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Board Of Education Regular Meeting

Minutes

Monday, February 10, 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, Boston
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. Nancy L. Catuogno, Registered Diplomate Reporter
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 January 14, 1997 Special Meeting as amended and the minutes of the January 15, 1997 Regular Meeting. Mr. Irwin made the motion and it was seconded by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield. The vote was unanimous.

2. Comments From The Chairman

Dr. Silber stated: With regard to the English Language Arts framework, I am still concerned about the absence of a list of required readings. I think we have come up with a very fine list of readings in appendix A and B. They are responsive to the issues of multiculturalism and the rest. But I do not know how we are going to be able to draft a customized test if there is not some smaller body of readings that are required of every student, so that we know that students who go through twelve grades in Massachusetts have read a specific number of books. I should think, for example, that two books each semester, or a total of 48, would be a reasonable minimal number. It is also a large enough number so that we should be able to get the kind of balance we want.

Dr. Silber continued: To that end, I have asked Patricia Crutchfield, who is a former teacher of English, to take a stab at coming up with that list. When she comes up with her suggestions, we

can all review it and see whether we can come to some agreement as to what the required reading is going to be. Without some required reading, I do not think we can handle the problem of transience in the state of Massachusetts, where kids move from one school to another. It seems to me there have to be some books that are to be read at each grade level. I wanted to alert the Board that I have asked Pat to try this out and see what she can come up with.

Vice Chairperson Crutchfield stated that she has agreed to take on this task and plans to work with the existing English Language Arts committee on it.

3. Comments From The Commissione

Commissioner Antonucci stated that the revisions discussed by the Board to the English Language Arts framework in January have been incorporated. The approved framework is now being printed for distribution to the Board and to all school districts in the state so it can be used. The framework will also be available on the Internet.

On behalf of the Board and Department, Commissioner Antonucci congratulated Board member Roberta Schaefer for the Public Service Award she received from the Worcester *Telegram and Gazette* on January 23, 1997.

a. Lawrence Public Schools

The Commissioner reported that he has been actively monitoring the situation in the Lawrence Public Schools. He stated that in December, he asked the State Auditor to audit the school district's expenditures. The Auditor's staff has visited Lawrence and is working closely with the Department to define the financial and programmatic issues. The audit should be completed in four to six weeks.

Also, the Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has recommended withdrawal of accreditation from Lawrence High School. This action is scheduled to be brought to the full board of NEASC in March. An appeal by the Lawrence Public Schools would send the matter to the appeals committee and would mean that it would not come before the full NEASC board until May. Commissioner Antonucci distributed to Board members a chronology provided by Vince Ferrandino, Executive Director of NEASC, relating to the Lawrence High School accreditation.

The Commissioner said he met with Lawrence Superintendent James Scully last week. Following that meeting, on the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Lawrence School Committee decided not to appeal the finding of the Commission. It is most likely that in March, there will be a vote to deny accreditation. The Commissioner added that we can now see there is a focus on trying to resolve the serious issues facing the Lawrence Public Schools. He emphasized that much work needs to be done.

The Commissioner stated: If we are going to make a difference in Lawrence or any other district, the Board and the Commissioner need to be moving in the same direction. Commissioner Antonucci outlined the following options to the Board for further discussion next month: (1) under General Laws Chapter 69, Sections 1J and 1K, invoke the provisions of the Education Reform Act to put Lawrence on notice that the high school's loss of accreditation could result in a declaration that the school is under-performing; (2) appoint an independent fact-finding team; (3) start the process to adopt regulations for intervention in not only Lawrence but in any school district that is at risk of either educational or financial under-performance; and (4) file legislation to reduce the time period currently permitted under Chapter 69 to remedy a finding of under-performance. The Commissioner added that we might also consider filing legislation similar to that in New York, permitting the Commissioner to remove from office a school official who is found, after an administrative hearing, to have willfully violated or neglected his or her duty under state law. Also, the Department is reviewing the current certification regulations concerning revocation of certificates, to determine their applicability to these situations.

The Commissioner said he wants to make it clear that the concern is about students in the Lawrence school system. Lawrence receives a substantial amount of state funding to support

education reform initiatives, and we want to make sure those dollars are being spent appropriately for the benefit of students.

Dr. Silber stated: We have asked the State Auditor to examine all funds available to the school district because the funds are fungible. We asked for a programmatic audit of all funds Lawrence received from federal, state and local government.

Mr. Irwin asked the Commissioner to propose strategies for intervening in a troubled district before a school reaches the point of losing accreditation. Dr. Silber concurred, and noted that the motion is broad enough to accommodate Mr. Irwin's suggestion without amending the motion. The Commissioner said he agrees, and that he plans to present such a recommendation to the Board. Dr. Silber added: When our system of testing is in place, it will certainly give us an objective trigger for the kind of intervention you are talking about.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education, under G.L. c. 69, direct the Commissioner to propose regulations or legislation for consideration at the March meeting to permit the Board to intervene expeditiously to remedy a finding of school or school district under-performance.

The motion was made by Dr. Silber and seconded by Dr. Schaefer. The vote was unanimous.

After the Board took a brief recess, Dr. Silber stated: I speak with the same voice as the Commissioner. This Board of Education is not going to do anything with regard to Lawrence until we have received the report of the audit that is underway and the written report from the accreditation agency. After we have the facts, we will consider the issues and decide on a course of action. Until we have the facts available to us in the most objective form possible, we are not going to make any advance judgments on the merits of the case.

4. Report On Nasbe Study Group On Assessment

Dr. Roberta Schaefer reported on the meeting of the National Association of State Boards of Education study group on assessment that took place in Alexandria, Virginia over the weekend of January 25, 1997. NASBE is planning to issue a report on assessment in October. Dr. Schaefer reported that there are only three large testing companies that are affiliated with publishing companies: Psychological Testing - Harcourt Brace, Riverside-Houghton Mifflin, and CTB-McGraw Hill. They are the developers of the major norm-referenced tests. The group also discussed testing recommendations for special education students, the process of setting performance standards and the need for professional development. On the issue of performance standards, Dr. Schaefer said the group recommended setting between four and six performance levels in order to provide sufficient possibilities for improvement. She also said it is important for the Board and the Department to explain clearly to the public what the expectations are at each level. One suggestion is to publish a handbook for the public that explains the levels and provides examples of questions at each level.

Dr. Silber asked if the group considered having teachers assess the students in their class who are taking the test and comparing the teachers' assessment with the students' performance on the state test. He stated: That is one feature in the evaluation of teachers in the English system, and I wonder if anybody is considering introducing it here. Dr. Schaefer replied there was no discussion of that at the NASBE meeting.

5. History And Social Science Curriculum Framework - Status Report

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

a. Public Comment

Judy Boroschek, Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the Wellesley Public Schools, addressed the Board. She said the December draft framework is a step forward from earlier drafts that were deficient in content. However, she said it is far from adequate because it is provincial in its focus on Western history and its neglect of non-European cultures. She also recommended that the draft be revised to eliminate redundancy, and asked that it be reviewed by scholars with international perspectives.

Deborah Meier, Principal of the Mission Hill Elementary Pilot School in Boston, addressed the Board in opposition to the December draft of the History and Social Science framework. Ms. Meier stated: I am very glad to be here today with you, being new to the state of Massachusetts after nearly 30 years as an educator in New York State and the founder of a series of very successful schools in New York City, and I hope an equally successful one in the state of Massachusetts starting next fall. There are two separate but overlapping issues that are before you: Is a framework of this sort needed at all and, if so, is this the right one? I will focus on the first part of that question.

The existence of compulsory education covering 12 years of our children's lives places a special obligation upon us. An obligation to treat our differences of opinion and our diversity with the greatest of care, and to use public education to enhance and not weaken our respect for our differences. The interests of the state as against those of the individual community, school, family and child must be carefully weighed and balanced. Too many communities and families already feel alienated and powerless before the large scale institutions that appear to dominate their lives.

Our schools remain one of the few potentially powerful influences that require us to think, argue and reason together. Let us not remove from them the very issues we need to be reasoning about. Let us not deprive communities and families of the capacity to reach different conclusions where such differences are equally compatible with our democratic promise and our commitment and our constitution.

Mandated curriculum, backed by high stakes tests which can determine a child's entire future, shall be entered into with the greatest caution. Beyond basic reading, writing and mathematics, the state's mandate should be as lean and uncontroversial as possible, avoiding the legitimate disagreements that citizens hold regarding the definition of a well-educated 18 year old. Even where consensus exists, the state must treat with care. There is no one right answer to an old and honorable issue of what constitutes the best education and the best educated person.

The public responsibility is to define general parameters and then encourage difference, set down a broad curriculum that can be filled out community by community, school by school, within the context of a system of family choice. Providing exemplars, offering models, making information accessible regarding the merits of various approaches and the tradeoffs inherent in each is quite different from prescribing the one right way. Whether curriculum should focus exclusively on the past and avoid topics of current controversy; whether it should focus on one interpretation or another of our historic roots; whether it should reflect an interdisciplinary rather than a subject-based approach; whether it should offer students more or fewer electives, or prescribe which of many scientific disciplines are the most important, or which periods of history deserve the largest share of our attention, are not decisions that families or communities should have to let others decide for them.

Similarly, whether a long list of facts or a shorter list of intellectual habits of mind should be the center of a school's mandate, or whether students should be required to master more subjects at less depth or fewer at greater depth, are matters of legitimate dispute, and they will remain so whether or not we pretend to have resolved them or papered over them forever. Not to mention at which age or grade level or what sequence such matters should be taught. We will not resolve these forever, even if we pretend to. We already acknowledge these differences in post secondary education as well as in life itself. Why then are we so prepared to pretend they are not equally true for vulnerable 5- to 18-year-olds?

There is no indisputable evidence that students for example, from my state of New York, with its long history of state-mandated curriculum and testing, has produced better educated citizens than you of Massachusetts which has no history of such mandates. Nor is there evidence that Americans are less literate or less productive than our international competitors with their highly

centralized school systems. Yes, 21st century schools must be far more effective than those of the late 20th century. As we move forward, let us build on our strengths, our respect for diversity, for reasoning and arguing together in our local communities over issues that matter to us, and to our children and to our community rather than allowing solutions to be imposed by government agencies or experts far removed from our lives and the lives of our children.

The document before you is an example of a curriculum that dictates a particular narrow politically correct answer to issues of both pedagogy and curriculum. It offers us not standards, but standardization. Thank you.

Dr. Silber asked if anyone had any questions or comments they would like to ask Ms. Meier? Chairman Silber asked the following question: When you talk about leaving grade sequencing in various subjects to each local district or each school for that matter, how do we deal with this problem of student mobility? We have a terrible problem in some of our communities where as much as 20 percent of the student body changes schools at least once during the school year, and in some communities more than once, when they move from one community to another. How do we deal with that educational problem if there is not exact, not standardized, but some general agreement with regard to the subjects that are going to be considered at each grade sequence?

Ms. Meier replied: I only have to tell you in 35 years of teaching experience, that has never been a problem. My own children went to four different school systems before they even reached high school, and they learned different things in each of those school systems at difference grades, and it was not a problem to them. First of all, we forget so much of what we learn anyway. But what was powerful, what made them good students, were those intellectual habits of mind and those basic skills they learned. It did not matter if they repeated American History twice in a row. We could repeat American History every year and never get to the bottom of it. So I think it is a mistaken mixture of what is important. Kids go from one private school to another. The private schools that I attended as a child did not follow the New York City curriculum, and I have never been told by anybody who went from a private school to Stuyvesant, the fact that the kids had a different curriculum up to 9th grade placed them at a handicap in later times. I think what teachers are concerned about is students that have not been well educated, period. It does not matter if they were not well educated in the subjects that particular school has taught or some different school system taught.

Dr. Silber asked Ms. Meier the following question: Would you make an exception with regard to reading, writing and mathematics, which you singled out, and perhaps add science? Ms. Meier replied: I would not add science, but I think to learn to read well is imperative, and I think to understand basic mathematics is imperative. I think there are still issues about how best to assess that. But I do not think even the sequence in which you need to -- whether you need to learn addition before you learn division and so forth, I think there are interesting disputes in that field, but that at some age we could design a system for knowing whether we have competent students in those fields.

Dr. Thernstrom directed the following to Ms. Meier: Welcome to Massachusetts. I have followed your career for a long time with much admiration. Dr. Thernstrom asked the following questions: One, the last thing you said is, what matters is whether students are well educated. I am not sure what your definition of well educated is. Secondly, we do have built into the Massachusetts Education Reform Act a mandate for curriculum frameworks. I wondered what a History/Social Science framework would look like in your view, a proper one. Ms. Meier replied: It is going to take more than the next few minutes you will allow me. Dr. Thernstrom continued: It seems to me you are arguing against having a framework altogether.

Ms. Meier stated: I would argue there is -- for example, even in the school I went to, University of Chicago -- two schools of thought about what is the primary purpose of teaching history. I would leave it to different communities to focus differently. Sometimes the teaching of history is a morality lesson and sometimes it is an effort to try to teach people to seek evidence more soundly so they are better prepared to grapple with contemporary issues. So, we in the schools that I have been involved with, we focus on what I call habits of mind, that is certain intellectual disciplines of mind, rather than focusing on what you might call a survey course of history. Now, do I want mine mandated? To tell you the truth, I do not want them to mandate mine either. It is an awkward position to be in, that I believe the schools I have created are profoundly more successful than most schools, even following a very different path, without arguing that I believe

all schools should follow our path. I think there are trade-offs in different approaches and I think we need -- the genius of this country, historically, has been our being prepared to examine those tradeoffs rather than try to develop a highly centralized system.

Dr. Thernstrom stated: So that when you look at the work of our mutual friend Diane Ravich who argues our students just do not know enough, when you hear her, you say it is not true? Ms. Meier responded: I say they never knew enough. In New York, when they had a very narrow sequence, students who once went to schools when we had very narrow sequences, the students who didn't learn enough were dropped out of school. When I was a child, less than half the students started high school, much less completed it. So, when we had an easier consensus and all subjects treated exactly -- we have always had textbooks, we have had examinations and textbooks, but the truth of the matter is, even with those, most students did not know, quote know, remember, after they finished school important facts. Ms. Meier continued: What concerns me more about what American citizens do not know is how to reason from facts. If I present them with facts, how do they find out whether I am conning them or telling the truth, how to look up that evidence, how to reason with others what a logical argument might look like. I would far rather if we had to mandate something, mandate that. Although, I would rather persuade people rather than mandate it that what our citizens need is experience in knowing how to argue, how to defend, how to present evidence. That is what we require our graduates at Central Parks East Schools to do -- it is more like an oral defense in a doctoral dissertation -- to present their work and then to defend it before a body of their educated peers. I believe that we need to teach children how to use judgment, and they can only learn to use judgment if they attend schools in which the adults are exercising judgment. It is the exercise of judgment that I think we are avoiding in our schools, creating responsible communities that exercise public judgments, and I think mandates take away that power and they allow schools to be more irresponsible rather than more responsible.

Mr. Koplik addressed Ms. Meier with the following: I am curious about a statement you made that there is no basis of evidence that Americans are less literate than our global competitors, because it seems to counter many of the impressions and material that I have read that if we just looked at a snapshot of our 18-year-old, we would find that they are less literate, and we can name several western European nations, for example. Would you elaborate on that for me?

Ms. Meier responded that she would send some material to Mr. Koplik. In addition, Ms. Meier stated: On literacy, United States comes in second. The last time they were compared they came in second in literacy. I think it is interesting that we bury that fact, and I am not -- it was one of the northern European countries that came in first. The focus has been on math and science. We come in considerably lower in math and science, but I do not think anywhere near as disastrously. You have to understand. I come to this as an enormous critic of what our students are learning, but it is not a critic compared to the rest of the world, because I do not think we have an intellectually literate public in most countries. In my opinion, it is a fact. I will send you the evidence I am basing it on in the area of literacy in the United States. It not only does not rank low, it ranks quite high. On the area of productivity, which sort of started this whole thing, American students, Americans were not equally productive and therefore we are going to lose the economic race. I think that our competitors, the Japanese, are having a great deal of trouble despite their so-called highly successful centralized school system. So, I think productivity of Americans rank high and I think in part, they rank high because we were a culture that valued differences of opinion and learned to argue. I think we are in danger of losing a very valuable, powerful tradition of differences of opinion. I am for the partisanship of American politics as teaching us how to be productive citizens.

Dr. Schaefer addressed Ms. Meier: You said one of the important things that is missing from the schools today is teaching judgment. Is not one of the ways that we learn judgment from looking at past events and seeing how those decisions were made and, in hindsight, whether they were appropriate judgments or not?

Ms. Meier responded to Dr. Schaefer and concluded by stating the following: Absolutely, I am a history major. That is what I think is exciting about history. There is not a one right answer to that question of whether we made the right decision in the past. I think the marvelous thing about looking at the past that makes it a little easier than looking at the present is it should be more easy to acknowledge that the past is also problematic. The losers might have been right, not the winners. It allows us to argue those issues. Although, it only allows us to argue those issues.

In my opinion, if we have enough time to spend on certain periods of history and if we pick our periods well, depending on what might be of interest to us, to our students, and if we do not have to rush through 500 years in a few weeks, which allows us no time to listen to conflicting views and really to examine this with some intellectual seriousness. But I understand the arguments of the survey people. I think over time I will learn something from them and they will learn something from me. But we will not learn it if we are both just following what we are told to do.

Lawrence Blum, Professor of Philosophy and Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Education at UMass Boston, addressed the Board with concerns regarding the History and Social Science framework. Professor Blum's first concern was that the document should involve broad participation and consultation by teachers, parents and other education stakeholders called for by the Education Reform Act. Second, he stated that the December document provides no pedagogical guidance for teachers about the material it recommends. Third, he said the concept of civic education presented in the draft is unacceptably narrow. Last, Professor Blum stated that the December draft offers too narrow a view of American history and world history.

In response to Professor Blum's reference to global citizenship, Dr. Delattre stated: I think "global citizenship" is chimerical and I view the phrase itself as oxymoronic. My evidence is that in all places on the globe whose governments and others make a mockery of the idea of civic identity and the status of human beings and their civil rights, I would bank absolutely not on any putative global citizenship that I have, and I shudder for the safety of any child who is taught to do so. Such literature as I have read on this subject seems to me unpersuasive. In response, Professor Blum said he would agree to substitute for the term "global citizenship" the notion that students should be taught the condition of human rights around the world.

b. Discussion

Commissioner Antonucci stated that since the January 15, 1997 Board meeting, members of the Board committee have been working to revise the draft History and Social Science framework. They have met with Social Studies teachers and others to review the draft, and have been working with Department staff on the revisions. The Commissioner added that good progress is being made.

Mr. Peyser presented the committee's report. He stated: We are engaged in transforming a set of standards into a framework. At the same time, we are critically examining the standards to ensure they capture the intent of the Board and the criticisms we have received. We are in agreement not only internally among committee members, but among all those who have offered opinions on the frameworks, about the importance of strengthening and expanding History/ Social Science instruction in K-12 education, meaning especially that it be given greater prominence in the K-4 grade span as well as greater prominence throughout high school, through the 12th grade. Also, the standards are not intended to specify the particular teaching methodology or pedagogy, but rather are intended to define the floor rather than the ceiling of knowledge and curriculum. Schools should feel free to expand on the framework.

Mr. Peyser continued: We are working to integrate into the teaching standards some examples and key questions in order to give teachers guidance as to the level of rigor we expect in covering this material, as well as to suggest some linkages across the disciplines and forward and backward with respect to the various grade spans. In addition, the committee is considering adjusting U.S. and world history content to accommodate the 10th grade assessment. The idea is to ensure that the 10th grade test covers both U.S. and world history, and also to ensure that in the 11th and 12th grade the study of history continues with appropriate curriculum in both of those years covering the remainder of the 20th century. Also, we are allowing more time as a result of this adjustment for the study of other matters such as non-Western history and cultural or social history that are not specified in the current draft.

Mr. Peyser proposed that the committee send the Board a revised draft by February 28 for comment, and then revise that draft based on Board feedback. The next version would be available by March 7 for discussion at the March 10 Board meeting, at which time the Board would decide if it is ready to be released for public comment. The Board could then review and adopt the revised framework at the April 14 meeting.

Dr. Thernstrom emphasized the importance of the process that has been going on. She said the committee is listening carefully to their critics and taking their views very seriously. Dr. Thernstrom added that a number of the recent public comments are out of date because the committee has already incorporated many of those concerns. Dr. Schaefer also extended her appreciation to the teachers and legislators who have met with the committee.

Dr. Silber stated: I think it is quite clear that the criticism about the procedure that's being followed had plausibility only prior to the last meeting of the Board, because it presumed that we were going to accept the document that was presented for discussion at that meeting. Since we didn't, and since we continued the process of open hearings and receiving comments, and since all of those comments are being taken into account by the drafting committee, for anyone to suggest that somehow the procedure outlined in the Education Reform Act has not been adhered to, simply fails in light of the facts.

Dr. Silber continued: This has been an open process, a deliberative process, and a lengthy process, not to say an exhausting process. That criticism of the procedure just will not lie. Some may not like the framework, we can disagree about the framework, but the complaint that we have not been observing an open and thoughtful procedure simply is negated by the facts.

Dr. Delattre expressed concern about the proposed schedule, stating: I do not understand why, in light of the discussion we had last time, there is not direct cooperation on the draft with the previous drafting committee, prior to the February 28 delivery to the Board. Dr. Delattre added: I was given an assurance at the last meeting that there would be cooperation with the October draft committee and I believe that delivering this report or draft to the Board before that happens is not in keeping with what we discussed last time.

Mr. Peyser responded that rather than submit the revised draft first to the Board, the committee could submit it first to the October draft committee. Dr. Delattre said they should not submit it to that committee, but rather should be working on it openly and directly in cooperation with that committee. Dr. Koplik said he expects to receive a version that has been reviewed and has met the test of integration with the views of the October draft committee and the document that committee produced. He said he leaves it up to the current committee to accept or reject parts of the previous document, but he would expect them to go through that exercise before presenting another draft to the Board.

Mr. Peyser assured Board members that the Board committee will go to the October committee first, get feedback on the draft, and then incorporate that feedback in the version that is presented to the Board. They would still plan to make further revisions based on Board feedback before March 10. Dr. Delattre said he appreciated that.

6. Student Assessment - Continuing Discussion

a. Next Steps in Test Development and Schedule for Assessment

Commissioner Antonucci stated that as requested, we have sent the Board sample questions in science and mathematics so the Board could review the work that Advanced Systems was doing in preparation for those tests. The Commissioner made three points: First, the Board needs to decide whether or not to resume test development in English Language Arts and History and Social Science (the latter as soon as the framework is adopted). We also have to make a firm decision on Advanced Systems' role. Second, the Commissioner said if the Board decides to move ahead, we need to reconstitute and convene the assessment development committees in a different kind of structure than we have had, but utilizing the expertise that we need to get the questions developed.

Third, the Commissioner reviewed with the Board the schedule for testing, which would include this year the grade 3 standardized reading test; a standardized test in reading, language, math, science and social studies in grade 10; and the trial questions for mathematics and science in grades 4, 8 and 10. The Commissioner also informed the Board that we have gone out for requests for proposals for the grade 3 test and for the grade 10 test, and that we have already received the grade 3 proposals. The grade 10 test proposals will be in shortly, and then we'll

decide on awarding that contract.

Dr. Delattre requested that the Commissioner show the Board the proposals that have been received for the tests. The Commissioner agreed to do so.

Dr. Silber asked: Would not it be a good idea to have the standardized test given in grades 4 and 8, not just in 10, because without those we are not going to have any way of finding out what the norm is with regard to the customized tests that are being developed by Advanced Systems? Advanced Systems, by doing a customized test, will not be able to give us a national norm on it, or even a state norm, much less an international norm. But if we were to have a test at grades 4, 8 and 10, and you have already planned the 10, then we will be able to have a norm for Advanced Systems and be able to judge whether it's at about the level that we want.

Chairman Silber continued: For example, if on one of the nationally normed tests that is given in grades 4, 8 and 10, students should turn out with a B, and on the Advanced Systems test they came out with a C, we might conclude that Advanced Systems has pegged it just right with a more demanding standard, a standard that would approach international standards. On the other hand, if the situation were reversed, where a nationally normed test shows that the students were performing at about a C level and Advanced Systems had a B level, then we would know that the standards in that exam were perhaps not rigorous enough.

Dr. Silber added: I think we are going to need some way of satisfying ourselves on the level of the examinations that are given, and for that reason, unless it is just too expensive, I would think since you are setting up a standardized test in accordance with Roberta's motion of last time on grade 10, that we do it for 4 and 8 as well.

Commissioner Antonucci responded that the Department of Education does not have funds to test grades 4 and 8 this year. He reminded the Board that the trade-off was if the Board did not give the GED, we would give the grade 10 test this year. The Commissioner said a survey of testing in all school districts indicates enough commonality in grades 4 and 8 of tests that are already given to provide data of the sort that Dr. Silber is seeking. For example, the Department could do a correlation between the Iowa test results in school districts at grades 4 and 8 and what we are doing, so we would not duplicate the test. Dr. Silber said that would be fine.

Dr. Delattre asked if the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test would provide useful comparisons. The Commissioner said no, because it is a randomized sample, not an individual test. Dr. Silber stated: I do not see anything about the NAEP test that prevents it from being graded according to individual students if someone is prepared to break out those scores. If they are not going to do that, then I think we ought to ask why the federal government spends that much money on a test and at the same time on principle decides to make the test almost useless. It tells us very little, where we get a score for all of Massachusetts and we cannot differentiate between one school and another, one district and another, or between individual students. It is a lot of money to be throwing away where a very small amount of additional money would give us highly useful diagnostic information.

Dr. Delattre thanked Jeff Nellhaus and Nick Fischer of the Department of Education and representatives of Advanced Systems for meeting with him and others, including faculty members from BU and MIT experienced in math, science and schooling, to review the sample materials from the mathematics and science assessments Advanced Systems is designing.

Dr. Delattre stated: The tests this spring will contain only a collection of items. They will not establish the content of the final tests or even the common elements of the future completed version of the tests. The Department of Education plans to release some questions each year with sample exemplary answers by students. But at present the test developers in DOE face the problem of learning which schools teach what and at what grade levels in math and science, and how to build both the common and selective elements of the test to take local practices into account. This too means there won't be any completed tests for close to a year.

Dr. Delattre continued: I came to the review of the materials with such questions as does the complete instrument provide a useful and reliable assessment or measure of achievement in

mathematics or science for the grade level? But there is nowhere to ask this question at present because there are no completed instruments. Therefore, no one can currently say that Advanced Systems has prepared tests that promise to do what Massachusetts needs. The issue is still in balance. This means the best one can do at this point is to examine the questions and problems themselves in terms of clarity, coherence and accuracy of examples and description of phenomena and problems, levels of precision, adequacy to the tasks students are called on to perform, and appropriateness of vocabulary expectations, and to judge whether the test items cover subject matter and cover it at a level of difficulty appropriate to grade level.

Dr. Delattre said he will send to the Department the specific criticisms, suggestions and recommendations he and his colleagues made following their review. He highlighted a few, which he said identify a certain disproportion of emphasis which he hopes will not be present in the completed tests.

Dr. Delattre said: For example, the grade 4 mathematics test items seem rather heavily weighted toward probability and statistics and are not very attentive to patterns and relationships. The grade 10 mathematics seems rather heavily weighted toward number operations with not a whole lot of focus on functions and related aspects of mathematics. But these matters of emphasis and concentration can be resolved by close attention to the relative weight of the content strands.

Dr. Delattre continued: The levels of difficulty are sometimes troubling, as with matrix multiplication in grade 10 tests -- which is usually studied in algebra 2 and often is not part of the 10th grade curriculum -- and also the trigonometry items. The same thing shows up in some of the 4th grade items. It may, for example, not be unreasonable, though it might be a bit much, to call on 4th graders to answer the following: There are six socks in a drawer. Two are white, two are black, and two are blue. You want a matching pair of socks. You can take one sock at a time out of the drawer. How many times must you take a sock from the drawer to be sure you have a matching pair? Well, obviously the answer is you must take a sock from the drawer only once. The question is: How many socks must you take from the drawer to be sure that you have a matching pair? And I suppose that might be a suitable question for 4th graders. I will leave that to you to decide.

Dr. Delattre read another example: Johnny and Susan are playing a mystery bag game. There are three tiles in the bag. The tiles are either red or white. They take turns pulling one tile out of the bag. They must replace the tile in the bag, that is each individual, I take it this means, after recording its color. They each take three turns and mark the colors in the chart below. Susan draws white, white, red. Johnny draws red, red, red. Johnny predicts there are more red tiles than white tiles in the bag and Susan disagrees. Now, you the 4th grader are supposed to say who you think is right, Johnny or Susan, and explain why you think so. Johnny and Susan each take three more turns and here the students see a chart that shows the color of tiles they pull from the bag on this turn. Susan picks red, white, red and Johnny picks white, red, white. Do you think there are more red tiles or white tiles in the bag now? Explain why you think so. Now, how easy is that for everybody here to determine what can be inferred about the probability with respect to the identity of the tiles in that bag? The third part of the question says, is there a way to be more certain of what is in the bag without looking inside? Explain your thinking. Well, I don't know if a 4th grader would think to say dump the thing out and see what they all are. But in any case, that seems to me rather strenuous for a 4th grader.

Dr. Delattre continued: Problem settings are at times in the test odd and inadequate, as in questions that require students, down to the 4th grade level, to visualize three dimensional objects by looking at a two-dimensional representation and then making rather difficult estimations based on what they are able to visualize. With open-response questions, the instructions for scoring are frequently inadequate. I think that may be tied to some difficulties with framework, too. "It gives a clear explanation," or, "shows minimal understanding," and the like, I trust will be illuminated or at least exemplified. And criteria for scoring are frequently too blunt. There are questions in the examinations with a series of questions that must be answered, and in some of the problems your answer to the second question is contingent on your answer to the first or logically dependent on your answer to the first and your answer to the third logically dependent on your answers to the first two and so on. In other problems there is no such logical dependency and in the sequence of questions, each answer is separate, logically independent of any answer to the other. And yet the scoring arrangements for those two different kinds of problems are the same. That's too blunt. There need to be distinctions there.

Dr. Delattre went on: Similar difficulties obtained in some of the science questions so far developed. There is questionable science in the description of phenomena from which questions are drawn. For example, in grade 8 students are asked, suppose an object accidentally drops into the park's pond. While you are reaching for the object, you push it beneath the surface. If the density of the object is exactly equal to water's density, the object will most likely: return to the surface; sink to the bottom of the pond; stay near the depth to which it was pushed; or sink and then float to the surface. The right answer, according to the test, is: stay near the depth to which it was pushed. Why don't you try it if you can find an object that has exactly the same density of water and think about Newton's Law of Inertia while you're pushing it?

Dr. Delattre noted that the science framework expects students to understand that compounds form when atoms of two or more elements bond, which requires a fairly sophisticated level of abstract thought. However, he said, all of the items we saw utilize archaic and overly simplified electron orbital diagrams which do not represent very well chemical bonding.

After reading some additional sample questions, Dr. Delattre stated: My own view is that we need extended review of the tests in completed form by mathematicians and scientists as well as mathematics and science teachers before any of these tests can be used in any systematic way with students in Massachusetts. It is clear we are nine months to a year away from tests we can look at and we have no plans to administer completed tests within a year. I doubt on these grounds the wisdom of asking Advanced Systems to proceed with test development in English Language Arts and soon in History and Social Science until we have confirmation that the mathematics and science tests are up to the task of comprehensive statewide assessment.

Dr. Delattre added: It would be utterly unfair of me to deny that some of what Advanced Systems has done so far is really very good. Some of their work seems to me to be exemplary, and I admire very much a good bit of what has been done by the Department of Education to make the best out of this to date. The sooner we can see completed versions and subject them to analysis and criticism by the appropriate people, the better. But to tell Advanced Systems to go ahead as if we knew enough to warrant such a step from what they have so far done in math and science, seems to me to be precipitous and ill-considered.

Dr. Delattre concluded: I think the rush to testing and rush to preparing the tests will make both haste and waste. Rush of this sort will, I think, make students and their parents and teachers the losers if we insist that timing is more important than knowing. I think we should sit tight until we know more. I am persuaded, I confess, by the relevance of the point about the reading list for English Language Arts. But I do not think the claim that we should just go ahead on the strength of what we have so far, is going to serve anybody's interests.

Chairman Silber asked that the Board act separately on the two parts of the motion, one on having Advanced Systems proceed with test development in English Language Arts and History and Social Science and the other on reconstituting and convening the assessment committees. He recommended starting with the second part, reconstituting and convening assessment development committees, because establishing those committees may be very useful in further refining the frameworks themselves.

Dr. Thernstrom commented that no test is going to be perfect, and that experts could find that the questions on standardized tests leave as much to be desired as do these customized test questions. She suggested the Board consider two questions. First, how are we going to meet our schedule for frameworks and assessment in a responsible manner? Second, are we still committed to customized tests? She noted that Boston Supt. Payzant and others have strongly endorsed having customized tests to match the customized frameworks, and that the legal defensibility of a high stakes test depends on its alignment to the curriculum. Dr. Delattre responded that he is not arguing against customized tests; he takes them to be mandated by the Education Reform Act.

Dr. Schaefer said she showed the sample math and science questions to teachers at the elementary, secondary and college level, and while they raised some issues, their overall reaction was quite favorable.

Commissioner Antonucci said that close scrutiny of any test questions is likely to raise some issues, but on the whole the questions Advanced Systems has developed so far have been well received. He acknowledged Dr. Delattre brought up some good points. The key issue, the Commissioner said, is whether the test matches the frameworks and enables us to measure students' progress in meeting the frameworks. He said he does not think any standardized test will do that without some modification.

Dr. Silber stated: What are we doing in mathematics and science that could conceivably require a customized test? If our frameworks in math and science require a customized test, there must be something very peculiar and very provincial about our frameworks. We ought to be able to take the test they give German students or Chinese students or French students in math and science just as easily as we give one that is customized. I would like you to answer that question. I think Tom Birmingham is precisely right in his belief that we could find a lot of adequate tests off the shelf in math and science.

Dr. Silber continued: I think you can also use a standardized test in English, within limits. If you ask a student to analyze a particular Shakespeare play that they have not read, that would be unfair. But short of such specific literary examples, grammar, syntax, capacity to diagram sentences, identifying parts of speech, identifying figures of speech, identifying poetic forms, leaders and things like that, you can use a standardized test there. I do not see any legal bar. If Tom Birmingham is interested in standardized tests, as he appears to be in conversations with me, it must not be his impression that the law requires these tests to be customized. What the law requires is that they have a relationship to the frameworks. I do not see the slightest evidence on English, math and science that they need to be customized.

Dr. Silber went on: When it comes to History and Social Science, I agree with Abigail Thernstrom all the way. I do not know how in the world we could not develop a test there. When it comes to foreign language, I think we can use an off-the-shelf test. When it comes to the arts, it is going to have to be customized again. But I do not see any reason for us to commit ourselves to the expense of un-normed, customized tests that will not give us the capacity to answer one question the legislature insists on, and that is whether our students meet international standards. We will never know what the international standards are unless we can compare our results on tests that have been given in an international framework.

Jeffrey Nellhaus, Department administrator, responded to a question from Dr. Schaefer. He said standardized tests certainly will cover content included in the frameworks. However, because those tests have only 20 to 30 questions in each subject, they will not provide the breadth or depth that a customized test will. Associate Commissioner Nicholas Fischer added that most nationally norm referenced tests do not have a wide range of open-ended questions. Dr. Silber commented that any standardized test can be expanded or modified to meet the state's requirements, and no test will examine for everything.

Dr. Silber asked: Why do we have this alacrity to go with further contracts with Advanced Systems until we have seen those tests in a completed form, until we have been able to field test them, when at the same time we can meet at least 75 to 80 percent of our objective in at least English, math and science by the use of standardized tests? After we have more time and after we have completed not only the frameworks but the guides to teachers and the lesson plans and everything else so that we can refine these tests, then maybe we're going to reach that stage. But we are not going to reach the stage of adequate customized tests in less than three or four years, and in the meantime what are we going to do without testing? I cannot believe it makes sense for us to delay the process of systematic testing until we can reach the point that we have sound testing developed on this customized procedure.

Vice Chairperson Crutchfield asked what contractual agreements, if any, we have with Advanced Systems. Dr. Silber answered the Board has no obligation beyond having Advanced Systems develop the math and science tests. Commissioner Antonucci clarified that the Department has a contract with Advanced Systems for the assessment program. Currently Advanced Systems is on notice not to proceed with anything but math and science, based on the Board's vote. The contract also has a termination clause, with reasons and procedures for termination. Commissioner Antonucci said the legal issues related to the contract can be discussed at another time; right now the question is how the Board wants to proceed with test development and the assessment committees.

Stuart Kahl from Advanced Systems addressed the Board from the audience. He assured the Board that he has been reviewing the test items with several committees, and the questions are still under development. He said the sample questions Dr. Delattre reviewed did not represent the full domain at each level in each subject. The questions are also being reviewed by Dr. Ed Roeber, head of student assessment for the Council of Chief State School Officers, and by some Harvard mathematic professors. Mr. Kahl said that as a contractor, Advanced Systems will accept whatever decision the Board makes on delaying or not delaying aspects of the assessment. The company wants to produce a set of materials that meet the specifications of the Board and the Department.

Dr. Delattre responded: I have no intent whatsoever to end the arrangements with Advanced Systems around math and science. I just don't want to get started on development in English Language Arts and History and Social Science until we can see something closer to what a completed test would look like or have the information in hand that should be available once the pilot is conducted in the spring. He added that he has appreciated working with Mr. Kahl.

Dr. Silber responded to one of Mr. Kahl's comments about standards and median percentile ranks: What you refer to as a median is what some call a C. That is shorthand for median. If only the top 25 percent do better, then you are talking about perhaps a B or B plus. But we are obligated to have a test that shows that the achievement of Massachusetts high school graduates meets international standards. If we are not going to translate the mathematics test that is given to the students who attend German *gymnasia* at that grade, or the science test that they pass, or take the test from England or take the test from France, then we have to have some kind of standardization. I don't see how we're going to get it out of a customized test until extensive equating examination has taken place. That is going to take several years.

Mr. Peyser asked Dr. Delattre if his concern about proceeding with test development is largely financial. Dr. Delattre replied that cost is a consideration, but not the overriding one. Rather, he said, the issue is the wisdom of proceeding when we don't have sufficient information.

In response to a question from Dr. Thernstrom, Mr. Kahl stated the number one product of an off-the-shelf standardized test is percentile ranks and median percentile ranks, or cut scores. In contrast, with a customized test, the state will establish standards and be able to publish real student work that can be placed at different performance levels, showing the kind of work we expect to see from students designated as "proficient."

Dr. Silber stated: Off-the-shelf tests can also provide samples of what they expect students to accomplish at the various percentiles, so there is no unique advantage to a customized test in that regard. The fact that we want a customized test does not mean that we have to continue to use Advanced Systems before we have seen and are satisfied with two completed exams. I have no objection in principle to having all of it done by Advanced Systems. But although I am from Texas, I feel like I am from Missouri; I want to see it before I make that further commitment. I have concerns about questions of the sort that I have seen in this exam, such as this one: "On October 20, it's 65 degrees and sunny in Boston. What would you predict for the temperature on October 21 -- a little less than 65, a little more than 65, exactly 65, or there's no way to predict the temperature without more information?" When somebody puts together a question like that, I want to know who's thinking, because you can certainly make a prediction. It doesn't say anything about an accurate prediction. But people make predictions on the weather all the time and they almost never get it right and they certainly have some basis for it.

Dr. Silber continued: Why should I be committed, or be asked to commit by a vote of this Board to contract further until we have seen whether, by the time this test is final, such lapses of thought have totally disappeared and the refinement has been so effective that we can rely on all of them? One thing that bothers me about lots of tests is that there are certain tests, and the SAT has in part this feature, where a B grade student can handle the test very easily and an A student is continuously confused. These are examples of the sort that Ed Delattre noted, where the more you know about it the harder it is to answer the question. A test has to be reviewed very carefully for that criterion because there has to be a way of rewarding, not penalizing, the student who can see the ambiguities in a question.

Dr. Silber concluded: All I am saying is that I just do not understand this alacrity to extend the contract until we have seen the results. We should see the results first. If we want to customize another test, then let us take a company with a distinguished record in off-the-shelf tests and ask them to customize some part of it which might be 40 or 50 percent or something like that. But I see no reason to add to this burden because we are at least a year from having a test on which we can confidently stand on science and mathematics. I think we can come closer to meeting our objective and meeting international standards with off-the-shelf tests, customized as needed.

The Board continued to discuss their various concerns regarding the development of test questions and the schedule for statewide student assessment.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education direct the Commissioner to reconstitute and convene the assessment development committees, and solicit nominations from each Board member for these assessment committees.

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

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education direct the Commissioner to notify Advanced Systems to resume test development in English Language Arts, and in History and Social Science when that framework is approved.

The motion was made by Dr. Schaefer and seconded by Dr. Thernstrom. The motion carried 6 to 3. Dr. Silber, Dr. Delattre and Dr. Koplik voted in opposition.

7. Governor's House 1 Budget Proposal - Discussion

Commissioner Antonucci reported that he and the Chairman have reviewed the Governor's budget proposal, which all Board members have received. A few items are noteworthy. One is that the Governor did use the block grant approach that the Board suggested as an option for certain grant funds, based on Mr. Peyser's recommendation.

The Commissioner said he and the Chairman have concerns about two major issues in the proposal. The first is regional school transportation where we requested a $4.6 million increase to address the concerns of the larger regions in the western part of the state, and the Governor recommended an increase of $1.5 million in that account. The other issue is early childhood education. The Board requested an increase of $100 million which would have resulted in a total of $134 million. The Governor increased the account by $16 million, of which part is for Head Start.

Dr. Silber stated: The Governor has called on us in the aftermath of the Lawrence situation, to do more to evaluate school districts so that we can address problems before accreditation is lost. This is going to take a good deal of time and money, and we are probably going to have to contract out some of that research. Do we have enough money in the budget to handle the assessment and testing process and at the same time to make those evaluations? We also need legislation affirming that any evaluation submitted by school districts is under oath with penalties of perjury for any false statements contained therein, otherwise these things are not worth the time it takes to read them. Dr. Silber asked the Commissioner to estimate the cost of the evaluation system and to prepare to advocate for it with the legislature and the Governor. The Commissioner agreed to do so.

Dr. Koplik asked the Commissioner if the staff could do a brief analysis of the items in the Governor's budget affecting K-12 in particular, in relation to Massachusetts and our initiatives. The Commissioner agreed to do so.

The Commissioner noted that the Governor's House 1 proposal is the first step in the FY 98 budget process. We are now working with the House on their budget, and will make our views

known. The Senate will propose its FY 98 budget in April or May, after action by the House in March. Dr. Silber suggested that he and the Commissioner meet with Speaker Finneran before the House budget is completed.

8. Certificate Of Mastery - Discussion

The Board discussed the memo presented by the Commissioner outlining various options for the Certificate of Mastery, which under the Education Reform Act is intended to recognize high performance by Massachusetts high school graduates. Board members discussed using the Advanced Placement program (achieving a score of four or higher on two or more AP tests), or passing the International Baccalaureate program, as bases for the certificate. Dr. Schaefer and Ms. Vagianos recommended using a set score on a certain number of SAT II exams as an alternative basis for awarding the certificate to high school graduates who do not have the opportunity to take AP courses in certain subjects.

The options proposed by the Commissioner were as follows:

I. The clearest approach to establishing immediate credibility for the Certificate of Mastery is to use programs already recognized as having high performance standards for students. Based on the language in M.G.L., Chapter 69, Section 1D it would be possible to award the Certificate for specific subject competence, a course of study such as the International Baccalaureate, or a combination of both. Based on these assumptions, two options are worthy of consideration among nationally recognized programs.

> Achieving a score of four or better on two (or more) Advanced Placement (AP) tests.
> Successfully passing the International Baccalaureate program.

II. Successfully completing two or more honors level college courses of equivalent content to Advanced Placement courses achieving a grade of A and achieving a high school grade point average of 3.75 or better.

III. Meeting the academic course requirements for admission to state colleges and universities, achieving a grade of A in two or more honors courses, and achieving a 3.75 or higher grade point average.

IV. Create a pilot program in which students would pass verbal and written examinations administered by examiners trained by the Commonwealth in areas such as the humanities, the arts, the social sciences, sciences, mathematics and world languages. Upon passage of two or more examinations, students would be awarded the Certificate of Mastery in the areas passed.

The consensus was to revise option II in the memo, drop option III, and consider option IV further at a later date. The Commissioner will return to the Board with a revised proposal for further discussion.

9. Advisory Council Appointments - Discussion

Dr. Silber announced there is no vote on the appointments this month, and any Board members who have suggestions or additional nominations should contact the Commissioner.

10. Regulatory Reform

a.Transitional Bilingual Education Regulations - Initial Consideration to Seek Public Comment on Proposed Changes - VOTE

Dr. Silber invited public comment on this agenda item.

Marla Perez-Selles, President of the Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education,

addressed the Board with concerns about the proposed changes to the Transitional Bilingual Education regulations. She noted that the NEASC accreditation team cited little evidence of effective implementation of TBE at Lawrence High School. Ms. Perez-Selles asked how the Department of Education proposes to help Lawrence students learn English and become more academically successful. She said she hopes there will be public hearings all over the state for people to air their concerns. She fears the proposed changes in the regulations will eliminate bilingual kindergartens and bilingual parent advisory councils, increase class size, and result in misidentification of students who need bilingual services. She concluded by stating: We will attend the hearings and respond to what the Department has written, but we take issue with the unnecessarily confrontational situation that has been created by the Department's action in excluding educators and parents from the process at the beginning.

Commissioner Antonucci responded that this should not turn into a confrontation. He stated: The Governor issued an executive order for us to look at every regulation. We have been doing that on a regular basis. We decided to have a process where we would go through the regulations, make a proposal to the Board and at that point go out for public discussion. There is no intent on our part to do anything underhanded. We are being very open about it. Today I am recommending that we solicit public comment on these proposed revisions. We are proposing to eliminate regulations that are redundant or simply advisory. Our intent is to streamline the regulations and do the best for children. We know it will be controversial. There are a lot of different opinions about where we should be going with bilingual education.

Ms. Jane Lopez, representing parents from the Chelsea and Lynn Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils, addressed the Board. She said these proposals would gut the legislation without having to go through the legislature. Ms. Lopez expressed particular concern about eliminating parent advisory councils, because she said the councils have been very successful and have given parents a voice in their schools.

Antonio Molina, President of the Boston Master Parent Advisory Council, addressed the Board. He said he would welcome positive changes in the law, but that parents should be part of the process up front and not an afterthought. Mr. Molina also said children should not be mainstreamed at a pace that will mark them for failure, and that children of different language backgrounds should not be dumped into a classroom together. What language, he asked, will the teacher of that classroom teach?

Dr. Silber replied: Teach English as a second language. This system is being followed all over the country in programs to teach English as a second language to persons coming from maybe 15 to 20 different language groups. It has been highly successful. So I would like to know what is your evidence to suggest that English as a second language is not a very effective way of teaching English to people from a multi-lingual background? Mr. Molina responded that two of his children flunked out of high school after being put in a classroom with immersion. He concluded by stating that he fears this proposal sends a negative message to the bilingual community, that they are not welcome here unless they speak English. Dr. Silber asked Mr. Molina to submit his comments in writing for distribution to Board members, and Mr. Molina agreed.

Dr. Silber commented: If there had not been a great failure in the transitional bilingual education program, if we hadn't had a monumental failure to provide competence in English through this methodology, there wouldn't be any discussion of this issue. Dr. Delattre asked if the notice of public comment could solicit comment on the TBE statute as well as the proposed changes to the regulations. Commissioner Antonucci agreed.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, section 1B and c. 71A, section 9, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G. L. c. 30A, section 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed revised Regulations for Transitional Bilingual Education, 603 CMR 14.00 and on the Transitional Bilingual Education statute.

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

b.School Building Assistance Regulations - Annual Adoption of Rates - VOTE

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with requirements of Chapter 645 of the Acts of 1948 as amended, adopt as interim regulations 603 CMR 38.00, and approve, for public comment and legislative review, a proposed technical amendment to 603 CMR 38.12 and proposed amendments to 603 CMR 38.06 increasing school construction cost standards by 4%.

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

11. Proposed Amendment To By-Laws - Vote

Dr. Thernstrom stated that she has withdrawn the proposed amendment to the By Laws.

12. 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
378	Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students	19	$38, 568

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield. 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, March 10 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 1:10 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Robert V. Antonucci
Secretary