Minutes of the Regular Meeting

**of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**December 15, 2009**

**8:36 a.m. – 1:35 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Harneen Chernow**, Vice Chair, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**Michael D'Ortenzio Jr.**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Wellesley

**Thomas E. Fortmann**, Lexington

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

**Paul Reville**, Secretary of Education, Worcester

**Sandra L. Stotsky**, Brookline

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Beverly Holmes**, Springfield

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

Chair Maura Banta called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Maura Banta said it as a pleasure to have participated in Boston's Principal for a Day program at Parkway Academy of Technology and Health. The chair said she also participated in a Rennie Center panel discussion with union representatives, charter schools, and higher education on alternative teacher preparation programs, a Boston Plan for Excellence event, and the New England Board of Higher Education's Core of Matter conference on higher education embracing K-12 standards. Chair Banta announced that Board member Beverly Holmes has accepted an appointment to a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) study group on the use of time and technology in the 21st century. The chair thanked Board members who recently attended charter school public hearings, and said those members will be asked to make brief comments on those proceedings at the February meeting. The chair said that the Board's 2009 Annual Report had been finalized and distributed to members.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester said he did not have an answer as to whether Inspector General Gregory Sullivan would be attending this meeting, or when his report would be released. The commissioner said that he and other members of his staff had been interviewed by Inspector General Sullivan in recent days. The commissioner introduced Watertown Public Schools Superintendent Ann Koufman and Watertown High School Principal Paul Noftsker. The commissioner then recognized and congratulated Watertown High School student Kevin Phu, whose [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFmVwdovRq0) submission was chosen as a one of ten national semi-finalists in the U.S. Department of Education's "I Am What I Learn" contest.

**Comments from the Public**

* Senator Thomas McGee addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School amendment request.
* Michael Morrisey, a Lexington parent, addressed the Board on school records and child protection teams.
* Steve Hemman from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools addressed the Board on regional school transportation.
* Jillian Nesgos from Boston Renaissance Charter Public School addressed the Board on Boston Renaissance's charter renewal.
* Alice Gunning, Lynn Teachers Union, addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School amendment request.
* Josh Zoia from KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School addressed the Board on the school's amendment request.
* Esther Vargas, a parent, addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School amendment request.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Paul Reville said that while the Administration has thus far been able to protect chapter 70 from 9C cuts, there is a fair amount of uncertainty, and the Governor is seeking additional 9C powers. The secretary said that FY11 will be a challenging year. The secretary provided an update on the education reform legislation.

# Approval of the Minutes

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009 regular meeting and the November 16, 2009 special meeting, as amended.**

The vote was unanimous.

Partnership with WGBH

Commissioner Chester said that shortly after coming on board a year and a half ago, he was approached by the leadership of the WGBH Educational Foundation to discuss ways in which the Department and the Foundation could work together to support the work of teachers. The commissioner introduced Jon Abbott and Denise Blumenthal from the Foundation and Rus Peotter from WGBY Public Television. Mr. Abbott described the development of Teachers' Domain, a national digital service for classrooms to provide a lineup of educational programming and outreach. Ms. Blumenthal said Teachers' Domain, which is a free online resource that will provide content to use in the classroom, already has 23,000 registered users in Massachusetts. Mr. Peotter described the development of High School Quiz Show, a weekly game show tied to the state's academic standards. The show will launch in March 2010 and feature students from 20 Massachusetts high schools.

Commissioner Chester said the Department is tremendously appreciative of WGBH / WGBY's efforts, and that this work fits nicely with the Board's focus to support districts around curriculum and instruction. Vice Chair Chernow asked what percentage of participating districts in High School Quiz Show would be from urban districts. Mr. Abbott said that the show would include small and large districts, urban and rural, and include a very wide range of participants. He said all participating schools would be public schools at first. Board member Sandra Stotsky asked whether local scientists would be drawn on, and Ms. Blumenthal said they would be.

Board member Tom Fortmann said this was a very exciting opportunity. Dr. Fortmann asked why mathematics does not seem to be a part of High School Quiz Show. Mr. Peotter said there is always a struggle with categories, but that mathematics was included as part of the natural sciences. Board member Michael D'Ortenzio Jr. asked whether lesson plans were designed to fit into a class or represent an entire course. Ms. Blumenthal said there would be entire course designs for teachers.

**Charter Schools**

*Amendments to Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00*

Commissioner Chester recommended that the Board adopt amendments to the charter school regulations, [603 CMR 1.00](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr1.html?section=all), that were reviewed by the Board in September and sent out for public comment. The amendments are in response to the Joint Committee on Education's hearing on the Gloucester Community Arts Charter School approval process in early June and issues that arose around census data, Board members' attendance at charter public hearings, location of public hearings, and waiver of regulations.

Board member Ruth Kaplan asked about attrition of students over time with respect to charter renewal decisions. Charter School Director Mary Street said the Department uses common school performance criteria. The commissioner said he anticipates the need to further revise the charter school regulations depending on the final outcome of the education reform legislation that is currently before the House of Representatives.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B and chapter 71, § 89, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

*Charter Renewals for Boston Renaissance Charter Public School and Lowell Community Charter Public School*

*Boston Renaissance Charter Public School*

Commissioner Chester said that Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is a school moving in the right direction, but the Department continues to have concerns about the size of the school. The commissioner said the school's probationary status is not a negative, and the Department wants to look continually at the school's progress.

Ms. Kaplan asked why the Department sees the need to continue the school's probationary status. Commissioner Chester said the school has not yet accomplished its reduction in enrollment. Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the call to reduce enrollment was based on the school's performance in two earlier terms and that the grade span was too large to manage the school and the facility was hard to manage. Secretary Reville asked whether the school was making adequate progress toward enrollment now. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said it was.

Vice Chair Chernow said she saw nothing about teacher turnover or class size each year. Ms. Kaplan asked what rights the school has to get the status lifted. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said the commissioner can bring a recommendation to the Board at any time, and that the commissioner made a commitment to the school's principal Roger Harris to review the status in one year. Dr. Fortmann said the school was clearly struggling when he visited two years ago, and he is pleased to see this report and to see that performance is on track. Vice Chair Chernow asked about the school's move. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said the school will move to Hyde Park in September 2011.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grants to the following school a renewal for the five-year period from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2015 and an extension of the terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner.**

**Commonwealth Charter School:**

**Boston Renaissance Charter Public School**

**Location: Boston**

**Number of students: 1,178**

**Grade levels: Kindergarten through six**

**The terms of probation are extended as follows:**

**Extension of the deadline for reducing enrollment to September 2012, in accordance with enrollment of no more than:**

* **1,051 students in September 2010,**
* **944 students in September 2011 and**
* **880 students in September 2012.**

**Absent further action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, failure to meet this condition will result in revocation of the charter or imposition of additional conditions.**

**Boston Renaissance Charter Public 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.

*Lowell Community Charter Public School*

Commissioner Chester said he was putting Lowell Community Charter Public School on notice that he would ask the Board to vote not to renew the school's charter at its January 26, 2010 meeting. The commissioner said the school, now in its tenth year, has failed to make sufficient academic progress, and there is no sign that the school's low performance is on the upswing. The commissioner said that growth data illustrates that the school trails substantially below the performance of Lowell Public Schools as a whole.

Associate Commissioner Wulfson said the Department will invite the school's board of trustees to submit material prior to the January Board meeting and make a presentation at the meeting if it chooses to. General Counsel Rhoda Schneider said the Board's vote in January would be an intent to not renew the charter, and the school would have 15 days to request a hearing. If the school does not request a hearing, the school's charter would not be renewed and the school would close at the end of the current school year.

Board member Gerald Chertavian asked about options for probation or turnaround versus non-renewal. Commissioner Chester said this was not the first time the state had concerns about the school, and he hasn't seen any improvement. Ms. Street said the school is ten years old, and the Department conducted site visits in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of its charter, as well as a renewal inspection this fall. Vice Chair Chernow asked if there was some rubric that is used to look at renewals. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said the Board sets the standard for 10-year and 15-year renewals. Mr. Wulfson said the Department expects to see charter schools that are academic successes, that are faithful to their mission, and that are viable.

*Report on Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter Public School*

Commissioner Chester said he would ask the Board to vote its intent to revoke the charter of Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter Public School (RMH) at its January 26, 2010 meeting. The commissioner said his recommendation was based on evidence of widespread, pervasive cheating at the behest of adults during the 2009 administration of the MCAS tests at RMH and his belief that the school is no longer a viable organization. The school will be invited to make a presentation at the January meeting prior to the Board's vote. The commissioner said that additional allegations of irregularities that were raised during the investigation into cheating were not a part of his decision to recommend revocation, but were being investigated with assistance from the Attorney General's Office and the Office of the State Auditor.

*Charter Amendment for KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School*

Commissioner Chester said he was very pleased to bring forward an amendment request by KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School. The commissioner said this is a strong institution that has delivered good results to students. The school is seeking to add grades 9-12 and increase its enrollment by 530 students (to 850 students). The commissioner said he was recommending an increase of 430 students given the current cap for Lynn, the fact that there are two current charter applicants that include Lynn, and the desire to leave sufficient room under the cap.

Dr. Fortmann said he was very pleased to see this proposal. Dr. Fortmann said he has been to KIPP a number of times, and that the parent who spoke during public comment was very moving. He said the school has done an impressive amount of fundraising to support its students and it would have to do more for a high school. Secretary Reville said this is an extremely impressive school, but the request presents the Board with a significant challenge. The secretary said neither the statute nor the regulation asks the Board to take the financial picture into consideration. The secretary said the Board has to follow the process outlined by law, and judge this case on its merits. Secretary Reville said the Board should leave the funding decisions to the Legislature. The secretary said he was strongly supportive of this amendment request.

Ms. Kaplan asked about the school not admitting students beyond grade 5. Ms. Kaplan also asked why there was no consideration of a financial trigger for this school. Commissioner Chester said he did consider a financial trigger, but that the nature of the trigger for Gloucester last year was one that would be met a year in advance of the school opening. Vice Chair Chernow asked about apparent attrition numbers. Ms. Street said the school projects an attrition rate of 18 percent, a lot of which happens in 8th grade. Ms. Kaplan said she has concerns about the process of creating a high school as an amendment to a school and adding on a high school that would not be accessible to other students in Lynn. Ms. Kaplan said she sees the value of the school but has concerns about its expansion.

Dr. Stotsky said she was curious about the decline in the enrollment in the Lynn Public Schools, and asked for data on normal attrition. Vice Chair Chernow said that perhaps the Department could bring to future discussions information on per pupil costs and attrition.

Dr. Fortmann said the cohort that comes to KIPP is lower achieving than the public schools, but the school brings them up by 7th grade to 80 percent proficient or above. Dr. Fortmann said the problem is that KIPP and others do their job over years, and can't work their magic in one year. Mr. Chertavian said the question is whether this organization is going to do right by the students they serve. Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. said that if the Lynn Public Schools worked for every student, they wouldn’t need to have KIPP.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

### KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School (enrollment increase from 320 to 750

### students and grades served from 5-8 to 5-12)

**Location: Lynn**

**Maximum enrollment: 750**

**Grade levels: 5-12**

**Effective year: 2010**

The vote was 7-2. Board members Chernow and Kaplan voted in opposition.

*Report on Conditions Met by Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School and Vote to Remove from Probation*

In 2006 the Board renewed the charter for the Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School (BBCPS) with conditions. In February 2009, the Board placed the school on probation with a condition concerning academic success because the school did not consistently meet the conditions. Commissioner Chester said that since the school has met the condition and met its growth targets, he recommended that the school be removed from probationary status.

Ms. Kaplan asked about the Charter School Office's role in advising charter schools on how to improve. Commissioner Chester said the Department includes charter schools in all technical assistance and general assistance programs it runs. The commissioner said the state charter school association supports charter schools. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said the Department represents the Board as the charter school authorizer. The Department assisted in getting the resource center started. Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy said that charter schools identified as underperforming schools are eligible to access the same support as any other public school.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby remove Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School from probation because it has met the condition imposed on its charter in February 2009.**

The vote was unanimous.

Paul Reville had to leave the meeting at 11:20 a.m. Executive Office of Education General Counsel Nicholas Martinelli sat in for Secretary Reville.

Report on Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter Public School

Commissioner Chester clarified his earlier remarks on Robert M. Hughes. The commissioner said the Department's investigation had been initiated as a result of improbably high scores achieved during the 2009 MCAS administration. The commissioner said the Department concluded that cheating had occurred by or at the behest of adults, but that there had not been any final determination about any individual's role. The commissioner said the Department had permanently invalidated the school's 2009 MCAS results.

School and District Accountability and Assistance System Redesign: Update on Proposed Amendments to Regulations (603 CMR 2.00), Pending State Legislation, Advisory Council Report, and Other Developments

Joe Esposito, chair of the Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance, said the council met last Wednesday and reviewed the Department's proposed accountability regulations. Mr. Esposito reported on the work of the council, which has met four times since June 2009, including having: reviewed the Department's criteria and formula for designating Level 4 schools; discussed the structures and processes to deliver targeted assistance through regional District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs); discussed feedback and learning from the 2008-09 district reviews and plans for 2009-10 district reviews; reviewed revised district standards and conditions for school effectiveness; reviewed and commented on draft regulations on accountability and assistance; monitored the proposed education reform legislation; and monitored competitive ARRA and Title I School Improvement Section G grants and the implications for school and district accountability and assistance. Mr. Esposito said the Department lacks adequate resources and capacity to meet statutory requirements of 40 school district audits in FY2010 and targeted assistance for those districts requiring some intervention.

Dr. Stotsky asked how the council receives feedback from parents. Mr. Esposito said there are many parents on the council, but also that the council cannot redefine what it does by statute. Surveys from the Department could address parents’ concerns also. Commissioner Chester said the legislation that is pending anticipates parent involvement in these schools. Ms. Kaplan suggested there might be a way to use volunteers from the parent and family engagement advisory council.

Dr. Fortmann said he had concerns that of the four models for turnaround, the transformative model does not require schools to do very much. Dr. Fortmann asked whether the language could be made tighter. Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr said the transformative model requires the least change but is still significant. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said if a district has nine or more Level 4 schools, it can use a single model for only 50% of those schools. Chair Banta thanked Mr. Esposito for his presentation and his leadership.

Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr said that given the uncertainty around the implications of the proposed legislation and new USED regulations regarding Title I School Improvement Section G funding, and a desire not to confuse the field, there would be no discussion this month of the draft regulations, which will require additional revision. Deputy Commissioner Baehr made a presentation on the proposed methodology for identifying Level 4 schools. The deputy commissioner said that new regulations for Title I School Improvement, Section G requires states to develop a competitive process to administer the grants and outlines four models of turnaround. Level 4 schools would combine the weakest performance and least positive movement. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said 55 or so schools would be designated as Level 4 schools, and those schools would have first priority for Title 1 School Improvement, Section G dollars.

Dr. Stotsky asked about schools with turnaround partners. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said some of those schools still have partners, while others have moved on. Dr. Fortmann asked whether the four co-pilot schools landed in any particular category. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said it's mixed. She said the Department is getting away from multiple labels, and that all would be Level 4 schools. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said this will be a simpler, clearer framework with a methodology that is transparent and based on data. Commissioner Chester said what was presented at today's meeting would likely come back as a proposed regulation after the education reform legislation is enacted.

Ms. Kaplan asked if there was anything to look at other than test performance and graduation rates. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said there is a desire to have a quantitative measure, but a school would not go to Level 5 without a review of what is going on in that school. Ms. Kaplan said she was concerned about using only quantitative data. Vice Chair Chernow said she appreciated that the labels were being consolidated, and asked what it meant to be Title I eligible. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said eligibility is based on the percent of students in the school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. She said that districts must intervene in all of their struggling schools. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said that nationally only 10 percent of schools identified as underperforming ever make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In Massachusetts, only four of 40 schools have done so. Ms. Kaplan asked what has been learned in those four schools. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Department will come back with a future report.

Dr. Stotsky asked about a research base for effectiveness. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the federal government is not requiring a research base, except for the curriculum models. There are defined interventions, and you have to choose one of the four models. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Department is planning 10 comprehensive district reviews in 2010 and 10 Best Practices reviews focused on English language learners.

**National Validation Committee**

Board member Sandra Stotsky, who serves as a member of the National Validation Committee, provided an update and said that drafts of complete sets of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) standards are due to be released in mid-January.

Dr. Stotsky asked that the following statement be read into the record:

I have three questions for the Commissioner and the Secretary of Education:

1. What is our Plan B if the math and ELA standards released by CCSSO in mid-January are inferior to what is in our current documents? It's possible they may be as good, but we should be as prepared for the possibility that they won't be. Can the Commissioner tell us what procedure we will follow if the released standards are inferior to what we now have? I understand that several staff members have been working with the CCSSO draft-writing committees. But there is no guarantee that anything they do or suggest will be in the released documents. That is what I have been told with respect to my own contributions, as well.
2. Regardless of the condition these standards are in when they are released, what is the process that needs to be put in place so that these standards can be quickly reviewed by Massachusetts high school mathematics and English teachers – the teachers who will bear the chief burden of addressing whatever are finalized by CCSSO as "college and career readiness standards?"
3. Can we set aside a good amount of Board time in February or March for a full discussion of the released CCSSI standards?

**Proposed Graduation Rate Standard for 2010 AYP Determinations and Graduation Rate Goal and Annual Targets**

Commissioner Chester said the state sets targets each year for school level and district level graduation rate attainment. The commissioner said the proposal he was recommending would raise the state's standard for the third consecutive year, to a 4-year rate of 70 percent and a 5-year rate of 75 percent or a 2 percentage point increase from the previous year.

Ms. Kaplan said a graduation rate of 100 percent is not a realistic goal. Ms. Kaplan asked what strategy there was to support special education students who can't pass the MCAS tests. Dr. Fortmann said it is clear that more and more schools will be identified for improvement until all schools are identified in 2014. Dr. Fortmann said the 100 percent target is not realistic.

Dr. Mohler-Faria said that goals are interesting, and that when we don't set them, we won't reach them. Dr. Mohler-Faria said our goal is 100 percent, and that to not set a goal is to say we don't expect all students to succeed.

Ms. Kaplan said there needs to be a way to modify the assessment practice so that all students can meet the goal. Dr. Mohler-Faria said if we set the goal, we must find strategies to meet that goal.

Vice Chair Chernow asked how many schools would not have met the new standard. Robert Curtin from the Department said that an additional four schools would not have met AYP under the new criteria. Vice Chair Chernow said that an ambitious goal would be okay if there were funding to allow for more support for students. Commissioner Chester said he worries about setting goals based on diminished support, but that the goals are aspirational and allow us to advocate for more dollars. Dr. Fortmann said we should aspire to a 100 percent graduation rate and to100 percent proficiency, but this has accountability measures tied to it. Dr. Fortmann said AYP is rapidly becoming meaningless.

Mr. Chertavian said there is a high cost to society when students don't graduate from high school. Mr. Chertavian said this should prompt action about the cost to not get all students to that goal, and that these questions don't come into play until a high bar is set. Dr. Stotsky said a longer discussion is needed to examine what is meant by a high school diploma. Dr. Stotsky suggested a discussion about differentiated diplomas.

Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the Department’s submission is going through peer review and the Department is required by January 15, 2010 to submit the 2010 target for AYP determinations and a long-term graduation rate goal.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the following minimum graduation rate standard to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education as the required Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target for 2010 AYP determinations in Massachusetts under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Each of the three alternative criteria is subject to approval by the U.S. Department of Education. These criteria shall apply to all public high schools in the aggregate and all subgroups within each high school. Upon approval of any or all of the criteria by the U.S. Department of Education, all public high schools in the Commonwealth shall meet or exceed one of the following criteria so approved:**

* **a four-year graduation rate of 70 percent applied to the 2009 graduation cohort, or**
* **a five-year graduation rate of 75 percent applied to the 2008 graduation cohort, or**
* **a two percentage point increase in the four-year graduation rate from the 2008 cohort to 2009 cohort.**

**Further, that the Board approve the following graduation rate goal that all public high schools in the Commonwealth and all subgroups within each high school are expected to achieve by 2018: a 95 percent four-year graduation rate and a 100 percent five-year graduation rate; and approve the associated annual targets to achieve this goal, as presented by the commissioner.**

The vote was 6-1-2. Dr. Stotsky voted in opposition. Vice Chair Chernow and Dr. Fortmann abstained.

Dr. Mohler-Faria had to leave the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

**Race to the Top**

Commissioner Chester provided an update to Board members on the Department's ongoing work on the federal Race to the Top application. The commissioner said the Department received 3,400 survey responses, of which 45 percent were from teachers, and that improved mentoring was selected as the most important initiative. The commissioner said that the state's application will contain five anchor initiatives: (1) increasing college and career readiness among all Massachusetts students; (2) rolling out a statewide P-12 teaching and learning system; (3) improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance; (4) ensuring effective teachers and leaders in every school and classroom; and (5) turning around Massachusetts' lowest-achieving schools. The commissioner said these initiatives are very much aligned with the Board's goals and priorities.

Dr. Stotsky said there should be more discussion about expanding vocational technical high schools, which are an important piece of other countries' educational programs. Dr. Stotsky said they are a successful model and a viable one. Commissioner Chester said this was a good point, and it dovetails with the earlier comments about differentiated diploma paths. The commissioner said in the context of this application, it won't buy the state any competitive advantage. Dr. Fortmann said he wanted to add his voice in support of the vocational technical schools. Dr. Fortmann also said that within the turnaround models, the transformational model is too easy, and he would like to see it tightened up. Dr. Stotsky said that we are ignoring teacher preparation, and that there has to be a way to get more well qualified people into teacher preparation programs. Dr. Stotsky said the goal should be to recruit more academically able college students and graduates into teaching.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2010 in Malden.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board