# Minutes of the Regular Meeting

**of the Massachusetts Board of Education**

# January 23, 2007

**9:10 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

**Microsoft Corporation**

**201 Jones Road, Waltham, Massachusetts**

Members of the Board of Education Present:

**Christopher R. Anderson**,Chairman, Westford

**Ann J. Reale**, Vice-Chair, Commissioner of Early Education and Care

**Thomas E. Fortmann,** Lexington

**Trevor Frederick**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Ipswich

**Patricia F. Plummer**, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education

**Roberta R. Schaefer**, Worcester

**Sandra L. Stotsky,** Brookline

**Henry M. Thomas, III,** Springfield

**David P. Driscoll,** Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Education Absent:

**Harneen Chernow,** Jamaica Plain

Chairman Christopher R. Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

## Statements from the Public

* Andrew Chen of EduTron Corporation addressed the Board on mathematics improvement initiatives.
* Richard Bisk of the Mathematics Department at Worcester State College addressed the Board on mathematics improvement initiatives.
* Nicole Sherf of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association addressed the Board on the requirements for the Elementary Foreign Language License.

#### Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Anderson opened the meeting by reading a statement of sympathy to the family of the student recently killed at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School and to the entire Lincoln-Sudbury community.

The Chairman reported on the search for a new Commissioner to replace Commissioner Driscoll, who has announced he is retiring as of August 31, 2007. Chairman Anderson said that a Request for Responses (RFR) has been posted to hire a consultant to assist the Board with the search process. He said that a committee of the Board, consisting of Thomas Fortmann, Patricia Plummer, Henry Thomas and the Chairman, will meet in February to discuss the details of the search effort.

Chairman Anderson thanked Microsoft for hosting the Board this month and for their continued commitment to the education of the students of the Commonwealth. Ted MacLean, Microsoft's General Manager of the Northeast Region, and Anthony Salcito, General Manager for Microsoft Education, welcomed the Board.

#### Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Driscoll introduced Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, President of Bridgewater State College and Special Advisor on Education to Governor Patrick, who briefly addressed the Board.

The Commissioner also congratulated former Deputy Commissioner Mark McQuillan on his recent appointment as Commissioner of Education for the state of Connecticut.

#### Approval of the Minutes

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 19, 2006 regular meeting, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

# 1. Graduation Rate as an Element of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Calculation under No Child Left Behind Act

The Board had an initial discussion on using the graduation rate as an element of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations. The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires states to report graduation rates for each high school, based on the percentage of students, measured from the beginning of high school, who graduate from high school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years. Commissioner Driscoll explained that the Department now has five years of student-level data from the state's Student Information Management System (SIMS), and will be able to track and report the graduation data rather than relying on estimates based on dropout and enrollment reports. Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton and Project Manager Paula O’Sullivan presented a PowerPoint overview on Calculating Graduation Rates and responded to questions from Board members.

The Board discussed preliminary state-level graduation rate data for the class of 2006, which indicate that 80% of students statewide (62% in urban districts) graduate within four years. Beginning next year, the Department will also be able to report a five-year graduation rate for all high schools.

Currently, the rate of students earning a Competency Determination (CD) is used in calculating AYP for high schools. Associate Commissioner Juliane Dow noted that the CD rate (70%) is not intended to be a goal; rather, it is the cut point for state intervention. At the February meeting the Commissioner will recommend and the Board will vote on a graduation rate standard that all student groups in secondary schools in the Commonwealth must meet in order for the school to make AYP.

# 2. School and District Accountability System

**a. Update on Four Schools Considered for Commonwealth Pilot School Status**

Last month the Board heard from the superintendents, principals and union leaders of the four schools being considered for Commonwealth Pilot School status: Duggan Middle School and Putnam Vocational-Technical High School in Springfield, English High School in Boston and Academy Middle School in Fitchburg.

At the meeting this month, Commissioner Driscoll updated the Board on the current status of each of the schools. He said that the faculty in each of the four schools has voted in favor of becoming a Commonwealth Pilot School. The next step is for the schools to submit their proposals to the Department of Education. Initial proposals are due on February 9th and a more detailed proposal is due in April. Chairman Anderson said he is very gratified by the progress these schools have made thus far and that he would encourage other schools to consider this model.

At the February meeting, Commissioner Driscoll will make a recommendation to the Board on whether the schools have met the state guidelines in their submitted proposals.

**b. Recommendations on Plans from 13 Underperforming Schools**

The Board discussed the plans to improve student performance submitted by thirteen schools that were identified as underperforming in the 2005 and 2006 review cycles. The schools include a Horace Mann charter school in Springfield, three schools in New Bedford, two schools in Fall River and seven schools in Worcester.

All thirteen school plans respond to the criteria in the regulations on underperforming schools and school districts that the Board adopted in October. The schools will implement the plans over the next 24 months. Worcester Supt. James Caradonio addressed the Board in response to questions from Board members about the plans for the Worcester schools.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1J and 603 CMR 2.03, and upon recommendation of the Commissioner, hereby accept the plans for improving student performance submitted for the following 13 schools:**

***2005 cohort***

**New Leadership Horace Mann Charter School – Springfield**

**Normandin Middle School – New Bedford**

***2006 cohort***

**William S. Greene Elementary School – Fall River**

**Harriet T. Healey Elementary School – Fall River**

**Abraham Lincoln Elementary School – New Bedford**

**George H. Dunbar Elementary School – New Bedford**

**Burncoat Middle School – Worcester**

**Burncoat Street Elementary School – Worcester**

**Forest Grove Middle School – Worcester**

**Lincoln Street Elementary School – Worcester**

**Sullivan Middle School – Worcester**

**Chandler Elementary School – Worcester**

**Chandler Magnet School - Worcester**

The motion passed 7-0-1. Board member Henry Thomasabstained.

# 3. Charter Schools

The Board discussed renewing the charter for Uphams Corner Charter School in Boston with five conditions that the school must meet. At its December meeting, the Board had an initial discussion on renewal of the charter for the Uphams Corner Charter School. At that time, Commissioner Driscoll recommended that the charter not be renewed, due primarily to the school's poor academic performance. Chairman Anderson requested that the Commissioner identify the conditions the school would need to meet in order to renew the charter and ensure success.

This month the Commissioner summarized the issues of concern and presented specific conditions covering the problems that have been identified. The school must take certain actions by June 30, 2007 and show substantial progress by December 2007. By December 2008 the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success and arrange for relocation of the school to the Uphams Corner area. The Department's Charter School Office will conduct annual site visits starting in the fall of 2007 to evaluate the school's progress.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grant a renewal of a public school charter to the following school for the five-year period from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2012, as recommended by the Commissioner:**

**Commonwealth Charter School:**

**Uphams Corner Charter School**

**Location: Boston**

**Number of students: 200**

**Grade levels: 5 through 8**

**This renewal is explicitly conditioned upon the following. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Board of Education placing Uphams Corner Charter School on probation or revoking its charter.**

1. **By June 30, 2007, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have submitted to and received approval from the Department of Education for the following items:**

* **A school improvement plan, consistent with the Department’s standards for a District Plan for School Intervention.**
* **A charter school Accountability Plan, including goals and annual benchmarks regarding academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. The Accountability Plan must be aligned to the school’s plan for improvement as referenced above, and must include the school’s plan for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics.**
* **All relevant amendments to its charter, in accordance with 603 CMR 1.11.**

1. **By June 30, 2007, the school shall engage a consultant, who shall be approved by the Commissioner, to review the school’s leadership structure and provide training and assistance to strengthen the school’s management.**
2. **By December 2007, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have met or shall be making substantial progress toward the benchmarks set forth in its approved Accountability Plan.**
3. **By December 2008, Uphams Corner Charter School shall demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting all benchmarks in its 2007-2012 Accountability Plan and has made Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics for 2008.**
4. **By December 2008, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have completed the necessary property acquisition and fundraising to permit a relocation of the school to the Uphams Corner area no later than September 2009.**

**Uphams Corner Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote was unanimous.

The Board had an initial discussion of the charter renewal applications from four charter schools. Commissioner Driscoll recommended that the Board renew the charters for the Edward Brooke Charter School and Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School, both of which are in Boston. He further recommended that the Board renew the charters for the Christa McAuliffe Regional Charter School (Framingham) and North Central Charter Essential School (Fitchburg) with conditions. The Board will vote on the renewals at its February meeting.

The Board discussed four final applications for new Commonwealth charters. The Department is continuing its review of the four charter applications. At the February 27th Board meeting, Commissioner Driscoll will recommend and the Board will vote on granting charters for new charter schools.

# Mathematics Improvement Initiatives: Proposed Amendments to Educator Licensure and Preparation Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00

Continuing its discussion from last month's meeting, the Board discussed soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to the Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7.00) for the purpose of strengthening preparation and licensing of elementary and special education teachers to teach mathematics.

The proposed changes would specify the subject matter knowledge requirements of the 36 semester hours in arts and sciences coursework in undergraduate preparation programs, focusing on outcomes. The changes also would clarify the breadth and depth of mathematics knowledge topics addressed on the General Curriculum test. Board member Thomas Fortmann recommended that the guidelines should reflect several national and professional publications that already exist. Board member Patricia Plummer, Chancellor of Higher Education, said she would work with the Department to communicate the changes to state college presidents. After the public comment period, the Commissioner will bring the proposed amendments back to the Board in the spring for final action.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B and c. 71, § 38G, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner. The proposed amendments address mathematics requirements for elementary and special education licenses.**

The vote was unanimous.

# 5. Amendments to Regional School District Regulations (603 CMR 41.00)

In June 2006, the Board voted to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the regulations governing regional school districts, to clarify the rules governing regional school district budgets. The Department received helpful comments on the proposed amendments and revised them as a result. This month, the Board discussed approving the amendments to the regulations.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, hereby adopt amendments to the regional school district regulations, 603 CMR 41.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

# 6. Approval of Grants

The Board discussed grants totaling $1,958,646 under the following programs: Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Programs for Students with Disabilities (an increase of $55,011 to one of the grants that the Board awarded last month - state funds); Community Adult Learning Centers (an increase of $46,306 to grants previously awarded - state funds); Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten ($1,681,700 - state funds); and John Silber Early Reading Initiative (an increase of $175,629 to grants previously awarded - state funds).

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the grants as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the meeting adjourn at 11:45 a.m., subject to the call of the Chairman.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll

Commissioner of Education

and Secretary of the Board