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Board Of Education Regular Meeting

City View School 80 Prospect Street Worcester, MA

Wednesday, December 11, 1996

Chairman John Silber of Brookline called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members Of The Board Of Education Present

Dr. John Silber, Brookline, Chairman
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick, Vice Chairperson
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Jr., Wilmington
Mr. James Peyser, Boston>
Dr. Roberta Schaefer, Worcester
Dr. Abigail M. Thernstrom, Lexington
Ms. Alexis Vagianos, Melrose, Chair, Student Advisory Council
Commissioner Robert V. Antonucci, Secretary

Member Of The Board Of Education Absent

Dr. Stanley Z. Koplik, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education

Also In Attendance

Nancy L. Catuogno, Registered Diplomate Reporter
Ms. Michelle McDonald, Department of Education

Commissioner Antonucci welcomed the state representatives and senators and the school superintendents who came to the meeting. The Commissioner then introduced Dr. James Garvey, Superintendent of Schools in Worcester. Superintendent Garvey thanked the Board of Education for coming to Worcester and introduced Principal Donald Shea of City View School and Principal Deborah Springpeace of the Seven Hills Charter School. Ms. Springpeace invited the Board to tour the charter school following the Board meeting.

Dr. Garvey assured the Board that education reform is alive and well in the Worcester Public Schools. He distributed an information packet describing the goals and accomplishments of the Worcester Public Schools since the Education Reform Act was enacted in 1993. He said Worcester has made great strides, and he encouraged the Board to stay on course with implementation of the Education Reform Act. The two school principals, Mr. Shea and Ms. Springpeace, also addressed the Board briefly.

Dr. Silber stated he was very pleased to see included in the Board materials a profile of the Seven Hills Charter School in terms of student demographics. He commented that it is clear this is one charter school in which the standards of admission are not selective. Dr. Silber also noted that 98% student attendance rate is very satisfactory.

1. Approval Of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 18, 1996 as amended.

Dr. Silber made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Peyser. The vote carried unanimously.

Dr. Silber encouraged Board members to continue the policy of sending corrections to the minutes to the Commissioner in advance of Board meetings, to save time at the meetings.

2.Comments From The Chairman

Dr. Silber stated: I want to address the eagerness with which the Attorney General's Office and the press have addressed whether or not we are meeting legally. I can assure you that there's nothing illegal happening at these meetings. We find it convenient to meet before the regular meetings to discuss issues with one another, we don't take votes, we don't pass anything official, and the matters which we are discussing prior to these meetings are also brought before this entire group for public discussion later. Those who have tried to suggest that there's something illegal about these meetings are straining at a gnat, and I hope the Attorney General has all the other problems in this state corrected so he has time to devote himself to whether or not there was some deviation from the law in our meeting together to have some discussion. That kind of distraction and red herring by the press and the Attorney General's Office is totally unnecessary and doesn't help anybody. Those of you who want to know exactly how exciting those early morning meetings are may contact Tim Cornell or any other members of the press; they sat through it this morning and they can see what a high level discussion it was.

Dr. Silber stated: I also want to address a couple of letters that have been in the press. We have received letters from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, and friends in the Senate who are addressing their concern about speeding up education reform. I can assure them that's exactly what we are trying to do. We also received a letter from Michael Sentance, education advisor to Governor Weld, who is attempting to instruct us on what kind of examination we need to have. We will discuss his letter later when we discuss our assessment programs.

3. Comments From The Commissioner

Commissioner Antonucci noted that Board member Roberta Schaefer requested that the Board consider an amendment to the By-Laws, which is included in the materials. Board members discussed the proposed amendment and noted that it could be adopted at this Board meeting upon a two-thirds vote. **On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education amend the Board By-Laws by adding a new section to Article II (Meetings of the Board) as follows:**

> *Article II. Meetings of the Board*
> *Section 7. Action at Board Meetings*
> **Except in an emergency, the Board shall take action on a matter of policy only when the matter has been discussed by the Board at a previous meeting. This provision may be waived by a two-thirds vote of the members present.**

The motion was made by Dr. Schaefer and seconded by Dr. Thernstrom. The vote carried unanimously. The Commissioner informed the Board that Chancellor Stanley Koplik is not at today's meeting because he has been in the hospital, but he is now doing better. Commissioner Antonucci introduced Ms. Robin McCaffrey who is the new Executive Assistant in his office. He and Dr. Silber then joined in presenting a token of appreciation to Senior Associate Commissioner Mary-Beth Fafard, who is leaving the Department of Education as of today to work at the Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University. Dr. Fafard thanked the Department and the Board.

Statements From The Public

The first speaker was State Representative Harold Lane, Jr. from the First Worcester District,

comprising the towns of Holden, Rutland, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Templeton and Winchendon. Rep. Lane told the Board that last week he filed a bill that would prohibit the purchase and administration of the GED exam. He asked the Board to reverse its recent decision to give the GED exam to this year's public high school seniors. Rep. Lane said he favors assessment and evaluation of schools and students, through meaningful and consequential testing. He believes administering the GED test as an "interim" measure prior to the development of the curriculum-aligned high stakes assessment tests called for under the Education Reform Act is misguided at best.

Rep. Lane said the administration of the GED would be a distraction to the most important job at hand: straightforward, unrelenting school reform in our local schools, school districts and charter schools. The improvement in student results that has been demonstrated in Worcester, Everett, Methuen and Upton-Mendon came from clear and concise curriculum goals and tests that counted for something. Establishing curriculum frameworks is essential for improvement, and should be a primary goal for the Board this year, whereas giving the GED is a gimmick.

Rep. Lane continued: The GED may stop school systems in their tracks and cause them to teach to the GED so they can raise their scores and not suffer embarrassment. Spending taxpayer money on a testing program that has no real purpose other than to issue another wake-up call to a profession already awake and working is a waste, especially when it is unlikely to get serious attention from high school seniors. Rep. Lane concluded by asking the Board to reverse its decision of last month and move quickly to approve the remaining curriculum frameworks and implement the kind of assessment called for under the Education Reform Act.

School Superintendent Isa Zimmerman of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District addressed the Board about the use of technology in schools. She said technology does not replace the learning of, or competence in, the basic skills; rather, it is a tool for teachers and students. In response to a question from Dr. Silber, Supt. Zimmerman said she believes schools should be networked, with a computer in every classroom, and VCR's and video disc players so students can access information that is not otherwise available to them. She encouraged the Board of Education to engage in a discussion with various groups involved with educational technology about developing age-appropriate guidelines for the proper use of technology in schools.

Dr. Kathleen Riordan, Director of Foreign Languages in the Springfield Public Schools, addressed the Board regarding the World Languages framework and assessment. She distributed and asked the Board to review the National Foreign Language Standards Executive Summary, with which the Massachusetts framework is philosophically consistent. She stressed that the study of foreign language is for all students, not a select few. In response to questions from Dr. Silber, Dr. Delattre and other Board members, Dr. Riordan described the Springfield program. She said that at present, every elementary school in Springfield offers foreign language at the kindergarten level. The K-3 program is district wide and all children participate. All children in grades 7 and 8 this year participate, as do all 9th graders in the high schools. Every public school in Springfield has a language program, and the goal is for all students to participate, grades K-12. Dr. Delattre commented that Springfield's work in foreign language instruction is indeed impressive. He expressed appreciation to Dr. Riordan and others who are willing to work with the Board to ensure that the World Languages framework and assessment will serve the children of Massachusetts well.

Rita Oleksak, teacher of foreign languages in Springfield, and second Vice President of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, addressed the Board. She urged the Board to review the World Languages framework and resume the work to develop challenging assessments based on it.

Peter Finn, President of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, addressed the Board on three issues, the GED, Time and Learning, and the state budget. Mr. Finn testified against the GED, stating that if it is administered with consequences for students, it will clearly lead to legal challenges, and if it is administered without consequences for students, it will not receive serious attention from high school seniors. He urged the Board to move forward with the student assessment program called for under the Education Reform Act. Second, Mr. Finn asked the Board not to tamper with the regulations on Time and Learning which are scheduled to take full effect in September 1997. He noted that a number of school districts are having difficulty at the bargaining table even implementing the existing regulations. He recommended that the Board defer decisions on changing the Time and Learning requirements until we see the results of statewide assessments and identify where there are problems. Lastly, Mr. Finn urged the Board not to take money for charter school reimbursements from the Chapter 70 aid to school districts.

Dr. Silber stated he agrees with Mr. Finn that changing the Time and Learning regulations for the fall of 1997 would create havoc. He asked Mr. Finn if he thought it would be possible to stagger teacher schedules in order to extend the school day for students, or to address these issues at the bargaining table with the teachers' unions when collective bargaining agreements are renegotiated Mr. Finn replied that he sees no intrinsic reason not to consider these approaches, but he would not want to speak for the teacher unions on these issues.

Kathy Kelley, President of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, and Meline Kasparian, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, addressed the Board. In response to Dr. Silber's question, they said staggered work schedules for teachers would not be an unattractive concept, but the issue would have to be decided based on the needs and facts in individual school districts. Ms. Kasparian endorsed the Board's request for an additional $100 million for early childhood education, but expressed concern about reducing state aid to districts to fund charter school reimbursements. She urged the Board to leave in place the current Student Learning Time regulations, and opposed administering the GED. Ms. Kelley spoke strongly in favor of the additional $100 million budget requested for the early childhood education budget. She expressed concern about going to block grants for state education programs, particularly those targeted at urban schools. She endorsed the pilot school concept now being implemented in Boston as an alternative to charter schools. Ms. Kelley said administering the GED to high school seniors this year would waste time and money, and would be a detour from the Education Reform Act. In conclusion, she asked the Board to leave the Student Learning Time regulations in place.

In response to a question from Mr. Peyser, Ms. Kasparian said she will fax to the Board a study the MTA has done on the impact of charter school funding on above foundation communities.

Charlotte Ryan of North Orange, past President of the Massachusetts PTA and member of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional District School Committee addressed the Board. She asked the Board to stay on track with the frameworks and assessment called for in the Education Reform Act and forego the GED.

Dr. James Shiminski, Director of Title I and Judy Stolzberg, Director of the Parent Child Home Program in the Pittsfield Public Schools, addressed the Board. They stated the key component of Pittsfield's preschool program is the Parent-Child Home Program, a two-year early intervention initiative for potentially at-risk two- and three-year-olds and their parents. Children and their parents receive a total of 96 home sessions over the two years, using materials and techniques to stimulate the child's early intellectual development. The Pittsfield program is in its 27th year of operation. The results indicate that the program significantly aids low income, academically disadvantaged children to intellectual growth and future performance in school, starting in kindergarten and throughout their schooling. The speakers urged the Board to replicate this type of program throughout the Commonwealth.

Loretta Patterson, President of the Massachusetts Business Educators Association, expressed concern that the Board's statements about the core academic subjects might be detrimental to business education courses and programs. Dr. Silber replied he does not believe any Board member intends to eliminate business education courses, which are in fact very important.

4. Curriculum Frameworks - Continuing Discussion

a. Presentation of English Language Arts Framework

Commissioner Antonucci introduced representatives of the group that have been working on the English Language Arts framework since the summer: Sandra Stotsky, Mark MacQuillan, James McDermott, and Lorraine Plasse. They joined members of the previous committee in working on the document, and today they are presenting the revised draft of the English Language Arts framework. The Commissioner acknowledged others in the audience who worked on the framework: Price Jones from Plymouth High School and Department of Education staff Mary-Beth Fafard, Linda Beardsley, Laurie Slobody, and Susan Wheltle.

Sandra Stotsky stated the English Language Arts framework committee brings familiarity with the public schools and students in them, knowledge of all aspects of the English language arts, understanding of the kind of preparation students should have for post-secondary education, and

many years of professional experience and leadership. She stated the committee began meeting as a group on June 6 and during June to October, the committee spent eight full days working together on the various pieces of the task. In addition, members spent time at home writing new sections, revising useful material from the original draft, and critiquing each other's work as well as the new drafts as they emerged. Every theoretical or pedagogical issue brought up by any member was discussed. Dr. Stotsky said the committee took Commissioner Antonucci's charge very seriously: Do whatever needs to be done to make the revised draft a first class academic document.

Dr. Stotsky added that the committee would never have been able to work together as well as they did, or accomplish what they did in five months, without the steady support and keen interest of the Commissioner and the superb assistance from the Department of Education staff. She said the committee appreciates the many positive comments they have already received from Board members, including the Chairman. She noted that Dr. Silber, in particular, is a scrupulously attentive reader who has clearly read every word in this draft. For example, he noted that Lord Byron's name was not in the core literature list where it belonged and helped Dr. Stotsky discover that it had been inadvertently dropped from the list of British Romantic poets during one of the many retypings of the list.

Dr. Stotsky stated that the committee plans to address all the Board's comments and critiques in the next two weeks to prepare a final version of the framework to be submitted for official approval at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Mark MacQuillan, another member of the committee, stated the document attempts to balance pedagogy and content, with special attention to writing and literature. Literature and composition are drawn together as they historically have been drawn together in the study of English. Dr. MacQuillan said the committee tried to give greater and sharper distinctions between spoken and written language in this document, to help teachers show students how to use literal language and written language in all forms. He concluded that the new framework is designed to offer balance with a reference to a classical approach to the language arts and yet at the same time draw upon various strengths. He thinks it will greatly assist teachers in developing curriculum in their classrooms.

Mr. Jim McDermott, a high school English teacher in Worcester who also served on the committee, next addressed the Board. He discussed the rationale and philosophy of the English Language Arts document. He stated this document will be good for students precisely because it will challenge our best teachers. It offers no illusions that strict adherence to a particular method or pedagogical philosophy is a panacea. It does offer clear and focused parameters, complete with reasonable rationale and a repertoire of strategies and methods and suggestions to get the job done. Mr. McDermott continued that this is not a "teacher-proof" document. In fact, the J. Alfred Prufrocks of the educational world will not like this document because it is not a cookbook. No one method or strategy will be effective for all. Instead, this document is a framework of reference offering guidelines from which teachers can draw to identify instructional strategies and content criteria that will guide their students to master learning standards that are concretely articulated.

Mr. McDermott stated: I can think of three or more teaching practices that this framework will eliminate almost immediately. Number 1 I call "Cover-the-content, not-my-fault, I-didn't-get-it" approach. Number 2, "Keep-them-busy-with worksheets" approach. Number 3 is the "Good-writing-means-writing-as-the-spirit moves-you-so-everything-is-okay" approach. He described case studies of students whose teachers currently use these teaching approaches, and who would benefit greatly from the rigorous standards in this curriculum framework.

Mr. McDermott continued that it makes sense to design a curriculum that sets parameters and reads like an academic document, that offers suggestions based on good practice and sound research and that expects teachers to make professional decisions. It makes sense that reflective thinking students are produced by reflective thinking practitioners. This document, he said, works for him precisely because it expects a lot of him as a teacher.

Lorraine Plasse of the Springfield Public Schools was the last committee member to address the Board. She said the document supports the goal of Education Reform: higher achievement for students. The first part of the framework gives a broad philosophical background, but then the standards present very specific ideas about what it means to be taught to read and write. What is perhaps strongest about the document, she said, is that it provides the benchmarks from preschool through high school. It makes it possible to see the development from the introduction of ideas and

skills in the early grades on through mastery of these ideas and skills by the time a student is in 12th grade. Ms. Plasse added that another very strong part of the document is the focus on early literacy, starting at kindergarten. She said she believes teachers throughout the state will be eager to use the framework in order to raise student achievement.

Dr. Silber stated that he does not want to talk for the others, but he thought Mr. McDermott pretty well summarized his own feeling about this document when he said it offers learning standards concretely delineated. Dr. Silber said he is sure all Board members appreciate the work the committee has done on the framework and are very pleased to hear the committee's evaluation of that work.

Dr. Delattre extended his thanks to the committee and said he feels enormously grateful for the progress that has been made and the work that has been done. He said he hopes the framework will be adopted by the Board in January. He stated that he thinks the most important single word in this document appears in the first appendix on page 70, and it's the most important because it's the wrong word. Dr. Delattre stated: If you look at Appendix A on page 70, in the third paragraph on the page in the middle it says, "A literature curriculum should include works drawn from this list, that is the core literary heritage list or contemporary works of similar quality, exposing students to the diversity of American and world cultures." Dr. Delattre continued: By including the word "or" rather than the word "and" you have effectively cut the core literary heritage list out of the document. The literary list can be simply ignored. I hope you will change the word "or" to "and." He added that he has two other reasons for making this suggestion. First, vocabulary acquisition depends on reading progressively more sophisticated, refined and demanding words. That's one reason to include the core literary list. He said he hopes the framework will provide assurance that if it is followed, there will be reading by grade level that is progressively more demanding. Second, Dr. Delattre asked the committee what portion of the assessment they would recommend be drawn from the core literary list, if they were advising a test maker about building a test. He asked the committee to put this question very much up front.

Mr. Peyser asked the committee to consider the implications for student assessment of including in the literature appendix references to authors rather than titles of specific works that should be read by students. Committee members responded that this is a dilemma they have discussed.
Dr. Schaefer echoed the praise for the English Language Arts framework and asked the Chairman and the Commissioner to clarify the next steps in the process. Dr. Silber stated that he presumes the Commissioner is still receiving comments and criticisms on the document. He invited all Board members to submit whatever criticisms they have, including examples just as previous speakers have provided. He said the Commissioner will take them and, he hopes, assign a single person to do the drafting because drafting is not managed as well by committees as it is by an individual, and then give the revised document to the Board for review as soon as possible. Dr. Silber continued that if members have any subsequent criticisms after having seen the incorporation of the criticisms already made, then send them to the Commissioner so that he can prepare a final document early in January in time for the Board to read it. Presumably the Board would have a look at the document before the end of this year and then another look at a document by the end of the first week of January. That gives the Board a week to study it before voting on it.

Dr. Schaefer asked if it is the Board's intention to vote at the next Board meeting or prior to that. Dr. Silber responded that he was hoping the vote would take place prior to that, but if the Board were to speed things up and do it before the end of the year, nobody is going to be looking at it over Christmas and New Year's and, consequently, waiting until the January 15th meeting would not create a great deal of delay.

Commissioner Antonucci stated the framework has been distributed for public comment based on the Board's endorsement to do that a few weeks ago. We hope to do that as well with the History/ Social Science framework when we finish that discussion, and we will now begin a major public relations initiative to get people to respond in the time frame that the Chairman has described.

Board members briefly discussed the possibility of holding a special meeting early in January to review the revised framework. The Board concluded it is not necessary to hold a meeting prior to the regular January meeting as long as they receive the redrafted framework in time to review the changes that have been incorporated, in order to take a final vote in January.

Commissioner Antonucci asked Sandra Stotsky to serve as the one person who incorporates the comments and changes in the framework. Dr. Stotsky agreed.

Dr. Silber stated the following observations: I don't know whether this is something you wish to incorporate or not, but I find an absence of any discussion of elocution, which it seems to me is quite important, or of penmanship. I recently was visiting a school in which the majority of the children in one class were holding their pens in a way which gives them minimal flexibility. I don't know who had taught them how to write, but it was terribly bad writing and you could understand why, because the children were holding their pens incorrectly. Some address of penmanship would be useful. I also encourage you to consider that thought and language have many purposes other than learning and communicating. It has to do with, this is on page 4, observing and remembering, and what we are trying to communicate is not only meanings, but feelings and mood and a variety of things. And I wonder if on the top of page 5 you really mean that every instructional approach may have a place in a sound and comprehensive educational program. There were educational programs based on boxing ears and slapping hands and corporal punishment, and I doubt seriously if you intend that. So "every" may be just a little too broad a term. Why do you suggest that an illogical argument reflects poorly on the speaker? That is a mistake. It may lead to error but sometimes it results in great praise for the speaker who manages to use fallacy greatly to his advantage. Unfortunately, that's the way it happens.

Dr. Silber continued: That triangle on page 7 would not stand up to any kind of critical examination. Referential or Informational Prose is Information-Centered Discourse, is dealing with subject matter. Whereas if it's audience-centered, it's on persuasion. If I'm engaged in information-centered discourse, it may take a variety of forms and genres which come in the inverted triangle. It may be directed toward listeners for the purpose of persuasion. If I write an essay on capital punishment, for example, as an editorial or as an essay or as a history of a subject, it is all information-centered at the same time that it is directed toward persuasion. This thing of Kinneavy, although University of Texas is where I used to be, I don't think will stand up to the slightest examination or analysis, and I wish you would consider whether it adds anything to your document.

Dr. Silber continued: One final point, on page 15 you begin, "Proponents of a whole language approach believe that reading develops naturally, much as speech does." I think it is fine to put in what the beliefs are of proponents of whole language, and you might indicate what other preferences and beliefs they might have in addition to this one. But if you're going to put that in, it ought to be followed by a statement, "Unfortunately, this belief is not confirmed in fact, because history records civilizations many thousands of years old which developed speech and enjoyed speech for thousands of years and never developed a written language." We know that petroglyphs existed for American Indians, but I'm not aware of a single American Indian tribe that ever made the transition from speech to writing. The Egyptians went into hieroglyphs, which was taking petroglyphs one step further, and finally we get into alphabets and into writing. But the belief that reading and writing develop as naturally as speech -- a belief disconfirmed by fact -- has led a lot of people astray in the way to teach reading. Any normal child who hears language spoken learns to speak, but many normal children watch their parents read and watch their brothers and sisters read and do not automatically learn to read. This is a different enterprise and I don't think that we should be responsible for perpetuating a belief that is known by scholars, historians and anthropologists simply to be false.

Dr. Silber went on: Having said that, these are such minor criticisms. The only serious criticism that I have heard, which I think will take a good deal of time on your behalf, is the question that was raised by E.D. Hirsch when he said that the multi-year arrangement where you have K-4 and 5-8 and 10-12, is not optimally practical and useful because students tend to move on to a different teacher each year and, to make that worse, they move from school to school sometimes even in the same year, or they move from one school to another in the next year or from one town to another.

Dr. Silber concluded: It seems to me that if we fail to achieve uniformity, considerable uniformity in what is expected at every grade level, we're going to have a very difficult, indeed an impossible task of having assessments, and that's the trivial objection. The much more profound objection is we are going to have children who are inevitably transferred and who are going to miss out on a sequential education because of the lack of uniformity. I hope that it's not too much work for you to take those periods, K-4, whatever it is, and break it down into K, 1, 2, and 3, or at least get closer to this so that the teachers at each grade level will have more specific guidance. Picking up again on the observation that was made earlier, we want standards that are rigorous and precise and determinant. I think that is the most important need that this document has at the present time.

Dr. Thernstrom concurred with other Board members that this document is wonderful. She said she shares Dr. Silber's concern about the E.D. Hirsch comment, and asked for the committee's reaction.

Mr. MacQuillan replied that rather than go grade by grade, it would be preferable to narrow the band, to a two-grade span, such as K-1 or K-2. Because reading is developmental and students move at different rates, he thinks targeting expectations by grade could be difficult. On the other hand, the framework could be more specific, as has been suggested. Mr. MacQuillan added, in response to Dr. Delattre's earlier comment, that there is an essential core list but it could be enhanced by other more modern works of literature.

Dr. Silber followed up by asking whether it is possible and practical, using the two grade span, to say, if the child transfers to a new school and has already read *Charlotte's Web*, although *Charlotte's Web* is on the docket for the school to which the child has come, that they ask the child to read another book that the class had already read. In this way most of the kids in that class read *Charlotte's Web* , but the newcomer who has already read it reads the other book. Can the problem be solved that way on a practical level?

Ms. Plasse responded by saying Dr. Silber has identified the problem we have when we have a very narrowly defined list. One would hope that the suggested list we give would give schools an idea of the type of reading, the quality of reading and the level of reading that one would expect at what we are calling benchmarks. Furthermore, she stated, to attempt to identify every piece of literature that students should read would be beyond the scope of a state curriculum framework, and perhaps the cities and towns would like to relate this framework to their own local curriculum.

Dr. Silber replied that much of that is done. However, when the child moves from one city to another, say from Pittsfield to Boston, there's got to be some common standard. And how do you deal with the problem of school books if there's so much flexibility? You can't have libraries in each school with as many copies of each book as there are children who are assigned to read it. When I was in high school, everybody read Henry Esmond. I'm glad they don't require it anymore. I found it counterintuitive at the time I had to read it. But everybody read it and everybody had the volume. It was a textbook. How are you going to handle the problem of the supply of books if it's that fluid? I think some of those practical questions are going to have to be dealt with. You're going to have to have the same books in Boston as in Pittsfield, otherwise we can't have the assessment, can we?

Dr. Stotsky commented that Dr. Silber has raised an issue that is going to require a lot more discussion. She said the framework could ensure that by grade 4, in communities across the state, some core works of literature have been read by all students. The assessments would be geared to the three educational levels. Dr. Silber thanked Dr. Stotsky and the committee and suggested she take into account all of the issues raised and come up with the perfect document. Dr. Schaefer suggested the committee work with the assessment people and Dr. Stotsky replied that in fact, most of this committee is on the assessment committee as well.

Dr. Silber and Commissioner Antonucci thanked the committee for their presentation.

b. Update on History and Social Science Framework

Commissioner Antonucci informed the audience that a Board subcommittee of Mr. James Peyser, Dr. Roberta Schaefer and Dr. Abigail Thernstrom has reviewed and revised the draft curriculum framework in History and Social Science. The revised History/Social Science draft is now being distributed for public comment and the Board will discuss it at the January meeting.
Mr. Peyser explained that the subcommittee based its draft on the nationally acclaimed Virginia learning standards. They edited, reorganized and augmented the Virginia standards, incorporating as much as possible of the most recent Massachusetts draft. Overall, this draft is more content-rich and content-focused than the previous draft. He noted that the exercise of making choices in a framework such as this is not frictionless, and different teachers and school systems will be affected in different ways. Dr. Schaefer added that this framework, like the English Language Arts framework, is organized by bands of several grade levels. She said in light of the earlier discussion, it might be useful to rethink that and be more specific grade-to-grade.

Commissioner Antonucci stated that we will solicit and review public comments on this draft, and then the Board can look at the framework in more detail in January. Dr. Silber stated: We don't know if the Board can take a vote in January until the comments come back. I would hope we can just move as quickly as we can, but I think the people who try to judge progress on educational reform simply on the question of time and when something gets done are missing the boat. If what we do is no better than what was already there, there's no educational reform even if we vote for something. We want to get frameworks we can rely on and that might hold the attention and the

respect of the populace for a decade or two, not something that's going to be obsolete in two or three years and cause somebody to say that we need to rewrite the frameworks. That's what we are working against. But obviously we want to move as quickly as we can.

Dr. Silber said he assumes the comments will be distributed to members of the Board. Commissioner Antonucci agreed, and added in response to a question from Dr. Thernstrom that we can also solicit comments from experts in the field of history and social science.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Dr. Silber informed the Board that he just received and is distributing to members a memo from the MTA on charter school financing. He said: I think it's creating an unnecessary hostility to the charter schools for us to be financing them by making it a zero sum game where the money that goes to a charter school is taken away from the school district from which those students are sent. The charter schools are public schools so in that sense it's still part of the same community, but when the communities in particular are under-funded, it can become a very serious problem. Since the Board has voted to increase the number of charter schools by 50 and to raise the percentage of students that can be taught in the charter schools to ten percent of the total population, which carries it from about 5,000 up to a possibility of 90,000, I propose that we consider changing our vote on how it's to be funded by voting to appropriate sufficient funds to finance those charter schools without subtracting those funds from Chapter 70, so that it's not a zero sum game and so that we will not face the opposition of groups that will jeopardize the chance of our getting the increase we are looking for.

Dr. Thernstrom responded that the Board should consider this proposal but not make a precipitous decision on it. She suggested discussing it further at the January meeting. Dr. Silber agreed that the issue will be on the January agenda, and noted that Meline Kasparian of the MTA will be available to provide further information about the MTA memo if it is needed.

5. GED - Continuing Discussion

Dr. Silber took note of the sudden attention of the media when the discussion of the GED came up, while they had ignored the important discussion of the frameworks.

Dr. Thernstrom said she appreciates the concerns of those who during the public comment period criticized the Board's decision to administer the GED. She noted she voted for that decision, and said she is also concerned about the larger problem of flip-flops on this Board and the integrity of votes already taken. Moreover, she stated, this is an issue that the Chairman and the Governor both care very much about and I think that we need to respect their concern. In addition, we owe both the Chairman and the Governor a vote of thanks. Their strong advocacy of this test has really focused our attention on the whole timetable of assessments and has led to us to think about ways we could speed up that process. We have thought very constructively about that matter. Dr. Thernstrom then offered as the first item in a package to be further outlined by Dr. Schaefer, a proposal that the Board stick with the vote taken last month: to give the GED one time only, this spring, for diagnostic purposes only, with nothing on the student's transcript.

Dr. Schaefer then said: In addition to the GED, we would this year put in place a 10th grade assessment test as is required by law, but this would be an off-the-shelf test, as closely aligned to the curriculum frameworks as possible. This would be used as baseline data for 10th graders this year. Then we would have in place, for the spring of 1998, the entire battery of tests in math and science and hopefully also in English and social science, so that we would be giving those tests for two years before the 10th grade test becomes high stakes for students in the year 2000. Finally, we would ask the Department to develop a proposal for the certificate of advanced mastery based on the administration of advanced placement exams. The Department would come up with a proposal as to how many tests students should take and at what grade they should pass in order to receive the certificate. So we would be moving up the entire timetable for the administration of the assessment by at least a year or perhaps two.

Mr. Irwin stated: We have had our wake-up calls, all the educational community has had their wake-up calls; we know how low our test scores are. Let's do something about it, like completing the curriculum frameworks and assessment requirements of the Education Reform Act. As a Board member I'm in the business of developing policies that are proactive, diagnostic and prescriptive. Why should we penalize students when they are the victims of the system? Let's identify the school districts, with the data we already have, that have the highest percentage of low scores and work with

them to do better until we have the curriculum frameworks and assessments in place. Mr. Irwin made the following motion: that the Board of Education will not require the administration of the GED to high school seniors in the spring of 1997.The motion was seconded by Vice Chairperson Patricia Crutchfield.

There was further discussion on the motion. Student Board member Alexis Vagianos stated: My understanding of the last meeting was that the GED would be a good measure of the knowledge that high school students are expected to know when they graduate. That's why it would be given to people who dropped out of high school and I also understood from what was said at the last meeting that this was either an 8th or 10th grade level assessment test. Between the last meeting and this meeting, I've taken the test and I've administered some of the questions to high school students in my area and I found out that it is neither an 8th grade nor a 10th grade test. In this test, some of the questions require and expect life experience that students in high school cannot have acquired. It is not an easy test as some have said it is. Some people have referred to this test as a breeze - I wouldn't call it that at all. I would also say that the results of this test will be useless if there are no consequences. I also don't believe there should be consequences this year. So, I do not see the point in spending $600,000 to get bad, inconclusive results. It seems like a waste of money to me and I think the students could be better served by saving that money for something else.

Ms. Vagianos continued: I did support this motion the last time, but I was under the impression that the test was a different type of test. From first hand experience and first hand knowledge I would now vote against administering the GED because we won't get very good results because kids won't take it seriously. Kids have told me they will not take it seriously. So, I just think it would be in the best interest of the Board to save the $600,000 and to administer a test as they are planning to next year to 10th grade students - an off-the-shelf test which really does measure the standards of a high school education.

Dr. Delattre commented: There is a lot in the media and a lot of public discourse about this: I have heard repeatedly that students will not take the test seriously. I want to say, questions of consequences aside, I do not believe that students in general are so indifferent to their teachers or their schools or to each other. I do not share this cynicism about the way they will behave.

Mr. Peyser commented: I want to associate myself with the proposal made by Dr. Thernstrom and Dr. Schaefer. First, it sends a clear signal that graduation requirements and accountability for students and schools are to be taken seriously by this Board and by the state. Second, it lights a fire under us, as well as others in the state, to implement the Education Reform Act with high quality and high standards and as expeditiously as possible so we can move on to actually seeing educational improvements in the classroom and in student performance.

Dr. Silber stated: I have a few comments to make. The MEAP test did not give a wake-up call to the state, because following it we still have more than a majority of parents saying that their schools deserve grades of A's and B's. It wasn't a wake-up call because all you can get are the scores for the schools; you can't get the scores by individual students; you can't get the scores even by classrooms, and consequently, no parents have any idea how well or how poorly their child did. No teachers have any idea of how well or how poorly their students did. It was from that standpoint a serious failure. That would not be a failure associated with the GED because we will have records of individual student performance. We will have records also that will be fair to the school. MEAP was very unfair to schools because schools with a high transiency rate were downgraded not because of their students -- the students that have been in that school system four years or more -- but because they lumped all the performances together. So what they were testing were not just the students in the school system itself, but students who had transferred into the school system and thus, we had a test that told us nothing except that the overall standard of students was severely inadequate. But it was not possible to break it down. Under this test, we will be able to break it down.

Dr. Silber continued: Now the statement has been made many times, that if we have this test it will be a distraction and will result in a delay. It's not distracting to this Board. This Board spent about 10 minutes on it at the last meeting, we spent about 15 minutes on it at this meeting, that's all together about 25 minutes of the time of this Board that will be devoted to the GED. The rest of the time on the GED will be those who are paid to administer it and the students who will spend seven and a half hours on it. The students who spend seven and a half hours on it will have to, if you want to measure what that means in their lives, forego perhaps two or three evenings of television to make up the seven and a half hours. It is not that their time is so scrupulously kept that they cannot afford to spend the seven and a half hours to take the test. Moreover, the test is not going to be a distraction

for us or a delay in completing the work on the frameworks. It is an entirely separate activity. We are working assiduously on the frameworks and the other forms of assessment at the same time.

Dr. Silber went on: Moreover, there is no question that the test is a sound test. If teachers say we will have to teach to the test, why shouldn't they? It covers mathematics, it covers science, it covers English, it covers reading ability, comprehension, analysis - all of the things that schools are supposed to be teaching. It is not an arcane test in any sense of the word, but a test that comes right down the middle where students who graduate from high school ought to be competent to handle it. I think for that reason, it will be very useful for us to give it. Moreover, it is not convincing when a superintendent tells us if you offer this test, the teachers will teach to this test instead of to the frameworks, because I thought the superintendents and principals and teachers had some responsibility to teach their own frameworks. If they do, let them continue to do their duty and not worry about being distracted because there is no reason to be distracted. When we consider all these factors, we're going to find that when that test is given there will be a wake-up because the parents will know that, despite the fact their children are typically getting A's and B's in school, they are not meeting a standard that is appropriate for their level in education.

Dr. Silber continued: The statement was made, and it does not happen to be true, that this test was designed so 30% will flunk. That is absolutely false. This test was designed to measure the middle standard of high school seniors and the middle standard of high school seniors is none too high nationally -- it is substantially below the median standards of students in Taiwan, Hungary, Germany, France and elsewhere in the world. So in that sense, it is not a high standard but it is at the median of senior high school students in the United States. And when they give that test, 30% failed. It's not because the test was designed to have a 30% failure rate; it is because 30% of the high school students in the United States cannot measure up to a median level of expectation. It is time we find out what percentage of high school students in Massachusetts can meet that perfectly reasonable standard.

Dr. Silber concluded: The other suggestions you have heard with regard to Roberta Schaefer's motion, I don't have any problem with any of those suggestions. It was never my intention in raising the issue of the GED to say the GED should be the permanent 12th grade test given year after year in Massachusetts. But I think it's highly relevant to give it now because the 10th grade examination, I don't care how we phrase it, is not going to be adequate to address 12th grade needs. And we can discuss that at some other time. So those are the remarks I want to make. Anybody else want to make remarks on this motion?

Dr. Thernstrom asked whether the GED scoring system is about to be changed, so that it is not graded on a curve with 30% of the test takers failing. The Commissioner responded that effective January 1, the scoring system will change for non-high school students, but he does not believe there are plans to change the way the grading is curved. Mr. Irwin asked about the costs of administering the GED. Commissioner Antonucci responded that the Department has been in contact with the representatives of the company and they have indicated an estimate for the testing program would be $600,000. They would be administering it to 60,000 students at a reduced cost, and they have indicated to us that is probably the maximum cost of administering the test.

Vice Chairperson Crutchfield said she wonders what additional diagnosis we need at this point. Dr. Silber stated: The parents of Massachusetts don't know that the schools are inadequate, otherwise 52% of them would not say that our students deserve A's and B's. The parents do not believe we have a serious problem in the schools and I can understand why; when their children get A's and B's, they don't conclude that the children are not doing well in the school.

Dr. Schaefer commented that she sees a number of young people in the room who seem to be high school students, and she is curious what they are doing here. Ms. Vagianos replied: I've spoken to the students and I hope I'm representing what they hope to accomplish by coming here today. It seems that around this table students have gotten a bad rap of sorts by us saying that students are not going to take this test seriously. I have spoken to students, I represent students. The seniors are not going to take this test seriously for the precise reason that they have taken tests all year to get into college, they have been accepted into college - most of them - by the time they will take this test and they are preparing for final exams. Many are preparing for AP exams, many different things are going on in their lives and they are not for a test that many of them consider does not measure what they should have learned. The students are here because they do not want to take the GED with consequences but they want everyone to know that without consequences, it's not going to be taken seriously this year. Dr. Schaefer said she is concerned the students are at the Board meeting rather

than in school. Ms. Vagianos replied: We can see by the fact that I am here and not in school, that this is a very educational experience for me. I would encourage students to come to every Board meeting.

Dr. Silber then called for a vote on the motion made by Mr. Irwin.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education will not require the administration of the GED test to high school seniors in the spring of 1997.

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Vice Chairperson Patricia Crutchfield. The motion was defeated on a 3 to 5 vote with the following Board members in opposition: Dr. Silber, Mr. Peyser, Dr. Delattre, Dr. Schaefer, and Dr. Thernstrom. The following Board members were in favor: Mr. Irwin, Ms. Crutchfield, and Ms. Vagianos.

The Board then took up the proposal made by Dr. Thernstrom and Dr. Schaefer, which they put into the form of a motion. Commissioner Antonucci informed the Board that if it reaffirms the GED test, which will cost $600,000, and we give the grade 3 reading test this spring as well as the trial test in math and in science that Advanced Systems is going to have, we will not have enough funds in the current line item for testing to add a 10th grade test this year.

Dr. Silber asked the Commissioner if we have enough to administer an off-the-shelf test in math and science to 10th graders, because that would be useful as a way of our norming the customized test that is being done by Advanced Systems. Dr. Silber said: If we give, let's say, the Iowa test in math and science at the 10th grade level, that is nationally and internationally normed. Our test from Advanced Systems will not be normed at all, so if the scores on the Advanced Systems test are higher than they are on the Iowa test, we will know they are measurably averaged. Then we know, if we want to have a 10th grade exam, at a higher standard which is what I believe we are looking for, we would know that Advanced Systems had to rachet it up for the second time we give it. Would we have enough money to do just that? Commissioner Antonucci responded that we do not. Dr. Schaefer said in that case she would add to her motion on the 10th grade test the condition, "subject to available funding."

Mr. Irwin commented that an off-the-shelf test will not reflect the curriculum frameworks. Dr. Schaefer responded that she has asked the Department of Education to look at all the off-the-shelf tests and use the one that most closely aligned to our frameworks. Dr. Silber said: You have a good point there because in mathematics and science and English, much more so than perhaps history, there are off-the-shelf tests that are going to measure things like vocabulary, comprehension in reading, the knowledge of English grammar and so forth, and there are certainly standardized tests that will measure our frameworks if our frameworks are any good in mathematics and science. If we cannot offer an international test in mathematics and science, then we are not even getting close to the purpose of educational reform, which is to have standards of achievement for 12th graders in Massachusetts that are equal to those of foreign countries. The mathematics examination could be written in Germany or in Beijing and translated into English and given to our senior students if we want to find out whether they are functioning at a standard equal to that of foreign countries. Algebra is algebra, geometry is geometry, calculus is calculus and English grammar is English grammar. So the argument that somehow we have to have specially designed tests for physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics is just not true. I think Roberta has an excellent point that we can get a head start. It is not that we are neglecting the issue of specially designed examinations, but we can get an important head start by using off-the-shelf tests at least in those areas. If you're talking about the arts and social studies, that is not such an easy fit. But it's certainly an easy fit on those basic questions.

Dr. Delattre asked Dr. Schaefer to clarify which frameworks her motion on 10th grade assessment covers. She explained she has in mind the four subjects of Math, Science, English Language Arts and History/Social Science. Dr. Delattre also asked whether the proposed timetable would pressure the Board to make a decision about Advanced Systems developing other tests before the Board sees fully the tests they develop in math and science. Dr. Thernstrom replied that the motion assumes a full battery of customized tests a year from this spring, and surely the Board can decide about the quality of Advanced Systems' work in time for them to devise those tests a year from now. Dr. Delattre expressed concern about approving a motion that would limit the Board's discretion in the future.

Dr. Silber called for a vote on the following motion made by Dr. Thernstrom:

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education (1) reaffirm the November 18 vote of the Board of Education to administer the GED test to 12th grade students this spring and only this spring with the understanding that no indication of a passing or failing grade or score will be made on a student's permanent record or diploma; (2) that a 10th grade commercially developed test, subject to funding, be administered which is aligned to the four curriculum frameworks of Science, Social Science/History, English/Language Arts, and Math; (3) that the schedule be accelerated to require a full battery of tests in the spring of 1998; and (4) that the Department of Education develop a proposal using the Advanced Placement test for the certificate of mastery.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Roberta Schaefer. The motion carried on a 6 to 2 vote* with the following Board members in favor: Dr. Silber, Ms. Crutchfield, Mr. Peyser, Dr. Thernstrom, Dr. Schaefer, and Ms. Vagianos.

The following Board members voted in opposition: Mr. Irwin and Dr. Delattre.

***** Dr. Silber originally voted in opposition. Further into the meeting, he noted that he inadvertently voted against offering the GED. He stated that was an oversight and so corrected his vote to be recorded in favor of the motion.

6. Physical Education Regulations

Dr. Silber stated: The Board's vote last month to repeal the physical education regulations is a matter of concern to the students and teachers I have talked to since our last meeting. Our vote doesn't obscure the fact that state law requires physical education and consequently, it raises the question of how schools fit it in. I have been told that in two school districts gym classes have been canceled subsequent to our decision. I think the Board needs to take into consideration the fact that some school systems will take advantage of a decision like the one we made in order to cut back on a very important activity and save money. I'm not proposing that we vote to reverse the decision we made on physical education, but I would like to say that when we examine the Student Time and Learning and we come up with our next recommendation on that subject, that we include physical education in that discussion so that we can specify how that requirement in state law is going to be met in the determination of school learning time.

Mr. Irwin suggested that the Department track what changes, if any, school districts are planning for physical education in the 1997-98 school year.

7. Student Learning Time - Discussion On Redefining Core Subjects

Dr. Delattre began the discussion. In referring to the vote taken in November, he stated: I want to be clear in order to try to overcome an error that is explicit in all the correspondence that I have had and that was explicit in the testimony, in saying that the academic core subjects should be limited to those that are identified in the law. I was not saying structured learning time should be limited to the academic core subjects. I voted to go back to the meaning of the law for the core subjects, and I also voted to keep the 60-hour mandate for gym. If I thought structured learning time ought to be exclusively devoted to the academic core subjects, how could I have voted for the mandate for gym? I want a portion of the 990 hours explicitly restricted to the subjects that are identified as academic core subjects in the law. That's all. The balance of the 990, it's up to the schools to decide what to teach.

Dr. Schaefer and Dr. Thernstrom responded that while the term "core subject" should be used according to the meaning in the statute, it would be disruptive to change the Student Learning Time Regulations now. They said the high stakes statewide assessments will provide a powerful incentive for districts to devote adequate structured learning time to the core academic subjects.

Dr. Silber stated: Its seem to me that it's a very good idea for us to conform the regulations to the law. But I recognize the validity of the remarks by the two previous speakers. It is not something we

should try do for 1997, but I would like to see it on the agenda of this Board early next year. For example, I would like to see that at least 80 percent of those 990 hours are spent on specified courses. That leaves then 190 hours available in a school year for these others. And I would like to have as part of the motion that the Board of Education recommends to school superintendents and to school committees that in negotiating their contracts with bus companies and their contracts with the teachers' union and other unions, introduce as much flexibility as possible with regard to the scheduling of individuals employed by that system so that they will begin right now to pay attention to the need for more flexibility. Then they can put it into the current negotiations at the bargaining table and not have to ask to reopen contracts at a later date. Dr. Silber continued that the Board cannot tell school committees and superintendents how to negotiate their collective bargaining agreement. However it's more than a recommendation in the sense that we will put on the agenda of this Board next year consideration of the desired regulations for some future date at present not specified in the motion. But no change is being proposed for September of 1997.

After further discussion by Board members, Commissioner Antonucci commented that he has provided the Board with current information about the tests and assessments that school districts are now using, but we don't yet have good data on how many districts are increasing or decreasing time spent on the core subjects. The Department needs to collect that information. He urged the Board to clarify for school districts that the current regulations will remain in place for September 1997.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education reaffirm that the Time and Learning Regulations as adopted by the previous Board of Education will be the regulations that will direct Time and Learning for the 1997/1998 school year. Secondly, that the Board strongly recommends that school committees and superintendents begin addressing the issue of extended days and alternative schedules as they collectively bargain their contracts.

Dr. Silber made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Irwin. The motion carried on a 7 to 1 vote with Dr. Delattre voting in opposition.

8. FY 98 STate Budget For Education - Continuing Discussion

The Board unanimously approved its $2.941 billion budget recommendation for Fiscal Year 1998. The Board agreed to submit to the Governor's Office an alternative budget format incorporating Board member James Peyser's block grant recommendations. The total funding level for both budgets is the same. Mr. Peyser said his proposal would consolidate 13 existing grant programs into a single block grant to permit districts greater flexibility in programming. Mr. Peyser stated that this approach allows schools to devote time and staff to achieving outcomes, rather than complying with specific grant requirements.

Last month, the Board agreed to increase its request for early childhood programs to $100 million. Commissioner Antonucci told the Board there was a request for a further discussion of increasing the amount under Direct Educational Services, account 7030-1000, Early Childhood Grants.

Dr Silber stated that he requested this item be restored to the agenda because he originally recommended increasing the item by $100 million and questions were raised about how much money could actually be used for early childhood education. He talked with Dr. Thomas Payzant, Superintendent of Schools in Boston, who has terminated kindergarten for four-year-olds for budgetary reasons. Dr. Silber said: If he were to just make a start in restoring the four-year-old kindergarten and perhaps introducing programs, not for all children but for some children, at an earlier age of the sort that we heard about from Pittsfield, it would cost somewhere between $28 and $34 million. He could use one-third of the $100 million of additional money I proposed to add to that budget in a single year. And in Leominster where I visited schools last week, I asked what were their needs in just that preschool, and they estimated an immediate need of at least $600,000. So there's no question when you go around the state that over a period of time we could easily use an additional $500 million. I don't think it was any exaggeration when Kathy Kelley pointed out that for every dollar we spend in this area, there's probably a saving over a long period of time to the state of $6.

Dr. Silber continued: First of all, there's no reason why there should be such a high percentage of students in special education in Massachusetts except for the preschool neglect. And in that regard, I

should like to read a letter to you from a person who has been working in this area for quite some time, Diane Rulow of the McKay Campus School at Fitchburg State College. She said that, as a kindergarten teacher, she has seen a noticeable decline in the skills and readiness levels of incoming students. When she began teaching in 1972, approximately 33 percent of her students entered kindergarten knowing all the upper and lower case letters, 33 percent knew about half and 33 percent few or none. Statistics this year from her 43 students are: 15 percent know most or all the letters, 24 percent know half and 61 percent know few or none. This decline in skill levels is reflected also in their language and math readiness.

Dr. Silber went on: Additionally, in 1972 all of Ms. Rulow's children spoke English. Most came from two-parent families and most moms were able to provide support for their children's academic endeavors. This year, 18 of her children came from homes where English is not the primary language and four children speak no English whatsoever. Also, for a variety of reasons, many parents are now unable to offer the support so necessary for enhancing the academic success of their children. It has long been my hope the state would realize our need for assessment for incoming development levels and provide us with this information. It is her belief that many of our children are entering school with language and readiness skills way below the five-year-old level. Documentation of this would greatly add to a better understanding of the types of early childhood programs which we need. While all of us in teaching must be held accountable, we must be basing this accountability on the measurable growth which children make each year, and so on.

Dr. Silber stated that this letter succinctly summarizes the concerns he was trying to express. We are in a state that is proposing welfare reform, to require mothers to go back to work or go back to school, which will reduce the time that they have with their children. These children cannot be neglected unless we want to pay a very high social price later, and the children's potential is clearly damaged if they do not have intervention of the sort that was described by the Pittsfield group at a very early age, preferably at no later than two to three years of age. For this reason, the suggestion of adding a $100 million increase to that budget -- that's $100 million out of a budget that already amounts to $2.9 billion, which would bring the budget up to around $3 billion -- that is not an excessive amount to spend when you consider the social consequences on the one hand of our failure to spend it, and the social consequences and financial savings on the other hand if we go ahead and spend it. So I would like this Board to reconsider that suggestion of raising the amount we requested with regard to early childhood education to the full $100 million rather than having it reduced to the $67 million increase that was voted at our last meeting.

Mr. Irwin said he agrees with Dr. Silber 100 percent. Mr. Irwin stated, if anything, the Board should put $200 million into early childhood education. Dr. Silber said he agrees with Mr. Irwin's point that we could easily use the $200 million but he will not push that today.

With that, Mr. Irwin made a motion to increase line item 7031-1000 by $100 million to a total of $134,309,540. The motion was seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Ms. Crutchfield. All in favor of the motion were Dr. Silber, Dr. Delattre, Ms. Crutchfield, and Mr. Irwin. All opposed were Dr. Schaefer, Ms. Vagianos, Mr. Peyser, and Dr. Thernstrom. Because it is a tie, the motion was defeated.
Dr. Silber stated he will bring up this issue again at the next meeting.
Commissioner Antonucci then proposed to the Board that they approve the FY 98 state budget request of $2,941,333,434.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the FY 1998 state budget request for $2,941,333,434, and authorize the Commissioner to submit it to the House and Senate Committees on Ways & Means, the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and the Humanities, and the Secretary of Administration & Finance.

The motion was moved by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield. The vote carried unanimously. Dr. Silber stated the Board will be submitting the budget in dual form as outlined by Mr. Peyser.

9. Approval Of Grants

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the following grants:

FUND CODE	NAME OF GRANT	NUMBER OF GRANTS RECOMMENDED	AMOUNT
345	Adult BasicEducation	16	$646,475
532	Elementary School Violence PreventionInitiative	15	$170,000

The motion was moved by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Dr. Schaefer. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 1997 at 9:00 a.m. at the Massachusetts Department of Education in Malden.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting at 1:15 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

The motion was made by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield and seconded by Dr. Thernstrom. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert V. Antonucci
Secretary