

**NJM Comments at the
May 26, 2011 Special-Called Board of Trustees Meeting**

Budget Priorities:

- I know I do not need to remind anyone on this Board that our victory is in the classroom.
- It goes without saying that you would not be doing this work if you were not committed to giving the children of this community a better chance at life through a high quality education.
- I know you are seeing progress and improvements each year.
- The quality of our schools is a direct result of the quality and support of our teachers and leaders.
- Our greatest resource is our human capital.
- At this time however; we are in danger of losing our best and brightest.

Board Members,

We are in a competition for talent:

- Teacher talent, and
- Leadership talent.

And, we are beginning to lose our competitive edge.

Because:

1. Our staff has had no raise in three years;
2. Significant reductions in personnel mean those workers left behind absorb more responsibilities and work longer hours with no corresponding increase in compensation; and
3. Our entry level teachers and hourly employees have a hard time existing due to the cost of living in Charleston.

Here is my bottom line:

Our dedicated staff should not be forced to choose between doing good things for the children of Charleston County and being a good provider for their own family. Therefore, I respectfully request that you make it our **highest** priority to take care of the great people who are taking great care of the children.

Before you approve the **final** budget, I ask you to:

1. Please reverse the decision to furlough our principals and 12-month employees, and
2. Give our teachers a step increase.