- BOE Home
- Board Meeting Schedule
- Board in Brief
- Board Meeting Minutes
- BOE Members
- BOE Advisory Councils
- Chairman's Statements

Subject to approval by the Board at the the February 10 meeting in Malden

Board of Education Regular Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 1997

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 Delattre, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Jr., Wilmington
Dr. Stanley Z. Koplik, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education
Mr. James Peyser, Boston
Dr. Roberta Schaefer, Worcester
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Ms. Alexis Vagianos, Melrose, Chair, Student Advisory Council
Commissioner Robert V. Antonucci, Secretary

Also In Attendance

Ms. Michelle McDonald, Department of Education

1. Approval Of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Special and Regular Meeting of December 11, 1996.

Mr. Irwin made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Peyser. The vote was unanimous.

2. Comments From the Chairman

a. GED

In light of events subsequent to the Board's vote on the GED, Dr. Silber proposed that the Board vote to drop the idea of giving the GED to high school seniors in 1997.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education rescind its November 18 vote to administer the GED to high school seniors in 1997.

The motion was made by Chairman Silber and seconded by Mr. Irwin. The vote was unanimous.

*** Testimony by Senator David P. Magnani**

Dr. Silber announced that Senator Magnani requested the opportunity to comment on a motion that will be made later to increase the Board's FY 98 budget request for early childhood education. Dr. Silber welcomed Senator Magnani.

Senator Magnani announced he has been elevated to the vice chairmanship of the Joint Committee on Education as of yesterday and he is honored to have that position.

He said that when he and the Senate President discussed his new role, they agreed that Phase I of education reform, at least legislatively, has been concentrated on grades K-12, and Phase II in terms of legislation and budget will focus on early childhood education.

Senator Magnani continued that he has been an advocate in the legislature for early childhood education, and he celebrates the action the Board took at a prior meeting to request expansion of early childhood education. He said the early childhood Community Partnerships Program and Family Networks Program have been well received statewide, and are models of what works. The Senator stated he cannot imagine a more critical priority than quality education and care for young children.

The Senator thanked Dr. Silber for having recognized that we are not doing enough and for having the courage to revisit this issue today. The Senator informed the Board that today they will be asked to make a courageous decision, to dramatically increase the amount of money spent on early childhood education. He suggested that even if Dr. Silber's proposal today were to pass, and the Governor had the courage and wisdom to include that kind of investment in House 1, and the legislature had similar wisdom to appropriate the funds, we would be spending less per year on early childhood education than half of what we currently pay for interest on the Big Dig.

In response to a question from Dr. Schaefer about evaluation of early childhood programs, the Senator told the Board that the Department will be reporting on the Family Networks and Community Partnerships programs. He said across the country there have been studies of programs similar to ours -- and Massachusetts has one of the best -- and those studies suggest the return on investment is seven to one for every dollar invested in early childhood programs.

3. Early Childhood Education Grants - Vote

Dr. Silber said he had promised he would raise again at this meeting the proposal to increase the budget request for early childhood education programs, line item 7030 1000, by a full $100 million to bring it to a total of $134,309,000. In support of the proposal, he has gathered additional data about the extent of the need.

Dr. Silber quoted from a letter he received from Boston School Superintendent Thomas Payzant: "You asked about the cost of providing full-day kindergarten programs this year for four-year-olds in the City of Boston. Although the schools serve only 2,700 four-year-old children, there are almost 7,000 children who are four years old in the city. By September of 1998, we will provide full-day kindergarten for all five-year-old children. Unfortunately, most school programs for four year-olds will be eliminated. At a cost of approximately $6,153 per student, the total cost of serving all four-year-old students would be $43,071,000. The surround-care option cost is approximately $2,600 per student. The surround-care option for four-year-old students would cost about $18,200,000. Using the same per capita, the provision of surround care for five-year-old students (presently 7,300) would cost approximately $18,980,000. Our experience indicates that 80 percent of the parents of students eligible for surround care would opt for the program."

Dr. Silber stated: If we were to provide care that is badly needed, particularly by persons on welfare and even by families not on welfare but where both parents are working, the cost in the City of Boston alone would be approximately $76 million, assuming an 80 percent participation rate in the surround care program. Now, we're talking about $100 million and Boston can use almost all of it. Consequently, I think it is evident that when we talk about $100 million, we're talking about perhaps one-fifth of the amount of money that is necessary in order to meet the objective need for early intervention in our urban schools. And that's where so many of the most critical problems arise.

Dr. Silber continued: The offset in this program is going to be in a reduction in special education costs and also in the dropout rate and consequent delinquency and welfare. It is also a way to break the cycle of poverty so that the children of people on welfare do not themselves go on welfare. By the way, I have to say to the Senator this is not to support all aspects of his concerns in early childhood programs; this proposal is focusing on the budget of the Department of Education which will make grants specifically for educational programs for preschool children.

Dr. Silber went on: Before taking a vote, I would like to read a short paragraph written by John Ruskin in the late 19th century in which he put himself in the position of a member of the upper middle class in London. He wrote, "If, suddenly, in the midst of the enjoyments of the palate and the lightness of heart of a London dinner party, the walls of the chamber were parted, and through their gap, the nearest human beings who were famishing and in misery, were borne into the midst of the company -- feasting and fancy-free -- if, pale with sickness, horrible in destitution, broken by despair, body by body, they were laid upon the soft carpet, one beside the chair of every guest, would only the crumbs of the dainties be cast to them? Would only a passing glance, a passing thought be vouchsafed to them? Yet the actual facts, the real relation of each Dives and Lazarus are not altered by the intervention of the house wall between the table and the sickbed by the few feet of ground (how few!) which are indeed all that separate the merriment from the misery."

Dr. Silber stated: That is one thing all of us who are relatively well-fixed should bear in mind. There is a lot of misery in this state; there is a lot of misery in our urban centers. And it focuses on those children who don't have the opportunities that middle class children have, who are severely neglected in the earliest years of their childhood and, as a consequence, suffer from a totally unnecessary and gratuitous retardation. They eventually impose a burden on the taxpayers of Massachusetts far greater than would be the cost of meeting their needs at this early age and seeing to it that they avoid the unnecessary retardation that is a consequence of their neglect.

Dr. Silber then moved that the Board increase line item 7030-1000 in the FY 98 budget request by a full $100 million. He stated he hopes the Board will do that every year for the next four, but he is not including that latter part in the motion.

Mr. Irwin seconded the motion, stating he agrees with the Chairman. He added that early childhood is a critical time for learning, and we either pay now or we are going to pay ten to a hundred times more later in life. Chancellor Koplik added his endorsement of the motion, noting that the investment in early childhood education is crucial to the future of the Commonwealth.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education increase the FY 98 budget request for early childhood education programs, line item 7030-1000, by a full $100 million to bring it to a total of $134,309,000.

Chairman Silber made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Irwin. The vote passed 5 to 4 with the following in opposition: Mr. Peyser, Dr. Schaefer, Dr. Thernstrom, and Ms. Vagianos. Commissioner Antonucci informed the Board that the Governor will be releasing House 1 on January 22, 1997 and that this is the first step in the FY 98 budget process. Summaries will be given to Board members immediately upon release of House 1.

4. Comments From The Commissioner

a. Advisory Councils

Commissioner Antonucci referred to the materials in the Board package concerning appointment of advisory councils, as required by the Education Reform Law. He distributed a revised list of proposed nominees. The Commissioner noted that the new Braille literacy law requires appointment of an additional advisory council. In light of that change, he recommended that the Board defer action on this item until next month. In the meantime, Board members are invited to propose individuals for appointment to any of the councils. The Commissioner said he will provide the Board with resumes of the proposed nominees.

b. U.Plan

The Commissioner referred to the information provided to the Board on the U.Plan, the state-sponsored college savings program. The Governor and the Board of Higher Education have endorsed the plan and have asked the Board to do so as well, in order to encourage all Massachusetts colleges and universities

and all interested families to participate.

Mr. Irwin said that as the parent of two young children who plan to go to college, he has already enrolled in the U.Plan, and would encourage others to do so. He moved that the Board endorse the plan, a motion seconded by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield. Dr. Silber noted that we are going to urge additional colleges to join the U.Plan. Chancellor Koplik said the colleges are close to full participation, and the Board should encourage participation by parents on behalf of their children. Mr. Irwin agreed that the motion should encompass this suggestion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education endorse the *U.Plan - The Massachusetts College Savings Program*, and encourage all Massachusetts colleges and universities and all interested families to participate in the program.

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin, modified by Mr. Koplik, and seconded by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield. The vote was unanimous.

c. Teacher Certification Testing

Commissioner Antonucci distributed to Board members the Request for Responses (RFR) for the teacher certification test, which was previously voted by the Board. He said the RFR is being distributed to a number of different people for reactions. The Commissioner said it is consistent with the law and with the vote of the Board. He asked Board members to review it and call him if they would like to offer any suggestions within the next week so we can move this along.

5. Curriculum Frameworks

A. English Language Arts

Dr. Silber announced that he would first call for the comments of those who wish to speak on the English Language Arts framework, and following the Board's discussion and action on English Language Arts, he would call on those who wished to comment on the History and Social Science framework.

a. Public Comment

Ms. June Kuzmeskus, a former high school English teacher and current associate director of the Massachusetts Field Center for Teaching and Learning, addressed the Board on the English Language Arts framework, focusing on the literature component of the framework. She asked the Board to delay action on this document to allow a proper opportunity for a broad range of educators to respond. Ms. Kuzmeskus said the examples cited in the body of the framework provide too narrow a view of what constitutes quality literature. She also said she would prefer that book lists be selected by teachers locally, but if a book list is included in the framework, it should be a single list rather than two separate appendices. Ms. Kuzmeskus concluded her remarks by stating the time lines and manner of distribution of this latest draft provided too little review time and virtually no meaningful access for most educators.

In inviting other members of the audience to speak, Dr. Silber stated that Board members have received and read over a hundred letters that have come in. He said he can find approximately 16 recognizably different objections or criticisms on the frameworks, and what we have is a great amount of repetition. Dr. Silber asked those who are speaking to avoid repetition by addressing points that have not already been mentioned in previous testimony.

Mr. Damian Curtiss, Coordinator of English Language Arts for the Billerica Public Schools who also was a member of the committee that prepared the initial draft of the English Language Arts framework and a member of the assessment committee, addressed the Board. He said he is pleased that work is continuing on the framework, but he is concerned about the opportunity for continued comment by the public. Mr. Curtiss added that students learning English as a second language need to have a more focused place in this framework, and that the list of literary works should be broader.

Representative Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville), a member of the Joint Committee on Education, Arts & Humanities, briefly addressed the Board on the English Language Arts framework. Representative Jehlen stated that she has the unanimous and bipartisan support of the House members of the

Education Committee in stating that the Board should return to the open and consultative process directed by the Education Reform Law on both frameworks and standards.

Mr. Robert Tumposky, outgoing co-chair of the Boston Citywide Parents Council, addressed the Board. He stated the additions and corrections he has heard to this framework sound trivial as compared to the many objections people have raised. He said the repetitive comments on the two framework drafts indicate that a consensus is building in the education community that these drafts have serious problems. Mr. Tumposky said he objects to the idea of not having the public see the final draft before the Board votes on it. He concluded that the Board is undercutting the value of citizen input, and asked the Board to postpone its vote by a week.

Ms. Marilyn Segal addressed the Board on behalf of Ms. Sheila Decter, executive director of the American Jewish Congress. She said the American Jewish Congress objects to the framework as it has been presented. First, all children should have exposure to the great works of a variety of cultures that are non-Western. Second, the framework should make clear that the Bible and other religious materials must be taught as literature and on a comparative basis. She said the framework must alert teachers as to what is appropriate and what is not appropriate when teaching about a religious work or discussing comparative religions.

b. Discussion and VOTE

Addressing Representative Jehlen's concern about delaying the process to provide more time for public comment, Dr. Silber stated: I see no reason to believe anything new is going to be reported considering all that the Board has already heard. What we are going to hear, I think, after we pass it out again, is what we have already heard. I think it is far better for us to address these criticisms.

Dr. Silber continued: The draft before us, which the members of the Board discussed last night, responds very substantially to criticisms that have been written. Ms. Stotsky, one of the drafters serving on the committee, can describe the innumerable alterations that have been made in response to what we have heard from the public. Indeed, last night we discussed with her the latest reports we had, indicating to her comments that had been raised that we thought should be incorporated. The Board is well aware of the problem we have with regard to the long list of authors in the appendix. I have, for example, a letter from Wayne R. Masters, Social Studies department head of Weymouth High School, who made a point that is relevant to both frameworks. He said, "I can assure you that anything that is not subject to state assessment testing will be quickly purged from the curriculum." That is a common sense observation and we are acutely aware of it. One of the points we made to the drafting committee last night, was that we have to tighten our list so that teachers and superintendents and schools will know what is expected of them and what students are going to be tested on. That's something that does require further consideration.

Dr. Silber concluded: At some point the Board has to stop. We have heard and read the comments, we have responded to them, and we have confidence that we have met the legitimate comments that have been made. We must bring this to closure.

Vice Chairperson Crutchfield emphasized that the frameworks are works in progress. She said it is time to move ahead so that teachers and others in the field can use them. The feedback from that process will lead to further revisions in the future. In the meantime, Ms. Crutchfield said, the Board has heard and incorporated much useful feedback in this version of the framework, and should move on.

Commissioner Antonucci said: Last night's special Board meeting was a working session where we incorporated a number of ideas that people have brought forth. Prior to that time, we had a committee including Sandra Stotsky and Linda Beardsley from our staff, who worked on the framework with a group of teachers this past summer.

The Commissioner summarized some of the changes that have been made and the discussion at last night's special meeting. The changes include two new learning standards, one on development of vocabulary and one on the structure of language and grammar. Also, the early literacy section has been strengthened to put greater emphasis on using phonics to ensure that students learn to read; the examples of nonfiction are expanded to include speeches, biographies, science texts and other material, and to reduce the fragmentation of curriculum; a section on thinking has been added to the stages of the writing process; and improvements are incorporated relating to the use of technology and other media and to make the framework clearer and more useful to teachers. The Commissioner noted that the Board discussed the literature list, in terms of expanding it to include additional authors and works of literature, and in relation to student assessment. The Commissioner concluded that the Board has

reviewed and responded to extensive public comment, and the revised English Language Arts framework is improved as a result.

Responding to a public comment that repetition of certain criticisms shows that consensus is building in the education community, Dr. Delattre stated: I will not allow to pass in silence the claim that the coalescing of large numbers of people around specific ideas testifies to the merit of the ideas. People coalesce around bad ideas just as readily as they do around good ideas. If it were otherwise, you could find out the truth by taking a poll and we wouldn't have to have either committees or scholars and teachers and others working on the drafting of frameworks. All you would have to do is take a poll.

Responding to a public comment expressing concern over inclusion of the Bible in the framework's suggested reading list, Dr. Silber stated: The King James version of the Bible is the version that has had the greatest influence on the literature of the English-speaking world. If we want to have educated children who can read the poetry of the English language without recourse to a research library, then they have to know some of the allusions. It is just as important for them to have read the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* too, and to have read some of Shakespeare so the allusions they find in contemporary poetry are not beyond them. This is not indoctrination. We are making no religious statements in this framework. Student Board member Alexis Vagianos added that students should not be deprived of an opportunity to study aspects of the Bible as part of studying great literature and world history.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the English Language Arts framework with the inclusion of the changes discussed at the January 14, 1997 special meeting; provided that Board members will receive and review the changes and notify the Commissioner of their approval; and provided further that the Department and the assessment committee will continue to consider the literature list in relation to student assessment.

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Dr. Thernstrom. The vote was unanimous.

B. History and Social Science

Dr. Silber invited public comment from those wishing to testify on the History and Social Science framework.

a. Public Comment

Representative Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville) addressed the Board and presented three points that she said are endorsed by every House member of the Education Committee: (1) the Board must return to the open and consultative process directed by the Education Reform Law; (2) the framework as proposed will not improve learning; and (3) there is time for an open and consultative process to finish an improved framework and maintain the schedule for adoption of testing. Representative Jehlen added that the Board should encourage broad participation in the process because the frameworks and standards must reflect the best available knowledge, both of the disciplines and of how children learn; people in the profession must have confidence in both process and product, so they are willing to do the hard work of change to teach more effectively; and broad involvement will help to avoid narrow interests and to balance choices in history and social science, a field that always stirs controversy. She encouraged the Board to look at the California framework and to use the October draft as a basis for producing the Massachusetts framework.

Connie Rizoli, chief of staff of the Joint Committee on Education, presented a statement from Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks, Co-Chair of the Committee: (1) this draft does not adequately reflect the impact of the African-American presence in the United States (for example, the migration of hundreds of thousands of African-Americans from the South to Northern and Midwestern cities before and after World War I) ; (2) the draft does not sufficiently identify or address the many contributions made by African-Americans to the history of the United States, New England and Massachusetts; and (3) world history should not be limited to the Eurocentric position that suggests Western civilization and culture began with the Greeks, but should inform students of other civilizations and cultures that have significantly affected world history and world economic conditions. Her statement concluded by calling upon the Board to review the framework in view of the goals of education reform.

Dr. Harvey Mansfield, Professor of Government at Harvard and also the President of the Massachusetts Association of Scholars, addressed the Board in support of the framework. He stated: It's an honor to appear before this Board where I have several friends, and especially one that is chaired by John Silber,

a man who has done so much for education in Massachusetts, and is now about to do some more. The subject today is reform, pursuant to the Massachusetts Legislature's 1993 Education Reform Act. Fundamentally that reform has to be the rejection of the notion of self-esteem as the basis of our education. Education is learning. It is not feeling good about yourself or about the group to which you belong. Several years ago there was a high school mathematics test in which American students came out near the bottom, but on the question, How do you feel about how you did, we were at the top. That is the problem in American education today.

Dr. Mansfield continued: The first requirement for reform is more rigor. We wouldn't expect reform to come out of the public education community. That is what has to be improved. But it's very important to get the experience of teachers teaching teachers, practitioners as they are called. What is less important is their opinions which are entitled, I think, to no more weight than those of other citizens. One opinion widespread among public teachers is multiculturalism. But America is not based on a culture, it's not based on a race, or on many cultures or on many races. It's based on a principle that unifies diverse cultures and races, and that principle is that all men are created equal. What is this principle? Where does it come from? What does it mean? How has it been applied? Have we lived up to it? Therefore, history has to be the center of our education requirements in social sciences and history. Our democracy has a tendency to center on the present and on the future. It takes an effort to get us to focus on the past. But our education must not be a mere endorsement of the status quo, an engine of self-satisfaction, of what we presently think. Our education must lead us to our better selves. The framework that you have before you is clear, simple, direct and, best of all, more demanding.

Dr. Gerard Koot, Chairman of the History Department at UMass Dartmouth and a member of the two previous History and Social Science framework committees, addressed the Board in opposition to the framework. Dr. Koot stated he believes the Board's subcommittee did not consult with anyone beyond plagiarizing the Virginia framework, which he described as a poorly received document. He said this draft shows little familiarity with current scholarship in history, geography, economics and the other social sciences; is almost entirely Anglo-American in its approach to world history; is pedagogically inappropriate and intellectually haphazard in its choice of topics; and is not a product of collaboration among teachers, parents and the community. He asked the Board to resume the collaborative process and recommended that the Board ask Dr. Paul Gagnon, a nationally recognized expert on history education who served on the second framework committee, to be the writer and to work with the previous committees to produce a framework that can be the basis for statewide assessment and a tool for effective teaching.

Ms. Meline Kasparian, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, also addressed the Board in opposition to the process of this draft. Ms. Kasparian referred to other frameworks as having been the result of an inclusive process involving thousands of educators, parents, policy makers and the public. She said this framework is not the product of a similarly inclusive process. She urged the Board to create sufficient opportunities for public hearings to permit working teachers to participate fully.

Dr. Marc Landy of Boston College addressed the Board in favor of this draft. He congratulated Dr. Silber and the Board for having the courage to revisit both the English and Social Science frameworks. He said this document is outstanding because it takes seriously the challenge of creating the kind of factual substructure upon which serious reflection and criticism can be based. The document is also chronological and it roots the students in space and time. Lastly, Dr. Landy said the document is dispassionate and treats the great controversies that have erupted in the past as genuinely open questions for students to think through on their own. He concluded by stating the framework contains both the richness of content and the fair-mindedness necessary to enable Massachusetts schools to fulfill democracy's promise.

Ms. Kathleen Kelley, President of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, addressed the Board in opposition to this document. Ms. Kelley told the Board she and the educators she represents are not opposed to rigor or standards or curriculum content, but rather to the lack of a process for broad debate and consensus about what is most important for all students to learn about the history of our state, our nation and the world. Ms. Kelley urged the Board to involve the members of the previous two drafting committees in the revision of this draft, because their expertise and skills are needed. She also objected to the very short time limit for comments on this draft. In terms of content, Ms. Kelley stated that the standards in this draft are specific but too narrow in focus. She said the Virginia standards have been graded by the AFT as clear, concise and content specific, but the AFT does have concerns about them which the Board will receive in writing. She said the process by which the board subcommittee reorganized the Virginia standards resulted in a disjointed document. Ms. Kelley encouraged the Board to look at the California framework as a possible model.

Mr. Peter Manoogian, a Social Studies curriculum specialist in the Saugus Public Schools, addressed the

Board with concerns about this draft. He said he welcomes the specificity of this draft, but is concerned about the amount of historical content that it jams into grades 9 and 10. Mr. Manoogian noted that 60% of high schools teach U.S. history in grade 11, and moving it to grades 9 and 10 will carry heavy costs. He urged the Board and the Legislature to consider changing the current requirement for high-stakes testing to grade 11 instead of grade 10. He also invited the Board's subcommittee to meet with the North of Boston Social Science Department Heads, of which he is a member, on January 23 to refine this draft and achieve a workable balance between content and process.

Dr. Luci Fortunato De Lisle, Assistant Professor of History at Bridgewater State College, addressed the Board in opposition to the framework. She said she believes a better framework can be drafted that will ensure students achieve high standards. She urged the Board to reconsider the October framework draft which responds to the critiques of classroom teachers. She noted that the October draft offered a balanced approach to the social sciences through the use of broad disciplinary strands, that it included learning standards connected with all the social science disciplines in a balanced fashion rather than too heavily emphasizing politics, war and economics, and that it offered pedagogical suggestions to teachers. She concluded by encouraging the Board to produce a framework that is balanced between inquiry and content, and that addresses the problems of all three drafts as to which periods of history and which social sciences should be studied at each grade or grade span.

Dr. Robert Costrell, Professor of Economics at UMass Amherst, addressed the Board in support of this draft. He said it is sound because it focuses on basic economic principles. Mr. Costrell made three points: (1) this draft provides a solid basis for upgrading economic literacy; (2) the previous drafts tended to do more harm than good; and (3) this draft can be further improved by replacing some vestiges of previous drafts with material from the voluntary National Content Standards in Economics that were just released. He said the standards in the framework are appropriately demanding.

Dr. Russ Vernon Jones, Principal of Fort River School in Amherst and a member of the original framework drafting committee, addressed the Board in opposition to this draft. Dr. Jones agreed with other speakers who said the Board should return to an open process for framework revision. Second, he noted that there is content in this draft, but it is not designed around questions that build on students' natural curiosity and promote lifelong learning. Dr. Jones concluded that the final document should equip students with a world view as well as teach them our national heritage, and it should reflect the diversity of children and families in the Commonwealth and the world. He urged the Board to let a broad committee include the best from all three drafts in the final framework.

Ms. Betty Bardige, a parent from Cambridge, addressed the Board in opposition to this draft. She asked the Board to improve the framework by expanding the coverage of blacks and others from diverse homelands and ethnic groups who have helped to define our country, and by making more connections between history and present day issues. She also said she hopes the frameworks will encourage family involvement in their children's education.

Dr. Vernon Domingo, Professor of Geography at Bridgewater State College, addressed the Board with the concern that there is a need for more geography in the draft. He said geographical knowledge and analysis is a vitally important tool needed by young people to compete effectively in the global marketplace. He stated that geographic education is not a luxury, but rather it is essential if we are to equip students properly for the 21st century.

b. Discussion

Dr. Silber reminded the audience that there is no plan by the Board to vote on the History and Social Science framework today and that adoption of this framework is not even on the agenda. He added: Contrary to the assertions that this has not been an open process, there is nothing sneaky, subversive, or particularly autocratic about it. It is a perfectly open process. We are not violating the spirit of the Act in any way and we have not made any decisions with regard to the final frameworks in History and Social Science. That's exactly why we are having this hearing today. So no conspiracy theories need apply.

In response to Mr. Manoogian's concern about administering the 10th grade test, Dr. Silber stated: The reason for giving the test in the 10th grade is so that every student and the parent of every student will be put on notice that the student is well prepared at that stage of the 10th grade to graduate, or that he is not prepared to graduate, so that remedial efforts can be made. If we moved that test to the 11th grade, there might not be enough time for remediation and for that reason, we do not want to encourage the Legislature to change the test. However, we have to clarify the purpose of the test. It is not to measure what children will know in the 12th grade, but what they ought to know in the 10th grade. They will have to reach much higher standards, international standards, by the 12th grade that will include

whatever they have learned in the 11th and 12th grades.

Dr. Silber commented on a particular criticism that he read many times in the letters received by the Board, the notion that somehow the history framework involves what is always described as rote memory. Dr. Silber stated: It is useful for all of you to look in your dictionary and see what that adjective "rote" entails. When somebody ties rote to memory, what they mean is the idle remembrance of some isolated event without regard to the meaning and the context. I don't think anybody in preparing the history framework has any interest in rote memory. We're talking about memory. If we are concerned with memory, we are concerned in our history framework with the context that gives meaning and significance to what is remembered. But let us never forget that if we do not remember what is being taught in the schools, if there is no memory in the schools, there will be no education. Skills have to be remembered just as surely as facts have to be remembered, and facts take on their meaning by the context in which these facts are taught. We are not ever going to approve curriculum guidelines that do not involve a massive imposition on the memory of children. They are going to have to remember mathematics, they are going to have to remember science and they are going to have to remember a lot of history and sociology and other subjects. We are not going to be a know-nothing Board of Education that says, as long as the kids do things and feel good about it, it's okay. They have to remember things. Kids can't even have skills unless they remember the skills.

Dr. Silber continued: This is going to be a content-oriented decision that we are going to reach, and let everybody start dropping that adjective "rote" from their discussion of memory. Then they will find that it's not a bad thing to have memory; in fact, it's essential if there's going to be any learning whatsoever.

The three members of the Board's subcommittee expressed their appreciation to all who submitted oral and written comments on the draft, and said the suggestions were constructive and will be considered when the draft is revised. Mr. Peyser said among the areas where the draft will be changed are: to ensure developmentally appropriate topics for grades K-4; to establish clearer connections among various disciplines, topics and time periods; and to address missing content. He added that while consensus is desirable in the abstract, in practice it is more often the enemy of good policy and good teaching. There are real principled differences here, and we shouldn't pretend otherwise. Real choices need to be made that won't please all parties. Mr. Peyser concluded that he hopes and intends to move the process forward and produce a revised draft of the framework.

Dr. Thernstrom assured the audience that this is a public process and it will continue to be one as they redraft the framework. She said critical comments are being taken very seriously by the subcommittee. Dr. Thernstrom encouraged people to telephone her at home with their concerns and suggestions. Dr. Schaefer agreed that the subcommittee finds the comments very valuable. She said the goal of this framework is to establish a measurable, content-oriented curriculum that will set high standards of academic mastery for all students, including those who enter school without the advantages that middle class children have.

Ms. Vagianos presented a statement from the Student Advisory Council expressing various concerns about the draft. She said she respects but does not share the council's views on the framework.

Mr. Irwin suggested that the Board subcommittee meet with some members of the two previous committees to look over all three drafts and incorporate the best from each into a revised document. He also suggested that the Board hold public hearings on the framework. Mr. Koplik said he has confidence that the members of the Board subcommittee will distill good ideas from all the comments and all the drafts and incorporate them into the next draft. Vice Chairperson Crutchfield noted the next Board meeting is on February 10, and that the process should be extended at least until March in light of all the comments received and work to be done.

Dr. Delattre stated: I am not as cheerful or as sanguine about this text as many of my Board colleagues seem to be. I do not view it as a curriculum framework, I see it as a collection of standards, and I believe that a very great deal stands between it and the completion of a framework. I share my colleague Mr. Irwin's view that public hearings are obligatory and the view of Ms. Kasparian that people should have a chance in a case like this to speak their minds. This is, after all, a rather distinctive way of proceeding here, that we formed a committee from the Board that had no direct continuity with memberships from previous committees. I think any suggestion that this could be ready in February or even in March is utterly implausible because a great deal of work remains to be done.

Dr. Delattre continued: I want to know whether this committee is going to work directly with the members of the committee that prepared the October draft. I'm not asking that this committee be made into some other committee. I'm asking whether it is prepared to work directly with a second committee

that has already existed. In response, Mr. Peyser said he is eager to work with anyone who has value to add, including members of prior committees. Dr. Thernstrom suggested that the subcommittee organize the criticisms that have come in and think about what the task is, and then decide how to proceed. She said the subcommittee can promise the process will have integrity.

Dr. Silber stated: I think the draft that was prepared in October by Paul Gagnon was a very fine framework, not without serious flaws and incompleteness, but it was a framework that has the advantage of offering great coherence. Aspects of that draft are substantially superior to the standards the subcommittee has presented, although I recognize the vitality, the directness and simplicity and clarity of this draft. I do not see why there cannot be a melding of these documents.

Dr. Silber continued: I think Paul Gagnon ought to be working very seriously on this to see how the strengths of the document we have before us today can be incorporated into the other document. I think you on this committee should consider how you can incorporate the strengths of that document. I don't know how the rest of the Board feels, but I believe there ought to be a way of melding those two documents to come up with one that preserves the best in each and that will be a stronger document than either of them would have been independently.

Board members engaged in a vigorous discussion about the process by which the framework will be revised. Commissioner Antonucci said he will be actively involved in the process. He and Department staff will work with the Board subcommittee and include a number of people who were involved in developing the earlier draft, and coordinate the preparation of a revised framework combining the best elements of these documents and incorporating constructive suggestions that have been made.

Dr. Delattre addressed the Board subcommittee and asked if they would work directly with the members of the earlier committee. He did not ask that this subcommittee be made into some other committee. He asked whether it will work directly with a second committee that has already existed. In reply to Dr. Delattre's question, Mr. Peyser stated yes. He added that he is certainly interested and eager to work with members of prior committees, or in fact other individuals. Mr. Peyser reiterated that as long as it is clear the Board is not reconstituting its subcommittee, he is perfectly willing to work with anyone who has value to add, and stated that he thought a number of the members of the earlier committee, if not all of them, fall within that category. Commissioner Antonucci stated that we need to listen to people who were involved in the second draft and the first draft and include a review of those documents. The Commissioner added that the Board is going to consider the work that has been done by the people involved in the first and second draft.

Dr. Silber stated: If we view May as our drop-dead date on this framework, then any document we produce has to be ready for public discussion by March. By the February 10 meeting we should know if we are on track with a single document that will accomplish the results we are looking for. I agree with Mr. Irwin that when we have come up with the next document that we are prepared to endorse, there's got to be a public hearing, just as we have had on the English framework and just as we have had on this one. Some people claimed this was a done deal. We had a lot of letters saying, we realize this is a done deal, but there's no done deal here. You have seen exactly how we have responded to public comment. This process is open and responsive, and there has been no abandonment of our obligations under the Education Reform Act. I can assure all the people in this meeting that when the next documents are ready for public comment, we'll have public comment. I don't think we have to sit around for 10 or 12 hours listening to everybody who wants to talk in order to hear from the public. If we ask for written comment and provide a decent period of time (and we provided about an hour and a half this morning for oral comment), we can hear from the public. Obviously, that has to be part of the process. We are not going to end up approving some final document here without going back to the public.

The Commissioner reiterated that the Department has already begun incorporating strong aspects of the previous framework drafts into the current document. Working with the Board subcommittee as the lead committee, the Department will bring together its staff and representatives from the prior committee to come up with a single high-quality document.

The Board will discuss the status of the framework at its February 10 meeting.

6. Charter Schools

Dr. Silber announced that discussion of this item will be postponed.

7. Certificate Of Mastery - Discussion

Dr. Silber announced that discussion of this item will be postponed.

8. Regulatory Reform

a.School Finance Regulations - Initial consideration to seek public comment on proposed changes - VOTE

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, Section 1B; c. 70, Sections 3 and 11; c. 71B, Section 2; c. 72, Section 6; and c. 76, Sections 12A and 12 B, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, Section 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed revised Regulations on School Finance and Accountability, 603 CMR 10.00.

The motion was made by Mr. Koplik and seconded by Mr. Peyser. The vote was unanimous.

9. Approval Of Grants - VOTE

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

FUND CODE	NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM	Number of Grants Recommended	Amount
536	Community Service Learning	23	$125,000
797	Safe Schools for Gay and Lesbian Students Mentor Program	6	$ 29,500

The motion was made by Mr. Koplik and seconded by Mr. Peyser. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10, 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 12:30 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert V. Antonucci
Secretary