have made a first step in our
20 school by stressing that French is just as important as
21 English.

22 In the long run, I think it will help in the
23 schools to develop a positive correlation between
24 learning and positive attitude. The attitude will be
25 that I can do it and I'm just as good as anyone else.

1 Not better, but just as good, and I can compete in the
2 global economy.

3 MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Belanger. I have a
4 question, and then I'll let other people ask questions.

5 You mentioned in Van Buren, where you have a
6 bilingual program --

7 MR. BELANGER: A two-way bilingual, yes.

8 MR. MORGAN: That was discussed earlier this
9 morning. That your staff, or your teachers specifically,
10 as I understood what you just said, are pretty much split
11 down --

12 MR. BELANGER: -- down the middle.

13 MR. MORGAN: -- down the middle. We had the
14 example of a parent this morning in the community of
15 Frenchville, which does not have this program -- it
16 appeared it might happen, it didn't happen. And, again,
17 it wasn't said specifically, but I found out subsequently
18 over lunch that at least part of the reason for the -- or
19 what happened in Frenchville was due to the opposition of
20 teachers in that system.

21 MR. BELANGER: The same problem with my school.

22 MR. MORGAN: And we heard a great deal this morning
23 -- everybody's been talking about your experiences here
24 in the St. John Valley of the '50s and the '60s. And
25 now, parents who have school-age children never wanting

1 their kids to have to go through what they went through.
2 But -- so, that's part, I guess, of the explanation of
3 the electives of many, or the opposition of a number
4 to -- the opposition of a number to go into a bilingual
5 program.

6 I would like your perspective of why teachers are
7 opposed to it?

8 MR. BELANGER: Our teachers are opposed simply for
9 the fact that, as was mentioned by Tom Scott this
10 morning -- a lot of them are not trained. They are
11 bilingual, probably they can read a little bit maybe, but
12 they're really not trained. You got to take courses, you
13 got to do other things to -- and they don't want to do
14 that.

15 Many of them are -- I have a senior staff. I gave
16 certificates to staff last night for people up to 33
17 years of teaching. And it's -- they simply do not want
18 to change.

19 Those who want to change are for the program.
20 Those who are involved in the bilingual program tend to
21 be younger, more energetic right now.

22 And the attitude is, why teach French, because
23 this is an English society, that exists very much in
24 Van Buren.

25 And I'm trying to sell the dream right now to my

1 school board that something can happen on this approach.
2 When these kids graduate in the twelfth grade, what can
3 we offer them.

4 We live in a global economy. What is wrong in
5 having -- like a credit card company, something like
6 that, move into the St. John Valley and employing these
7 people.

8 We're right next to a great economy. We got Quebec
9 who has cheap power. We have New Brunswick that's an
10 official bilingual province. We could communicate in
11 both languages equally, read and write biliterally.

12 I have some of that in my community, but it's a
13 long haul. Okay.

14 Also, on my last paragraph I talked about
15 culturally. I was really impressed when I went to
16 Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the people there had pride
17 in their culture. I want to install that in this
18 community. We seem to have wiped that out, you know.
19 You got to be proud of what you are, and not have -- I
20 can't -- we can't go play, for example, ball against
21 people from Caribou because they're English. Shouldn't
22 do that. We're just as good as anybody else.

23 MR. MORGAN: Thank you. Jerry?

24 MR. TALBOT: You're answering the question I think
25 I have in mind.

1 How do you determine -- how do you feel about the
2 federal government aligning the fact that we should have
3 English language as our major language? I believe that's
4 what I hear you saying.

5 MR. BELANGER: I'm saying that they should leave it
6 alone. Our founding fathers left it out. English was
7 not the official language. Leave it alone.

8 Okay. You mean the English language movement? No,
9 it should not be. I think we're aware of that -- leave
10 it alone.

11 We would like to be -- how is that phrase? A
12 community of salt and pepper, you know, all mixed
13 together, but we're different.

14 MR. TALBOT: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: First of all, I want to thank
16 you for the candor that you bring to this discussion.
17 It's a rare finding and I just -- I'm grateful to hear
18 those things.

19 MR. BELANGER: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: They're powerful insights that
21 I can share too having grown up Franco in an English
22 world. In my case, it was Lewiston.

23 But, in any case, a point of clarification. The
24 LAU plan that you said was -- parts of it don't work for
25 you because it's designed on a different kind of model --

;

1
2
3

1 I just want to point out that the LAU plan is what you
2 want it to be, you and your school district. It's how
3 you implement policies as long as it's consistent with
4 federal law. And the developing a plan doesn't mean that
5 you're developing a plan only for individual students,
6 unless that's what you want. That happens to be the most
7 popular model, because that's the most popular --

8 MR. BELANGER: But, we simply have -- what I was
9 to point out is, we simply have 26 of our --
10 percent of our local population is identified as ESL.
11 I find that this approach, an individual responsible
12 teacher -- taking responsibility for that child's
13 learning for the next three or four years, or as long as
14 it needs it, is really a powerful tool.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: But, the SAT kind of model
16 that you described -- I would just recommend, you might
17 want to reintroduce that into your LAU plan and bring it
18 back to the board and say, this is the way it's going to
19 work, and talk to the people that would help you do that.

20 The second item was, you mentioned Albuquerque.
21 And, for that matter, I was thinking of other models and
22 other states, other communities where the need for
23 bilingual teachers is great, and they have incentives.

24 And maybe the incentives -- I'm just wondering if
25 this might be something that you might explore.

1 Incentives not because you can't -- you can't access --
2 you have French-speaking teachers, the problem is getting
3 them on board.

4 MR. BELANGER: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Is building incentives a
6 consideration that might come into play if you had a --

7 MR. BELANGER: Well, it would be fine if we had a
8 nice budget.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Well, I suppose.

10 MR. BELANGER: Right now -- you know, I can't even
11 wait for the Maine Legislator, for example, to pass
12 the -- I thought the bill was going to pass on those ESL
13 students. I have to employ people next year, for
14 example, that will meet those needs of those students.
15 And I'm not going to get reimbursed from the state of
16 Maine. It's too bad. But, I really need help.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. PELLETIER: I have one. I guess I'm kind of
19 struck, almost in shock in a way, that people, teachers,
20 parents, students, who do see the obvious benefit of
21 maintaining French. It's not like we live, you know, a
22 thousand miles away from the nearest French culture. I
23 mean, three minutes from where we sit there are many
24 people who don't speak English. And every single town in
25 the valley is on the border with a town in Canada where

1 French is the primary language.

2 Is it because of the powers of the school to
3 socialize and a culture that's so powerful in the
4 preceding decades that English is it? That there's this
5 resistance to something that potential customers,
6 families, friends, are all speaking French just a few
7 miles away, because there's still the resistance? Is it
8 because of the legacy of the last 40 years; is that what
9 you're thinking?

10 MR. BELANGER: In my experience, it is. My brother
11 and I both speak French, but my sister and my younger
12 brother don't, and we went to the same school system. We
13 have wiped that out.

14 You go to Eagle Lake today, you communicate
15 anywhere freely in Eagle Lake in French, in SAD 27.

16 So, when you're saying the numbers are not there, I
17 don't know how -- how come the numbers change so
18 drastically.

19 I just know that when I went to school as an
20 elementary student, my elementary years were a disaster.
21 I'm not saying it had to do with my French background or
22 whatever, but it was a disaster.

23 And, you know, the attitude said that you could not
24 come to Fort Kent because you were different. And I bet
25 you it still exists in Eagle Lake today that exists in

1 Saint Francis.

2 And when I came to this school in Fort Kent, you
3 knew who was from Fort Kent and you knew who was from
4 out of town.

5 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. SERPA: I would like to apologize to the
7 audience, because I have to catch a plane and go to our
8 next meeting tomorrow. So you'll have to excuse me, and
9 I'll turn things over to Barney. Thank you very much.

10 (At 1:20 p.m. Mr. Serpa left the meeting.)

11 MR. MORGAN: Okay. Our next presenter is
12 Mr. Albert.

13 MR. ALBERT: Thank you for allowing me to talk with
14 you this afternoon on our project, on the LEP situation
15 in the St. John Valley. I don't see what else I can add
16 that hasn't been said -- already mentioned, except that I
17 can probably put it in a different way so that you can
18 understand it from a different perspective.

19 I would like to have you consult this document to
20 see where we were at 1959, so it will give you an idea of
21 where we got. This is a document that comes from the
22 Madawaska school district in 1959 as part of the handbook
23 for teachers.

24 Now, it is -- I selected this one because it's in
25 writing. But the situation is not different, was not

1 different then, I don't suspect, in the St. John Valley.
2 And if you read that portion of the -- what the situation
3 was, it gives you an idea of, historically, of what Tom
4 was asking about, the question he was asking about a
5 little while ago.

6 A lot of inconsistencies in educational
7 philosophies, and so on.

8 My name is Gil Albert. I'm the director of
9 L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean, a two-way bilingual education
10 program that exists now in Madawaska and in Van Buren,
11 and MSAD 24.

12 Other than general comments, I will restrict my
13 comments to where the program I operate is, the two
14 districts, Madawaska and Van Buren.

15 The towns of the St. John Valley are from 85
16 percent to 98 percent French in origin, in the
17 population. And the stores, churches and public places
18 French was and still is used extensively. However, the
19 schools did not fair so well as this example that I just
20 handed out to you from the Madawaska teachers' club
21 demonstrates.

22 This zealous drive to teach English contributed to
23 the development of a negative self-esteem since it
24 devalued the child's home language by emphasizing the
25 development of literacy in English and neglecting the

1 development of literacy in French.

2 We've come a long way since then. This kind of
3 statement now would not be tolerated in Madawaska and in
4 MSAD No. 24, which are presently serving limited English
5 proficient students population with L'Acadien du Haut St.
6 Jean.

7 L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean is a two-way immersion
8 program. It serves limited English proficient and non-
9 limited English proficient students in both districts
10 that I mentioned.

11 The procedure involved for the identification of
12 the limited English proficient students is included in a
13 LAU plan that each district has. Mr. Belanger discussed
14 his views on that, but, basically, the students whose
15 home language survey reveals a number other than a one
16 are flagged.

17 The second step. These students achievement tests
18 are then verified in the areas of math, reading and
19 language arts.

20 Students achieving at or below the 50 percent NCE
21 -- which is the normal curve equivalent -- in these
22 subject areas are then identified as limited English
23 proficient and are eligible to be served by the program.

24 In that past programs, we also administered the LAS
25 -- language assessment scales -- to students at the 2nd

1 and 4th grade level to see how they progressed.

2 L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean is a volunteer program
3 where limited English proficient and non-limited English
4 proficient students are invited to participate. It is
5 funded under Title VII IASA until year 2000 when it
6 should be fully implemented for grades K thru 8 in both
7 Madawaska and MSAD No. 24.

8 Another grant application for a two-way immersion
9 program for grades 9 thru 12 has been submitted to the
10 department of education to serve the LEP population in
11 both districts.

12 However, I just learned -- or we heard yesterday
13 that the program had not been funded.

14 The districts are fortunate to have a bilingual
15 staff on hand, and the two-way immersion program provides
16 training and materials so that the teaching staff will be
17 certified in the areas of bilingual education and English
18 as a second language.

19 We are working with the University of Maine at Fort
20 Kent and with other University of Maine system campuses
21 to provide the training. The president of UMFK sits on
22 our governance committee for the program.

23 We have made great strides in the past five years
24 in identifying and serving our LEP or limited English
25 proficient population. A two-way immersion program is

1 the most promising type of program for our population
2 which is made up of mostly Francophone and anglophone
3 students.

4 In other words, we don't have the diversity of
5 other -- that other communities have, so a two-way
6 bilingual program is the utmost of the kinds of programs
7 that we can offer our students.

8 We've enjoyed a strong parental, administrative and
9 professional support in both districts, although there
10 has been opposition in the early days of implementation.
11 Which is only a couple of years ago. This opposition was
12 due in part to a lack of information, a lack of prior
13 history with this kind of program, ideological
14 differences, fear of failure, fear of loss of employment.

15 And also the term, limited English proficient, also
16 gives a negative connotation which some parents or
17 educators do not want assigned to their children or
18 students. Because of these elements, it is difficult to
19 identify with precision the number of LEP students we
20 have.

21 In communities who have an overwhelming population
22 of French origin, the number of LEP students identified
23 is probably underestimated. However, there's been much
24 progress and we find more and more parents who want their
25 children to be proud of their ethnic heritage and to be

1 functionally literate in both languages.

2 As the program is implemented in the schools we
3 find less fear of loss of employment and more cooperation
4 between teachers of the program and others who are not in
5 the program.

6 I know we've heard differently, but I'm talking
7 generally here. I've seen some cases in the schools
8 where the tension is lessening.

9 We need to be better at providing information to
10 the Valley population and to the school personnel of the
11 Valley. For instance, several forums or panel
12 discussions on bilingual education held at the University
13 of Maine at Fort Kent, for example, and was widely
14 covered by the media would help. Although we work
15 closely with the University of Maine, there needs to be a
16 better way to deliver comprehensive training courses and
17 workshops to our staff. There needs to be undergraduate
18 and graduate programs addressing specifically issues of
19 bilingualism and bilingual education in the state.

20 Bilingual education needs a permanent presence on
21 campuses of the University of Maine system. The efforts
22 to encourage and assist adults in developing literacy in
23 French and in English need to be continued beyond the
24 project scope.

25 The efforts to offer summer camps to adults, to

1 children, also need to continue to improve. We have
2 enjoyed the co-sponsorship of UMFK, Fraser Papers,
3 Incorporated, L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean, le Club
4 Francais, and the Fort Kent Lyons Club in the past year
5 to realize these efforts, a summer camp in the summer for
6 children at the University of Maine.

7 But they now need to be institutionalized if we are
8 to develop a nurturing community toward bilingualism and
9 biliteracy which all of our students need. The Landry
10 study of 1992 -- that was referred to before --
11 emphasizes this need in order to develop the ethnic
12 vitality needed to be self-supporting after the federal
13 dollars go away. I brought a copy of that and will give
14 it to you -- a copy to each of you later.

15 I'm proud to work with the systems of Madawaska and
16 MSAD 24 to that end. We have a very dedicated staff of
17 teachers who are the true pioneers of bilingual
18 education. The members of the boards of education and
19 the administration of those two districts have a common
20 vision, and they have been very supportive.

21 In closing, I would like to thank you for making
22 sure that the needs of all of our students are being met.

23 MR. MORGAN: Thank you very much. I have two or
24 three things that I would like to ask you about. Could
25 you provide us with a written copy of your testimony?

1 MR. ALBERT: Sure.

2 MR. MORGAN: Okay. Are you going to be able to go
3 forward in your district in the upper grades with the
4 program, even though you just told us you have not gotten
5 the grant that you applied for?

6 MR. ALBERT: I hope so. The major problem -- the
7 problem that the grant solves is the training part and
8 the materials. Our districts are not the richest in the
9 nation, unfortunately. And the training and materials
10 cost money. That will be a difficult item to continue
11 without some kind of a grant, at least for the beginning
12 years.

13 I think we need more than -- even if the population
14 would be strongly in favor of that kind of program, the
15 tax dollar is not there to support it at the beginning.
16 The extra -- the amount of money that you need to invest
17 to get it going is what is difficult to get.

18 MR. MORGAN: Do all of the -- I take it the answer
19 to this is no. But, do all of the --

20 MR. GILBERT: No. I guess I would like to qualify
21 my no. It's not --

22 MR. MORGAN: No, I'm not -- I'm sorry, I'm going on
23 to another question.

24 MR. ALBERT: Oh. Okay.

25 MR. MORGAN: Do all of the LEP students in your

1 district decide to voluntarily enter the bilingual
2 program, or do some opt not to?

3 MR. ALBERT: I think as a rule, I think, most of
4 them have. I am not aware at this time of any who
5 haven't.

6 MR. MORGAN: My question simply was going to be,
7 what do you do with those LEP students, if there are any,
8 who do not opt to go into the bilingual program?

9 MR. ALBERT: Since it's a volunteer program, they
10 either go back to the regular program of the school
11 and --

12 MR. MORGAN: But, they have mostly, as far as you
13 know, most have gone in?

14 MR. ALBERT: Mostly, yes. There might be a small
15 number, under five, probably, who haven't. And I guess
16 they go back to the regular program, where there is also
17 bilingual personnel to service them, but they don't have
18 the kind of program that we can offer them.

19 MR. MORGAN: Okay. I was also wondering what we
20 who are not from here -- it just struck me, for example,
21 in the world that I really live in -- I mean, you know, I
22 do a lot of legislative work, for example. And -- I
23 mean, it's just never been brought to me in the way that
24 it has today, the total failure in order to get funding
25 for the programs -- for the programs you're attempting to

1 do, the problem of not having institutionalized training
2 in the university, and a number of things like that.

3 MR. ALBERT: I guess the Legislature could help in
4 that aspect, I guess, putting some efforts towards
5 institutionalizing some of these efforts in the
6 university. I think it's a whole global effort that
7 needs to be happening. It's happening, but slowly. And
8 I'm not sure that we're -- a lot of people were
9 witnessing that we're losing ground. I think we are, if
10 we're not -- for example, we're the only immersion
11 program in the state of Maine. And that's a small
12 population.

13 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

14 MR. ALBERT: So, unless things change
15 institutionally, we're losing a valuable resource.

16 MR. PELLETIER: I understood, Gil, that you're in
17 Madawaska, correct?

18 MR. ALBERT: My office is in Madawaska, but I serve
19 both Madawaska and Van Buren.

20 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. So that's why you count that
21 as one immersion program?

22 MR. ALBERT: Yes.

23 MR. PELLETIER: For both Madawaska and Van Buren?

24 MR. ALBERT: That's correct.

25 MR. PELLETIER: It was mentioned earlier that USM

1 might be offering a degree or a program in bilingual
2 education; is that right?

3 MR. ALBERT: I'm not sure about bilingual
4 education, but ESL --

5 MR. PELLETIER: ESL. So, is there a difference
6 between ESL and bilingual education?

7 MR. ALBERT: Yes. ESL does not require the use of
8 another language in the classroom, English as a second
9 language.

10 MR. PELLETIER: Okay.

11 MR. ALBERT: So, we devise techniques to teach
12 English, but we don't have techniques to teach the other
13 language. That's important to them also.

14 MR. PELLETIER: So the point you were making in
15 your statement was that we need bilingual education
16 specifically?

17 MR. ALBERT: Yes. In our area, yes, I would think
18 that's the kind of program that works best, that will
19 develop our students to the fullest.

20 MR. PELLETIER: Now, they train teachers right here
21 at UMFK still --

22 MR. ALBERT: Yes.

23 MR. PELLETIER: -- do they? Is that something
24 that's being talked about here or -- that would be
25 logical that this would be the place to do it, right?

1 MR. ALBERT: Yes, it would be very logical.
2 However, when I was on campus, we had a concentration in
3 bilingual education, but I think it's been taken off the
4 books now. First of all, there weren't many students
5 going into it because it's not a requirement of any kind,
6 until recently.

7 Another area I think that I heard Tom mention,
8 which I agree with, is a department of certification. I
9 think we have a lot of red tape that -- if the title of
10 the course that the teachers have taken is not quite
11 right -- I don't know if they bother to look into the
12 content of the syllabus. I know that when Barney was
13 more involved with it, he looked at that. But right now
14 I have teachers who have applied for certification, and
15 should have enough credits, who were denied. One of them
16 had to appeal and was granted one, but not both. He was
17 granted an endorsement in bilingual education, but not in
18 ESL.

19 Now, my understanding is that all of the
20 requirements for ESL are included in the bilingual
21 endorsement, but the bilingual endorsement has a language
22 requirement on top of it.

23 So, there's still a lot of inconsistency. And it's
24 discouraging for some of the teachers who are just
25 beginning to form an opinion that, yes, this is really

1 needed. But to have to go through three or four or five
2 months of red tape to find out if they're going to get
3 it, if they need more hours or something like that --
4 these are some of the --.

5 MR. PELLETIER: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Gil, I'm going to ask you to
7 wear two hats this time not -- when I say three, I'm
8 counting two districts as one; the project hat for Van
9 Buren-Madawaska on the one hand, and the other as a
10 resident, if you will, of Fort Kent -- you brought your
11 kids to schools in Fort Kent, so it sounds as though,
12 obviously, you know this community too.

13 Looking at both of those and valuing those, as you
14 know I do, in the long tenure you've had working in
15 education and being the resident expert in this field and
16 the community, I look at, again, the numbers.

17 Madawaska LEP students, as they come into us -- us,
18 not only this committee, but the department of education
19 -- Madawaska involved 214 students; Frenchville, 115; Van
20 Buren, 121. And we heard this morning, and you heard
21 from Fort Kent, the process by which they identified
22 seven students. A dramatic difference in the number.

23 Thinking -- understanding, as you do, how schools
24 would go about making an assessment -- and you do a
25 comprehensive assessment of -- that leads to the

1 identification of LEP students in the districts you serve
2 -- can you tell us if what you heard this morning about
3 how that was done in the community that you live in is
4 about right, or is something missing, or -- it's really
5 so drastic, as it were, a difference in the demographics,
6 the language demographics of Fort Kent that makes it so
7 remarkably different from the districts that you work in?

8 MR. ALBERT: I think Sandy gave you an honest
9 answer this morning, she said it depended on the
10 definition or how the particular district defines what is
11 or what isn't LEP.

12 I'm not sure exactly how they go about it; what
13 criteria they use, for example, when they go looking --
14 or if they go look at standardized tests.

15 We use the 50th NEC curve, which some people
16 thought was very high. I don't think so. I mean --
17 bilingual students should be able to achieve as highly as
18 other students. And if they don't achieve at least a
19 50th NEC, then they're not functioning in this community
20 -- in this global economy.

21 But, some people will use the 20th -- 20th
22 percentile, for example, which is very low. Almost none
23 of our students in the northeast achieve that low.

24 So, again, it all depends on who -- who sets the
25 criteria. And I don't know what the criteria are for --

1 MR. MORGAN: Do you have continuous testing along
2 the lines, or -- or is that something that happened years
3 ago. Do you have continuous monitoring of students as
4 far as progress?

5 MR. ALBERT: Yes. We have a comprehensive
6 evaluation normally done every year by an independent
7 evaluator as part of this program and -- just to
8 ensure --

9 MR. MORGAN: Does that differ from district to
10 district?

11 MR. ALBERT: Yes. Of course it does, yes. But our
12 aim is -- in hiring an evaluator is to demonstrate that
13 our students in the program are not going behind the
14 students that are not in the program. We're not
15 monitoring for the whole Valley, for example, or the
16 whole population.

17 MR. SCOTT: I think what your -- your answer is, we
18 do test from year to year with an achievement test. It's
19 a national test that gives you your NECs --

20 MR. MORGAN: On an English proficiency?

21 MR. SCOTT: Right.

22 MR. MORGAN: Well, I may have missed it, but I had
23 the sense, when Sandy was speaking this morning, that
24 they did not do that on an annual basis --

25 MR. SCOTT: They did it in kindergarten.

1 MR. MORGAN: -- at least in that system.

2 MR. ALBERT: In her system -- I'm not sure what's
3 happening in her system at the moment.

4 MR. SCOTT: But, Sandy's right. In our own
5 district now, Madawaska, they use a cut-off score of 50.
6 In Van Buren we have a 55 as an NEC score, so it's a
7 little bit higher, because we raised it a little bit more
8 than that, because our scores in Van Buren tend to be a
9 little bit more -- I don't know about Madawaska, but --
10 an average student in the Van Buren school system on a
11 national test will tend to score like a 60 NEC score.
12 So, we just raised it a little bit higher. 55 should be
13 normal.

14 MR. MORGAN: I have one more question, I think.
15 Does anyone else have any others?

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: I don't know if this is a
17 question for you, Gil, or for -- maybe I should have
18 asked your boss this morning, or bosses.

19 But, the Legislature recently enacted learning
20 results, and benchmarks -- of course, the learning
21 results are going to determine the future of education in
22 the state.

23 Is there anything that you would perceive that
24 could be problematic with learning results and this
25 population in the context of a bilingual education

1 program?

2 MR. ALBERT: Ideally, no. If students are getting
3 the kind of education in our program we plan to give
4 them, they should be able to compete with the same
5 results with anybody else. But, however, they don't
6 participate in the -- if they don't participate in this
7 kind of program, then, yes, they're going to be out-
8 classed, out --.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Do you, Clay, have anything
10 more on that?

11 MR. BELANGER: I think we're ideally set up for
12 that. Because, when the kids graduate from 8th grade,
13 supposedly, they'll read and write in two languages
14 equally.

15 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Thank you.

16 MR. BELANGER: You know, they've got their little
17 benchmarks in the 2nd and 3rd grade, and they can meet
18 that -- it's the rest of the state that's --

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Maybe that's why I asked.

20 MR. MORGAN: Just one more thing about the
21 University of Maine at Fort Kent. Your statement earlier
22 about that example of a professor and his or her
23 disparaging remarks towards the group from Madawaska --
24 but my question is, really, just -- I have this sense
25 that, from a number of things that have been said, that

1 -- but I guess I want to ask the question. Do you have
2 any suggestions for Fort Kent, the university, that they
3 can be guided to be more proactive in this program that
4 is -- it appears to me at least to be --

5 MR. ALBERT: I have partial answers. I'm still
6 grappling at everything that should be done.

7 But, I think the university has started doing some
8 things. For example, the summer camp that they're
9 offering for students, 1st grade through 6th grade this
10 year. Last year it was an overwhelming success for the
11 first year.

12 I think if they continue doing that -- I've
13 received more feedback from parents, positive feedback,
14 saying, my son or my daughter never spoke French before,
15 now they speak French with their mother so I can't
16 understand what they're saying, after one week of
17 instruction. So, you know, that kind of comment.

18 Others said they've enjoyed it, they didn't laugh
19 at the French. So, all of that -- all of that helps to
20 change the attitude. Changing the university's faculty's
21 attitude is probably, as you know, very difficult. As
22 you go up the ladder it's getting tougher and tougher.

23 And this university is limited in its resources.
24 So, we have to look at that, also. Even when the
25 university had a bilingual biculture major for a

1 concentration, it was hard to direct the students because
2 they were not -- it's hard to pull students out of mid-
3 air. If it doesn't start in their early schooling --
4 it's like a vicious circle.

5 So, I think the efforts have to be done, taken by
6 all parties, by the schools, universities, parents -- a
7 lot more awareness efforts.

8 LEP -- limited English proficient is almost unknown
9 out of the educational circle, even within the school.
10 It sounds like a dirty word to some people. We have not
11 done a good job of explaining what it is. We have not
12 done a good job finding who they are.

13 Like I say, we have done much better than we've
14 been doing, but I'm sure we're not identifying a good
15 portion of those that are legitimate LEPs.

16 MR. MORGAN: Thank you very much. I don't believe
17 anybody else has come in. Is Jerry White here?

18 Okay. That concludes this session of the program.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Thank you, Ken. I'm going to
20 bounce back now to one speaker who is here now who was
21 not here this morning on implementing programs for LEP
22 students, and that's Dave Raymond from Wisdom High
23 School, MSAD 33.

24 MR. RAYMOND: Thank you. When I was asked to
25 appear in front of you for this afternoon, I wasn't sure

1 of where I would be placed, because I have served in many
2 capacities in the area of bilingual education in the past
3 -- in the past few years.

4 I've been involved with bilingual education as a
5 teacher and program administrator since 1977. I am
6 presently a teacher of French and Social Studies at
7 Wisdom Middle/High School in St. Agatha, Maine. I've
8 taught English as a second language while a member of the
9 United State Peace Corps in 1975 and 1976.

10 In 1976 I received my first teaching job in MSAD
11 No. 33. MSAD No. 33 is comprised of the municipalities
12 of Frenchville and St. Agatha, whose population is over
13 90 percent Franco-American.

14 During the past ten years I have served this
15 district as director of the St. John Valley bilingual
16 education program and as curriculum coordinator of the
17 L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean bilingual program. I returned
18 to full-time teaching in 1976 as a 7th to 10th grade
19 teacher.

20 My experiences working with bilingual education
21 programs has given me a broad perspective regarding the
22 needs of LEP and non-LEP children in the St. John Valley.
23 I have witnessed and experienced the positive impact that
24 federally funded programs have had in school districts.

25 There is no doubt that you have already been

1 supplied with data from schools -- from school and
2 program administrators showing the academic impact that
3 bilingual education programs have had on our children.
4 Therefore, I felt no need to bring these with me to
5 duplicate the efforts.

6 In the spring of 1996, MSAD No. 33 voted to pull
7 out -- the board of directors voted to pull out of
8 L'Acadien du Haut St. Jean program. This program had
9 received initial funding in 1995 to serve four school
10 districts in the St. John Valley. Although this decision
11 was taken, I personally fully understand and appreciate
12 the needs and the obligations SAD 33 has to continue to
13 serve our LEP and non-LEP children.

14 As one who helped develop L'Acadien du Haut
15 St. Jean proposal, I am very much aware of its goals. As
16 a classroom teacher, I am fully committed to serve the
17 LEP and non-LEP children that I teach. My instructional
18 units include lessons to promote the French language and
19 culture in the Valley. I am committed to help my
20 students improve their literacy skills in both English
21 and French, as well as fostering an appreciation of the
22 rich culture which exists here in the Valley. Some of my
23 LEP students are in both my French and Social Studies
24 classes. Therefore, interdisciplinary units of
25 instruction to nurture language as well as content skills

1 is greatly facilitated.

2 I make myself available during my planning periods
3 as well as before and after school to give extra help to
4 those students in need.

5 One of my most successful units this year focused
6 on the celebration of the 150th anniversary of
7 Longfellow's poem, *Evangeline*. Not only were my students
8 involved but most teachers and their students
9 participated in this special interdisciplinary unit.

10 In the end, a hundred percent of the student
11 population participated in one or more component of the
12 unit. The content of this unit included the study of
13 French and English literature, history, math, science,
14 genealogy and culture of the Acadian people.

15 In April, our school hosted an exhibition evening
16 during which our products were -- at which our products
17 were displayed to the public. The success of this
18 project was due to the dedication of teachers and the
19 involvement of local institutions and organizations such
20 as Les Archives Acadienne here at the University of Maine
21 at Fort Kent, Le Club Francais, and the St. Agatha
22 Historical Society.

23 I took advantage of our school's close proximity to
24 French speaking Canada to educate my students against the
25 mythical belief, maintained by some members of our

1 population, that bilingualism is a handicap and has no
2 relevance to our students today.

3 I took my students on first-hand educational
4 experiences to New Brunswick and Quebec City for them to
5 witness that the French language is alive and functioning
6 in homes and commerce in their backyard. These
7 excursions helped to validate the importance of using
8 French in their school and in their homes.

9 As a strong promoter of biliteracy and cultural
10 pride, both in our school as well as in the community, I
11 value the efforts and impact resulting from bilingual
12 education programs in the Valley during the past 21
13 years.

14 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Questions or comments?

15 MR. MORGAN: Do the -- excuse my ignorance. But,
16 do Frenchville and St. Agatha have the same middle and
17 high schools, and is it --

18 MR. RAYMOND: Yes, we do.

19 MR. MORGAN: And is it the elementary levels that
20 each town has its own school?

21 MR. RAYMOND: No. We share elementaries as well as
22 high school.

23 MR. MORGAN: Okay. For the two communities?

24 MR. RAYMOND: That's correct.

25 MR. MORGAN: Okay. And you as -- there's been a

1 lot of reference today to the decision of the system not
2 to have the bilingual program in that district.

3 I'm just curious for what you say here that you
4 yourself do as a teacher. Are you as teachers, in the
5 way you conduct classes, free to integrate things that
6 way you do? Is that --

7 MR. RAYMOND: I feel that I'm free to integrate
8 things the way that I want to.

9 MR. MORGAN: There's no pressure on you not to --

10 MR. RAYMOND: I've been involved, as I said, as a
11 teacher -- I was involved in bilingual education in the
12 -- in 1977. So, I've seen it grow and I've seen the
13 changes. And to me it's been an extremely rewarding and
14 professionally enriching experience. I've learned a lot
15 through this experience.

16 So, I've been sort of culturated into the -- into
17 this program. So, yes, I feel certainly free in my
18 system.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: When you teach -- other than
20 when you teach French and teach Social Studies, do you
21 use French in the classroom much at all?

22 MR. RAYMOND: In my Social Studies class?

23 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: When you're actually teaching
24 contents in Social Studies.

25 MR. RAYMOND: Oh, absolutely.

1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You do?

2 MR. RAYMOND: Yes. I teach -- it's primarily an
3 English course, the material is English. However, I do
4 use some of the materials that I have acquired over the
5 years, French materials, if I want to teach a unit on
6 local history or local literature, I do use --

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Do you have colleagues who
8 also speak French in content other than French?

9 MR. RAYMOND: Of course, I'm not in the
10 classroom --

11 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Well, I know, but --

12 MR. RAYMOND: From my experience, French is not
13 used readily, no.

14 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Do you hear French spoken in
15 the hallways; kids talking to each other, teachers
16 talking to kids --

17 MR. RAYMOND: I hear teachers talking to teachers,
18 students talking to students, and occasionally teachers
19 talking to students. But, a lot of the talking that is
20 done, sometimes they're phrases, you know instead of a
21 conversation. Because, a lot of students are not at the
22 -- their language -- I think their ability to speak
23 readily in French is a bit limited. Of course, you have
24 the exceptions.

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: MSAD 33 submitted department

1 of education data, as all districts do, on the incidents
2 of LEP students in their schools and the economic
3 conditions of those students, and so on and so forth.

4 One statistic that I hope or wish is probably
5 inaccurate, or needs some explanation, is that for the
6 115 students, LEP students identified -- this is K thru
7 12 -- where the district is asking what services are
8 available to those LEP students -- and there are several
9 choices of what it is, what the districts may be offering
10 -- SAD 33 says, special education. That is the only item
11 they checked.

12 So, is it therefore true then that special
13 education is the only service that is available, that is,
14 beyond the regular classroom --

15 MR. RAYMOND: For LEP students?

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: For LEP students.

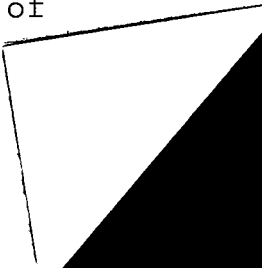
17 MR. RAYMOND: To my knowledge, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Other questions or
19 comments?

20 MR. TALBOT: Yes. In the study of French and
21 American -- English -- how is culture and history
22 coordinated that for LEP students -- how does that
23 help --

24 MR. RAYMOND: For North American history?

25 MR. TALBOT: English -- well, in your study of



1 English and French. And you also talked about history
2 and culture. How does that coordinate as far as the LEP
3 student?

4 MR. RAYMOND: I think the richness of living here
5 is our proximity to French Canada, our origin is French
6 Canadian -- or is Acadian. So, it's a rich -- we have a
7 rich opportunity to teach the history of our people.
8 We're so close to Quebec and New Brunswick.

9 I use it all the time. I use the -- I coordinate
10 our history, the history of the Valley to the history of
11 the United States all the time. We talk about the
12 French-Indian War, so it's a great opportunity to
13 integrate the two.

14 So, there is a lot of integration done. And I can
15 only speak for my classes.

16 MR. TALBOT: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Not to put you on --
18 give you an undo burden, but since we had your
19 superintendent scheduled to speak, Jerry White -- he's
20 not here -- and perhaps any others from SAD 33 who may
21 have -- would have been here who are not here. We do
22 have up to 30 days from today an opportunity for a
23 written commentary or whatever to be made available to
24 the committee. Jerry can do that if he wants to. I
25 don't know if you feel comfortable approaching him, but

1 you're welcome to do that, and anyone else for that
2 matter from the district who may have a perspective
3 dealing with this beyond what you have already offered
4 us. That was announced earlier this morning to the
5 others, just so you know that. Other comments can still
6 be accepted.

7 Other questions or --

8 MR. MORGAN: Well, I'm going way back to somewhere
9 else, I guess, to the beginning. Does SAD 33 have a LAU
10 plan?

11 MR. RAYMOND: Yes, we do.

12 MR. MORGAN: And what do the --

13 MR. RAYMOND: Procedures?

14 MR. MORGAN: -- what are the procedures -- is that
15 beyond the special education?

16 MR. RAYMOND: Okay. The whole language surveys are
17 used. Also, our standardized test scores -- we have --
18 50 percent is our benchmark. And also -- those are the
19 two.

20 MR. MORGAN: And then what happens once the people
21 are identified?

22 MR. RAYMOND: They are identified, and then -- and
23 then we as teachers, what we do at this time -- of
24 course, we don't have the program, we don't have the
25 bilingual program anymore.

1 At this time we -- it's up to the classroom
2 teachers to serve those students the best we can, or the
3 best they can.

4 MR. PELLETIER: Gil made reference to the
5 percentile thing that we talked about, and some districts
6 use a less percentile. I just want to be sure, because
7 I'm not in the education -- in the profession of
8 education.

9 Are you referring there to -- well, why don't you
10 just elaborate a little bit about what that means in
11 terms of how -- the contents of it.

12 MR. RAYMOND: Well, if the student has identified
13 -- if the parent has identified that the major language,
14 or the language at home -- the native language is French
15 on the home language survey, those students -- okay --
16 are placed in a special category. And if their
17 standardized test scores fall below the 50 percentile in
18 English, then SAD 33 considers them LEP.

19 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. So it's a combination of
20 both, the survey and how they did on the test scores?
21 And what age does that begin? In other words, when do
22 those standardized tests kick in?

23 MR. RAYMOND: In SAD 33, I think it's 2nd -- 1st
24 grade -- 2nd grade.

25 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Any other questions? Thank
2 you very much.

3 MR. RAYMOND: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Bouncing back again to
5 the seventh portion. I don't know if these people are
6 here, so we'll take a shot again.

7 Percy Thibeault?

8 MS. OUELLETTE: He couldn't make it.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Thank you. Jim
10 Lavertu? Not here.

11 Mary Michaud? Okay. We're going to be done early
12 here, I think.

13 Mary Ann Gauvin? Okay.

14 MS. GAUVIN: I'm the perfect example of what people
15 have been talking about today, the negative -- I don't
16 know if I would call it brainwashing or -- Franco-
17 Americans when they went to school, we were inferior, we
18 had to be anglosized, and so on.

19 If you look at the program, my name is on there as
20 Mary Ann Gauvin. And my name is not Mary Ann Gauvin, but
21 Marie-Anne Gauvin. And this is something that occurs
22 very frequently -- M-a-r-i-e-A-n-n-e, as it is on my
23 birth certificate.

24 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: You can blame Fernando for
25 this.

1 MS. GAUVIN: I don't know who typed this, but this
2 is a common occurrence, and that's why I mention it.

3 I will go so far as to say that I was born in
4 Daigle, Maine, a small village near Fort Kent. And about
5 20 years ago I had an opportunity to go study in France.
6 So, I had to send for a birth certificate to get my
7 passport.

8 I wrote to the town clerk in Daigle and got back my
9 birth certificate. I had become Mary Ann. And so I was
10 stuck with that, because there was a time limitation, and
11 so my passport came through as a/k/a, also known as.

12 So, after I retired, about nine years ago, my
13 sister and I went for a ride. And we found that my
14 sister wanted her birth certificate for -- she lives in
15 Canada, so she needed her birth certificate. So, we went
16 to the town clerk and we looked up my records.

17 A former town clerk from years back had erased my
18 name ending and anglosized it. That's pretty bad. So
19 the town clerk that was there at the time that we went
20 corrected it to what it had been. And this is one of the
21 results of wanting to be so English, so anglosized -- we
22 are so inferior that we have to anglosize our name, and
23 I'm just not one of those. This is just an example of
24 the kinds of things that happen to us here in the Valley.

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Excuse me. Can I ask you what

1 town you are --

2 MS. GAUVIN: Madawaska. I'm from Madawaska. And,
3 by the way, I'm not a retired ESL teacher, I'm a retired
4 French teacher. I have heard of the ESL programs and so
5 on, but I taught French to anglophone students, I
6 happened to be working in Connecticut.

7 And I'm usually not a talkative person, but this is
8 a favorite topic of mine. When Mr. Serpa called from
9 Washington and asked me if I would participate in this
10 bilingual quorum, panel discussion, I thought, yes, sure.
11 And then when the documents came through I thought, ooh,
12 this is not what I thought.

13 So, maybe I'm nitpicking, but I just -- I just do
14 not agree with calling ESL and LEP programs bilingual.
15 To me bilingual is something different. Perhaps it's my
16 interpretation.

17 But, I even looked it up in the dictionary. And in
18 the English dictionary, unabridged, bilingual means able
19 to speak one's native language and another with
20 approximately equal facility.

21 What has happened with ESL programs, I think -- and
22 the word subtractive was used today -- is that, yes, we
23 graduate French -- in this case, our Valley French-
24 speaking students into English, but the French part is
25 dropped. So we have people who can speak French, but

1 they can't read it, can't write it.

2 And also this morning somewhere I heard someone use
3 the word -- there's discordance between the speaking of
4 our language as opposed to -- some people call it
5 standard French. And that is true very often, because
6 when a student does not learn his or her heritage
7 language, there's a discrepancy.

8 If anglophones had to speak English, came from
9 English homes, but if they never saw it written and never
10 learned how to read and write it in school, there would
11 discordance with their language too.

12 So, this is what happens. It does cause -- through
13 the years there is sometimes a deterioration of the
14 spoken language, never mind the written and the -- you
15 know, the other part of it. So, that's my nitpicking
16 part.

17 I looked it up in French, my French dictionary.
18 And there I found -- oh, in the English one, spoken or
19 written in two different languages.

20 And written, that's important, because you have the
21 literate part of the language, which we're not getting
22 very often -- which we have not been getting in our
23 school. I have classmates who can speak French, graduate
24 from high school, but if you ask them to read and write,
25 then they're going to shy away from it because they just

1 have not had the training in it.

2 The French part of the definition -- I'm sorry. Do
3 you understand French, sir, or --

4 MR. MORGAN: No.

5 MS. GAUVIN: I'll repeat it in English. The first
6 definition, which is in two languages. The second
7 definition, who speaks and possesses perfectly two
8 different languages.

9 So, to me the bilingual definition that I got from
10 this is a misnomer. I would much prefer to see something
11 -- when you call it ESL and LEP programs, fine. But, it
12 has a negative impact, as I think we heard here today,
13 that some people object to that being known as -- their
14 children being known as a limited English proficient
15 child. Why not call them something more positive like
16 English enrichment program and be done with that, don't
17 call it bilingual. That's my nitpicking again.

18 Last year I had the opportunity to meet with a
19 young lady from California who had studied with -- in
20 psychology with a professor from Santa Cruz in
21 California. And they had done -- she had worked with her
22 professor in northern Canada Inuits, on the self-image
23 and self-esteem of the Inuits, who started school, were
24 denied their language, and were forced to take their
25 education in French or in English.

1 And he did some research on the self-esteem, the
2 individual self-esteem, all of the students -- Inuit
3 students. I believe that was for three years. I have
4 the paper -- I don't know if this has been published --
5 an abstract that this young lady let me borrow.

6 And the results that they found, as far as he had
7 gone -- he's still doing some research. And the self-
8 image or the self-esteem of the Inuit child that had to
9 take either the French or the English was very -- was
10 rather low. And the Inuit child -- they had a program
11 where the Inuit child could speak -- could choose
12 Inuktitut -- started his schooling in Inuktitut, complete
13 immersion, and would gradually take French or English as
14 a second language, and after a few years, I believe it
15 is, there was more -- there was more of a two-sided
16 bilingual thing.

17 And what he was testing was the self-esteem of
18 these students. And the results seemed to indicate that
19 the self-esteem, the individual self-esteem of the child,
20 the Inuit child, was much lower than to take either
21 French or English completely.

22 And the ones who had started in their own language
23 was much higher. Felt much better about themselves,
24 chose themselves more often as good looking, as more
25 intelligent, these kinds of things, than the other child

1 who had either the French or the English language -- who
2 would choose the English image as the better one, as the
3 more -- as the better looking one, the more intelligent
4 one, as the superior one, than the French.

5 There was the individual self-esteem that was low,
6 plus -- which was quite interesting -- the collective
7 self-image of the Inuits. If they had started school in
8 their native language, their collective self-image was
9 much better. They felt that they were worth something.

10 The action of forcing a child to study a language
11 other than his heritage language says to that child, very
12 effectively, his language is not good enough, his
13 language is inferior. And the language is the vehicle
14 that carries the culture.

15 So, this is just an interesting, I thought,
16 sideline that came to light that we ought to consider.
17 Let's see what else here.

18 I don't know -- somewhere this morning someone
19 talked about testing students, and the results were
20 lowered. So my immediate reaction was, if you have an
21 LEP student, and he's tested in English, sure, the
22 results are going to be low.

23 That's just like where I taught -- I remember a
24 little girl that came in from Italy. And the first year,
25 right off, within the first few months, they gave this

1 little girl an IQ test in English, of course. I don't
2 need to tell you that she turned out to be an idiot.

3 So, this kind of unfair treatment of students is
4 discriminatory. So, I'm for kind of an immersion
5 program. Bilingual to me means a track in French, in
6 this case, and a track in English with equal learning in
7 both languages so that -- I don't know. I think I'm
8 living proof of that. I learned to read French before I
9 went to school. My mother happened to be a teacher from
10 Canada, and she had books, and taught me to read; simple
11 sentences, of course, syllables. So that when I started
12 kindergarten I could read simple sentences.

13 And so, I had broken into that system of what
14 reading is. I never had any problems with the English.
15 And perhaps that's why I felt that I've always been
16 bilingual.

17 So, anyway, that's -- let's see. I'm digressing,
18 but -- I'll answer questions, I think, if you have them.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Questions?

20 MR. PELLETIER: Yes, I do. It sounds to me like
21 the bilingual immersion is what they do in New Brunswick
22 where, because they have an official bilingual culture by
23 law, they do this to all their people.

24 Are you saying that in the St. John Valley, if you
25 have a kid with a French name like mine, Pelletier, that

1 because when they come to school and they don't know any
2 French, are you saying that that person should get a
3 bilingual immersion --

4 MS. GAUVIN: If they choose --

5 MR. PELLETIER: -- if that's available?

6 MS. GAUVIN: If they choose.

7 MR. PELLETIER: Okay. Now, it seems apparent to me
8 that this would have worked better 25 years ago when I
9 was in school rather than now. I guess what I'm really
10 getting at is -- and I guess everybody here -- is it too
11 late, in a way --

12 MS. GAUVIN: I hope not. I hope not. It's -- I
13 think we're very close to being too late, very close.
14 Because, it's so pervasive, just -- I mean, I use my name
15 in Madawaska -- I had a home constructed and I had all
16 kinds of permits to get and bills to pay. And I would
17 tell them my name -- and these were people that were
18 Francos and could speak French, and I would see them
19 write Mary Ann.

20 And I would say, no, no, my name -- this is not my
21 name. And I would want it for my records.

22 So, they're reacting -- they're French but they
23 react in English because that's what they were taught to
24 do in many cases.

25 MR. TALBOT: Let me just point out something to

1 you. And I don't think this is for the record, but I
2 think we have people at the state level and at local
3 levels that do the same thing. They'll put down that
4 somebody's white, and they're black, and twenty years
5 along the line they'll say, wait a minute, this is wrong,
6 but they can't change it.

7 MS. GAUVIN: Right. So that's why I try to nip it
8 in the bud before it goes too far. And the next thing I
9 know I'm going through somebody's records because -- and
10 the birth certificate was a wower. And that really
11 knocked me over.

12 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. I think Guy wanted to
13 respond as well.

14 MR. ROY: Yeah, I wanted to respond to Tom's
15 question, because there's a lot of misconception about
16 bilingual education and the ability of children to learn
17 the language.

18 You mentioned New Brunswick. New Brunswick's
19 bilingual program is not quite the same as ours. It's
20 the same format as ours, but their children who
21 participate in the program are essentially English.
22 There are no French kids involved in the French bilingual
23 program.

24 They start from scratch. They have no prior
25 experience in French. Yes, they can learn it, and they

1 learn it very well.

2 So, is it too late? Not from the standpoint of the
3 ability of the children to learn the language. From the
4 standpoint of society saying, no, we don't want this, or,
5 yes, we want it, that's where we're at, I guess. That's
6 the more appropriate question, I think; does the
7 community want it because, if they want it, it's here.
8 It's a possibility, it's a reality, it's around us.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Hm-hmm. Clay?

10 MR. BELANGER: I found in the Van Buren area that a
11 lot of the kids who are in need of the bilingual program,
12 they recommended themselves to the parents, you sign me
13 up. So, even if the parents didn't want this, the
14 students do. And why? I think they feel they've got
15 something missing from their lives.

16 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Any other questions,
17 comments?

18 Okay. Mr. Banville?

19 MR. BANVILLE: I've been in a quandary ever since
20 Fernando called me up a couple weeks ago about testifying
21 here today. Since I am a reporter, and I am going to be
22 writing a story about this, the happenings here today, I
23 -- I am not going to sit here and bring you any data on
24 bilingualism or ESL students. I think that's been done
25 by professionals all day long.

1 I instead would just like to make some anecdotes on
2 being French, what it's like being French, and how you go
3 through life. And I know Barney's probably lived through
4 this already, but for the benefit of you others, I am
5 Canadian born. When I started school in Fort Kent, I did
6 not know a word of English. Much the same as two of my
7 other siblings. The rest of the family was all educated
8 in Canada.

9 My mother and father, who are both gone, were never
10 educated in English. The English that my parents knew,
11 they were self-taught, until my mother was in her late
12 60s and early 70s, when she took basic education courses
13 in Fort Kent to learn how to read in English.

14 Like the rest of my brothers and sisters, our
15 children are first born Americans in our family. The
16 rest of us were all born in Canada.

17 French to me -- my French language has been a plus
18 in my professional life as a reporter. I've been able to
19 travel into Quebec to cover stories in Quebec, and in New
20 Brunswick, simply because I'm the only French reporter
21 for the Bangor -- that the Bangor Daily News has. I've
22 had assignments because I'm French and able to understand
23 the language, I'm able to read it and I'm able to write
24 it.

25 I think there's a real need in the St. John Valley

1 for our children to learn how to read and write French,
2 how to speak it, not only for their professional lives,
3 but for their familial lives so that they may be able to
4 speak with their grandparents, they may be able to
5 connect with other members of their family.

6 Because of the education I had, I'm also the
7 product of a system that made French people feel like
8 second class citizens. We were not allowed to speak
9 French anywhere on public property, whether it be a
10 school classroom, the school building itself, or in the
11 yard playing with our friends. We were never allowed to
12 speak French.

13 I think it's because of that situation that
14 occurred in the '40s, '50s, and into the early '60s that
15 we see some of the problems with French in the St. John
16 Valley at this time.

17 You spoke this morning about the situation in Fort
18 Kent schools, why there are less LEP students identified
19 in SAD 27 than the other school districts in the St. John
20 Valley.

21 Well, being a product of SAD 27, I think that the
22 answer to that is that the angloization of French people
23 in SAD 27 was even more powerful than the rest of the St.
24 John Valley.

25 As far back as I can remember, there has never been

1 a French speaking administrator as superintendent of Fort
2 Kent. And I can remember back 45 years.

3 They were -- the process to anglosize French-
4 speaking people in Fort Kent has been dramatic for the
5 last 40 years. Whether you're talking about --

6 MR. MORGAN: There's never been a bilingual
7 superintendent?

8 MR. BANVILLE: That's correct. I do not remember a
9 superintendent in Fort Kent who could speak French. And
10 I started in schools in Fort Kent in 1953.

11 I think that we've seen the problems that you heard
12 about in SAD 33, where they were -- where the school
13 board had accepted the application for a bilingual
14 program -- they accepted the grant once it came in, and
15 then at a certain point later on the mind of the school
16 board was changed. I think that is a product of what
17 happened to French speaking people in the St. John
18 Valley.

19 When you were told year after year that you are
20 second class citizens because you are French, because you
21 speak French, you really get to believe that. And this
22 is one of the things that came out in SAD 33.

23 When these problems were occurring in SAD 33 -- I
24 remember parents telling me, I had problems in my life
25 because I was French, I don't want my children to go

1 through that. People were telling me, what do you know,
2 you no longer have kids in our school system. Why do you
3 care.

4 Another told me, I hated school because I was
5 French and I don't want my children to go through the
6 same thing.

7 Just last evening, I stopped at a store to ask them
8 to put a poster in their window about a Boy Scout fund-
9 raising project that I'm doing with my Boy Scouts. And
10 the person in the store says, yes, let me take this
11 Evangeline poster off the window, we don't need this in
12 this town anyway, look at the problems it caused last
13 year.

14 That is the product of decades of being told that
15 you are second class because you're French. And these
16 are the kinds of things that happen in our society. It
17 isn't a problem of the teachers today, it's a problem
18 that occurred 30 or 40 years ago. It's going to take a
19 lot to change it.

20 I happen to be one of those people that thinks that
21 the bilingual education project that they're starting in
22 Madawaska and in SAD 24 schools is the way to go, because
23 I'm one of those people that thinks that my being able to
24 speak, read and write French has been a plus in my
25 professional career.

1 I'm always amazed that when I watch television and
2 things are going on world wide -- we have people like Mr.
3 Natanyahu who comes on television, American television
4 and speaks to the American people in English. And then
5 when it comes time for Mr. Clinton to speak, he has to
6 use a translator to speak to the Israelis.

7 People in other parts of the of the world believe
8 that it's a plus to know more than one language. I
9 wonder how long it's going to take the United States to
10 understand that.

11 I really think that what is going on here in
12 Madawaska and Van Buren should go on in every school
13 district in the state of Maine and across the country,
14 where there are people who come from an other than
15 English society. Their language should be protected,
16 their culture should be protected. And I think that
17 program goes a long ways to do that.

18 I have nothing else.

19 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: As a reporter, it may be
20 tricky for you to respond to the question, but I'll fire
21 it away anyway, since you initially made the comment,
22 that in the last 40 or 50 years Fort Kent has not had a -
23 - an administrator or superintendent who was Franco.

24 That probably -- just the very fact that you raise
25 it suggests the fact that it was deliberate over the

1 years. It's now 1997. Suppose a vacancy occurred at the
2 top level, what are the odds of a Franco having a shot at
3 that spot?

4 MR. BANVILLE: About 9 to 1 against.

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Attitude?

6 MR. BANVILLE: Hm-hmm.

7 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Comments, questions?

8 MR. TALBOT: I would like to find out just for my
9 own information, wasn't it 15 or 20 years ago that you
10 had a superintendent of schools up here that was black?

11 MR. BANVILLE: No, not in Fort Kent.

12 MR. TALBOT: Caribou?

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: The County? The state?

14 MR. BANVILLE: Not that I remember. Maybe Barney
15 can answer that better than I can, but I'm just saying --

16 MR. TALBOT: I was just wondering. I don't know --

17 MR. WHITE: I've known the -- most of the
18 superintendents for the last 30 years, most of whom -- I
19 would say a majority of them are from the County.

20 MR. MORGAN: Well, it's certainly true of most
21 everybody's who's spoken here today -- I mean, do you
22 have a sense of optimism, of hope that there is a
23 renaissance of self-esteem among the French community in
24 the Valley?

25 MR. BANVILLE: Yes, I think there is. Just in the

1 last few years, other than the bilingual program, there's
2 been a French group, organized. You see some areas of
3 the St. John Valley that have French and English signs
4 for streets.

5 I walk into the schools in Van Buren, I see French
6 and English signs on the doorways of the different rooms,
7 laboratories and whatnot. That was not seen years ago.

8 You see stores today that have signs in the front
9 windows that state that they speak French in the store.
10 That was not around, you know, just a few years back. I
11 just think that there is hope. But, like anything else,
12 hope needs help.

13 MR. MORGAN: Okay. Actually, my own ancestry -- I
14 wanted to speak about New Brunswick for just a minute.
15 You pointed out that New Brunswick -- the approach in New
16 Brunswick compared to here. I'm half a product of at
17 least the New Brunswick English.

18 My impression is that -- I mean, making bilingual
19 official in New Brunswick of the last 15 years, 20 years
20 something like that?

21 MR. BANVILLE: Yes.

22 MR. MORGAN: I just wonder what your sense is of
23 how well it's developed.

24 MR. BANVILLE: Well, I guess I -- I can see an
25 equally bad problem in Edmunston as I do here in the St.

1 John Valley on the reverse side. I know a lot of people
2 in Edmunston and a lot of them do not speak English, and
3 I think that's as bad for them as it is for us not being
4 able to keep our French, you know.

5 I'm not here to say that we should have our
6 children speak French and only French, I'm saying that
7 they should be taught French and taught English so that
8 they would be -- they would equally be able to go about
9 their lives in both languages.

10 I don't -- I won't sit here and tell you that I
11 support unilanguage anywhere. I wish I would have the
12 ability to learn seven languages, but I don't.

13 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Anything else? Thank you. I
14 would like to, if I could, out of deference to those who
15 are waiting to speak, I'm going to hold any other
16 comments until we are done so we can accommodate those
17 who still haven't spoken, because the time is racing.

18 Is Manzer Belanger in the room? No? Okay. And
19 Jerry White, the superintendent from SAD 35 is here. He
20 would have been on earlier, but -- if you can join us
21 now, that would be fine. Would you come down? And I
22 think you're the last of the announced speakers, and then
23 there may be other comments or questions.

24 MR. WHITE: What kind of message would you like?
25 I'm Jerry White, superintendent of schools in SAD 33,

1 Frenchville and St. Agatha. I am trilingual in German
2 and Russian. My French is potato field French, and I can
3 swear like a trooper.

4 Do you have some questions? I mean, I would second
5 what was said here. I firmly -- I'm a firm believer in
6 multi-lingualism, not just bilingualism.

7 I had -- depending on which side of the fence
8 you're on, I had the fortunate or unfortunate position of
9 being the superintendent at the brunt of some of the
10 dissatisfaction or disagreement with the bilingual
11 project that we entered into partnership with in SAD 24;
12 Madawaska and the Grand Isle schools.

13 On the other hand, that is not to say that
14 bilingual education is not being used in SAD 33.
15 Students in SAD 33 in K thru 6, at least, have French
16 language instruction.

17 Whether there is enough of that or not, I don't
18 think -- I don't think there is, but I think we're --
19 we've come a long ways.

20 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Any other just general
21 perspectives on the implement -- the implication of
22 programs that support the LEP --

23 MR. WHITE: The perspective that I would use -- and
24 I would second what Beurmond said, there's a cultural and
25 societal impediment to accepting the fact that being

1 bilingual is beneficial. And I mean -- I shouldn't say
2 bilingual, I should say biliterate. We do live in
3 international worlds.

4 My daughter just graduated Colby, and her minor was
5 in German. She spent a year in Germany. As far as I'm
6 concerned at this point she is pretty much fluent. And
7 she has selected to participate in the German intern
8 program, one of twenty students across the country, and
9 she will spend a year in Bonn interning with a member of
10 the Boonestagdt.

11 So, in our household, certainly it's an important
12 element. And I think in our school systems, it -- we
13 have the residue of what Beurmond's referring to. And,
14 anecdotally, I'll tell you that the first year I was in
15 teaching, it was SAD 24, Van Buren, and I taught business
16 education courses. There happened to be a problem that a
17 student couldn't figure out, and I was dutifully trying
18 to explain it in English because, as I said, my French is
19 potato field French and not classroom French.

20 So, I asked one of the students if he would explain
21 to his buddy in French.

22 And he said, Prof, we can't do that. And being a
23 first year teacher, I said, why.

24 And he said, well, it's against the rules to speak
25 French in school. And I said, you speak both French and

1 English? And he said, yeah.

2 And I said, that's a dumb rule, isn't it? And he
3 says, yeah.

4 And I says, I tell you what, I'll promise if you
5 don't tell, I won't tell, now explain it to him in French
6 so that the kid can understand the problem.

7 Which he did, and the student turned around and
8 said, okay, Prof, yeah, and off he went.

9 And afterwards I was absolutely amazed. But that
10 certainly was the norm, and I could never understand
11 that. Because, we do have a rich heritage and culture
12 that can be utilized in the schools and in the community.

13 I also have come up against parents who -- they
14 don't want to touch, in this case, French with a ten foot
15 pole, and both mom and dad are French. They both speak
16 French, they speak French at home, and I -- so, that's a
17 tough hurdle to get over.

18 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Dave gave a very lucid
19 outline, as it were, of the -- what is occurring now in
20 the population. One of the questions I raised with him,
21 and I'll raise it with you also is, the most recent
22 report that the department received from MSAD 33 is the
23 breakdown of the LEPs, and indicates the services that
24 those students receive at SAD 33 are limited special
25 education. That's the only thing that was identified.

1 Is that accurate?

2 MR. WHITE: I -- no, I wouldn't say it was.

3 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Can you say some more about
4 that?

5 MR. WHITE: Well, to put LEP students in special ed
6 is a no-no in the first place as far as -- as far as
7 learning goes. And I would not support that, I don't
8 support that. To the best of my knowledge, no students
9 are put in special ed because they're LEP.

10 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: So that's an error, I mean if
11 that --

12 MR. WHITE: It certainly would be. I mean, that's
13 certainly not the information that should be there.

14 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Thank you. Is there
15 any other person who was scheduled to speak and didn't,
16 or who came in late? I don't think so. And Cleo's been
17 dying to say something. Go ahead.

18 MS. OUELLETTE: I'd like to comment on what was
19 said that there hasn't been a French superintendent in
20 Fort Kent for many, many years. And I would like to
21 extend that to most of the Valley, except on what Clayton
22 commented on here a few years ago. It has been
23 traditionally -- English has been the language of
24 power --

25 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Have there been candidates,

1 Franco candidates otherwise well-qualified?

2 MR. BANVILLE: Oh, there's been some French in
3 Madawaska, and in Van Buren.

4 MR. WHITE: There is an interesting anecdote. When
5 my father passed away, I discovered that his birth
6 certificate was LeBlanc. Because, I asked the question.
7 And it seems that back in the census of 1910, he was
8 living in Presque Isle. And he said it was much easier
9 to just anglosize French names than it was to write out
10 French names and ask.

11 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Yes. That was -- there was
12 another comment like that.

13 MS. OUELLETTE: Another thing too that I thought
14 that might interest you is the fact that -- the fact that
15 you were French, somehow or other you didn't quite
16 measure up to the other people. And people wouldn't try
17 for jobs because they would say, I didn't speak English
18 very well, or good French, or I speak with an accent,
19 nobody's going to listen to me.

20 And a few years ago I had some Canadian-French and
21 they would speak English with a very heavy accent. And
22 they could not understand why having an accent was such a
23 bad thing. They speak with an accent. And if they want
24 to be heard, they're heard, and there's nothing wrong
25 with them.

1 But, we have all this baggage coming -- dating from
2 way back of people with a French accent. Any other
3 accent is okay as long as it's not a French accent.

4 And when I was teaching in high school, I was
5 teaching French, and they wanted to take a second
6 language, yes, but not French. French is no good. Let's
7 take Spanish or some other language because they're --
8 those are better.

9 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Yes. Those are very common
10 statewide. Any other comments or -- yes.

11 MS. GAUVIN: Mr. Banville talked about New
12 Brunswick, and what is probably true is that Edmunston is
13 probably the reverse.

14 But, I happen to belong to a group called
15 Federation of Naturalists in New Brunswick, and they have
16 a general assembly once a year, which I like to attend
17 because it's a lot of fun. And there are anglophones and
18 Francophones, and it's almost 50/50 that belong to this
19 from New Brunswick.

20 And it's marvelous because they're not afraid to
21 try to speak French, the anglophones, and the
22 Francophones do their best in English. And we have
23 guided excursions, we have part of it in French and part
24 of it in English to satisfy everybody. In fact, this
25 weekend we celebrated our 25th year of existence, and for

1 the first time elected a -- for the first time elected a
2 woman president, but the first time a Francophone as
3 president of our federation, which was a real plus for us
4 -- a real pleasure for these kind of people.

5 CHAIRPERSON BERUBE: Okay. Any others -- yes.
6 This is Berthe Garcia.

7 MS. GARCIA: I'm fortunate enough to teach French
8 and Spanish at Madawaska High School, and in the
9 afternoon I'm the coordinator for the bilingual program
10 in Madawaska. I also work in Van Buren as a French and
11 Spanish teacher with Clayton for many years.

12 There are a lot of positive things happening. And
13 I've seen us having a dual tradition here in Madawaska.
14 I'm able to take my French students out of my classroom
15 and take them to the elementary school and work with the
16 bilingual students presently in the bilingual program.
17 We've had students reading to the younger children in a
18 bilingual classroom. We've also had pen pals, where
19 we've had high school students writing to second graders
20 in the elementary school, and we go back and forth.

21 And in the program in our school, I was seeing
22 repercussions from the high school students, because the
23 high school students were saying, wow, these kids are
24 really good in French, they write to us in French, they
25 can speak to us when we visit them, because we go back

1 and forth in school.

2 And then just last week, one of the parents of a
3 high school student said, you know, Carlie really enjoyed
4 having a pen pal in the second grade this year. And he's
5 just amazed at what these kids can do.

6 So, actually, yes, we do have a bilingual program,
7 but I think it's affecting our high school students, also
8 effecting parents. And I see a lot of positive -- a lot
9 of positive things coming out. And I think it's probably
10 more in response to Tom's question, is it too late, you
11 know, yes, maybe we should have done this 30 or 40 years
12 ago.

13 But, I think, you know, we have to be encouraged by
14 the little victories that we see. And it will take a
15 long time, I'm sure. But, we have these little victories
16 that keep popping up and will help us continue it,
17 striving to bring back French language in the Valley.

18 MR. MORGAN: I think it was Cleo who said something
19 about teaching French in high school, and in her
20 experience the kids wanted to take another language than
21 English, but they didn't want it to be French.

22 And you're talking now about the enthusiasm of
23 students who want to take French courses?

24 MS. GARCIA: We have more students now taking
25 French than before, and I think it's because of the type

1 of courses that we are offering the students. We have
2 courses for students who are purely English speaking and
3 are not ready to go into more of a college level of
4 French 1 and 2.

5 I teach Spanish also, and I don't want to take
6 sides, one language or the other. But, I do have a lot
7 of students who come to my Spanish classes because of all
8 of the issues that have been brought up, you know,
9 because -- maybe -- to them it's something new, it's
10 something interesting. They feel that with Spanish and
11 French they'll do better in the business world.

12 But, I do point out to them that -- and this comes
13 up all the time. I'll be teaching somebody in Spanish
14 and I'll say, isn't this a lot like a French word. And
15 they'll say yes. A lot of French comes out in the
16 Spanish classroom, and they're so proud of being able to
17 make a correlation between something in Spanish and
18 something in French, whereas the unilingual English
19 student can't make the correlation because they don't
20 have that second language.

21 So, they're using that second language and first
22 language -- they're using French to help them along with
23 the Spanish. And that comes out in class almost daily.

24 And the kids who speak French at home are finding
25 that they're being more successful with Spanish. And I

1 think that when they make that connection, I think the
2 self-esteem goes up, too.

3 MR. MORGAN: Have they been trying to get you down
4 south in Caribou?

5 MS. GARCIA: I taught down south.

6 MR. MORGAN: There was a person here this morning
7 that -- I forget what his title was, but he was lamenting
8 the fact that they do not have a Spanish teacher.

9 CHAIRMAN BERUBE: Okay. Thank you. What will
10 happen now is that the committee -- once the court
11 reporter's hard copy, or whatever you want to call it, a
12 copy of these proceedings and that of the other three
13 sites of just the proceedings -- they will be compiled
14 into a report of the Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S.
15 Commission on Civil Rights.

16 Anyone who has testified will be automatically
17 included in the distribution of that report. It won't
18 happen for several months, so don't call next week and
19 ask for it. It will take a very long time. I know,
20 because we've done other reports and they always take a
21 long time, partly because of staffing problems in
22 Washington with regard to putting that together. And
23 there are also legal hurdles to make sure that everything
24 is -- passes what they call a legal sufficiency test in
25 what we do.

1 It will probably also include recommendations;
2 recommendations for the schools, for the states, for the
3 feds -- I don't know. We'll be doing that over the next
4 several months.

5 And such a report will be focused only on the
6 issues of limited English proficiency in the state, with
7 one geographical point being the northern Maine, St. John
8 Valley in particular. And we include Caribou in that, as
9 you noticed this morning.

10 The Passamaquoddy, and the others would be the
11 umbrella of several immigrant groups in central and
12 southern Maine for those two hearings down there. So, it
13 will be kind of a comprehensive picture of the state.
14 But, this was -- the debut was here, so all that will
15 happen.

16 If you don't get a copy of the report whenever that
17 time is, just let us know, it is very public and it will
18 be widely distributed. But, I would say that you won't
19 see anything probably until the first of next year in
20 terms of the actual final published document. So --
21 that's my sense anyway.

22 On behalf of the committee and Fernando -- those of
23 you who were here know that he had to fly out to Bangor
24 to try to get to Calais for our hearing tomorrow, so he
25 had to leave early. Thank all of you who have

1 contributed to these deliberations today, and we'll stand
2 adjourned at approximately 3 p.m.

3 (The hearing was closed at 2:58 p.m. this date.)

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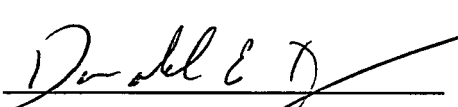
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CERTIFICATE

I, Donald E. Thompson, Notary Public,
in and for the state of Maine, hereby certify
that the foregoing pages are an accurate
transcription of the hearing on June 3, 1997.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I subscribe
my hand and affix my seal this 3rd day of
June 1997.

Dated at Bangor, Maine.


Donald E. Thompson, RPR,
Notary Public

My commission expires November 16, 1999.