



final exams, voting rights for the student, interact policies, weighted grades, and a host of others. He said that the students cared. Over the past few years when the issue of giving the student on the Board voting rights had arisen, the common argument against this had been that the student member did not represent the county students because he was elected indirectly at a small convention. This argument had been nullified by the Board's wise action in creating the new direct election method.

Mr. Hirsch said he looked forward to working with his colleagues on the Board toward giving the students in this county the true representation they deserve. He felt that the coming year was not going to be made any easier for him having to step into the very large shoes left by such a fine student member as Jon Lipson. He said that Jon had done a magnificent job by representing the county students during one of the Board's most trying and difficult years. He commended him and hoped that he could do as good a job as he had done this year by representing one of the country's finest student bodies. He thanked his parents, brother and friends for their help and support, Steve Heyman for his ideas and words, and his whole campaign committee for their hours of work. He thanked Peter Robertson and the special elections committee for their creativity and diligence in dealing with the unprecedented election process. Lastly he thanked the students of the county for putting their trust in him to represent them. He looked forward to serving as one of the eight members of the Board of Education in the coming year.

Re: Certificate of Appreciation

Mrs. Zappone and the superintendent presented a certificate of appreciation to outgoing Board member, Mr. Lipson.

Re: Statement by Outgoing Board Member

Mr. Lipson read the following into the record:

I'm going to start by talking about something that is so obviously pertinent to the functioning of a Board of Education that it seems sometimes lost as is the forest for the trees. The metaphoric forest is learning. I don't have to tell you what the trees are. But it seems that if we, on the School Board, have made any mistakes this year, they have been in losing sight of the importance of learning with respect to education.

I, myself, have learned a great deal this year. I've learned about how people deal with each other, about how power affects people, how people affect power, and most importantly I've learned a great deal about sensitivity. As individuals we are all the products of our upbringings and environments. In some cases we are said to be the victims of our environment. In just as many cases we are said to be the benefactors of our environment. We are sensitive only to what we know and to that which does not scare us. Of all the criticism that has been dumped upon the School Board by those of us on the Board, by

the press and by the public, the most painfully accurate is that our actions, at least this year, have often lacked sensitivity.

I have also learned a great deal about myself. I have learned at least a little about the importance of the idea of balance. In my term there was some good, there was some bad; it has all balanced out. I like to be optimistic and think that in the end some of the mistakes we have made this year will eventually be balanced out in the future. I have also learned a great deal about perceptions; about how dreadfully important they are. While it's funny to kid about, I have often felt that we are, all of us, like eight little emperors waiting for a new suit of clothes. At times the issue itself has become irrelevant to the point of being an offensive intrusion on the display at hand. When I say that, I must laugh, for a friend once told me, "Politics, son, is the art of dealing with the real."

I don't mean to sound cynical or bitter, for I'm not. They say that you criticize most strongly those that are most dear. Well, strange as it may seem, I do have a certain affection for the School Board. Like the song says, I guess I've just grown accustomed to its face. But, back to the idea of perceptions. Also, along those lines, I have learned that there are no panacea -- there are no absolutes. Try as we might to stuff this big, ungainly school system into a tight, all encompassing mold, it just doesn't seem to work. We are, all of us, individuals. Individually we have left an imprint on each other and the school system. I wish only that we were more sensitive to the fact that this whole school system is composed of individuals -- individual teachers and individual students. We just don't all fit into the same cookie cutter, though some of us wish it so.

I have also learned a great deal about ideology. Here on the School Board it seems there is a tendency towards name-calling. We call each other liberal and conservative. We are repelled, though, one by the image of the other. And we split along those lines, it seems, regardless of the issue. If a "liberal" defends an issue, the "conservatives" automatically reject it, and certainly the opposite scenario is true. It is sad that we, the body empowered to set good educational policy (presumably by example), must sometimes resort to such mindless, immature tactics.

I guess if you dredge up my voting record, you would see that I am a liberal. But I am not sure that's an epitaph I would want haunting me anymore than I would want the label "conservative" floating around my backdoor. I am my own person and have at least tried to vote accordingly. For the most part, I feel I have been successful. I have tried to see through the issues to their bearing upon students and learning. Unfortunately, I am not sure all Board members can claim credit for the same.

There are some things that I am proud of. I feel that a certain plateau has been reached in the student member's relationship to the Board of Education. I like to think that we are all able to leave our differences at the Board table where they belong. I don't feel

any personal acrimony towards any Board member. I hope that is reciprocal. That is the essence of professionalism.

Thus, learning is as much a part of being a Board member as it is in setting Board policy. I hope my colleagues on the Board have learned something from me -- about students and maybe even about themselves. I came to the School Board with many questions. Questions are obviously an essential part of the learning process. I had questions about the system, about politics, and about myself. The only real answer I've come away with is that there are no absolute answers -- and certainly never enough good questions. I hope this, and future School Boards, never become so content with the actions taken that they see no need to seek further answers. Regardless of what the test scores may or may not say, there is still much that needs to be done. There always will be.

I have been called an idealist and I cannot really disagree with that "accusation." I am perhaps of the highest order of idealists. I actually believe in what I say and dream. I believe any dream is possible and if I can say that after a year on the School Board, then you'd better believe it's true.

The reality of the School Board is that it is now and always will be a politically motivated body. While I decry the effect that attitude has on students, it is simply a fact that must be accepted. Even in my idealism I have learned that, in the end, facts, hard facts, can only be accepted. All we can do is accept reality for what it is and try to change it for the better.

In a sense, I feel I am leaving with some business unfinished. In one respect, it can be said that the school closure ordeal will never be over; its legal and political residue will haunt us for years to come. I am saddened and shamed by our weakness with the health curriculum. Having finally finished the K-8 policy, I can now say that our problems have just begun.

I have, thus far, avoided addressing specific Board members and their related actions which have upset me. Comments that I have for individual Board members were given in private, where they belong. My job now, and all year, has not been to try and make the School Board and individual members look bad. That's the job of the press. The criticisms I have enumerated so far are directed at the entire Board, all eight of us. When something goes wrong, it is the fault of all of us. Although we may not play very cohesively at times, we are all members of the team. Those are words of advice, Board members, please don't forget them.

I think that at this point, more than at any other time, in the history of the student member, we have arrived at the proverbial end of the beginning. This is true on many levels. If we look at the student seat in terms quantitatively equal to those of my adult counterparts, then we can say that one full, four-year term has come to an end. We have also implemented a new election process, which

Kurt was the first to endure. Many precedents have been set these past four years -- it is now time to start using them. Good luck, Kurt.

In closing, I would like to publicly thank both Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Zappone for being the gracious and responsive presidents they were during my term. I would also like to thank the School Board and school system staff for listening to me and for helping me, even when I didn't know I needed it. Finally, I would like to thank both Mike Michaelson and Tom Fess for always having a ear available and for never being afraid to tell me I was wrong.

And so, as I leave you, I ask you to remember the words of H.L. Mencken: "If, after I have gone you wish to please my ghost, forgive some sinner and wink at an ugly girl." Thank you. Good night.

Re: Statements by Board Members

Board members and the superintendent extended words of welcome to Mr. Hirsch and best wishes to Mr. Lipson for a job well done.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 8:40. A reception for Mr. Hirsch and Mr. Lipson followed.

President

Secretary

EA:mlw