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Board Of Education Regular Meeting

Minutes

Monday, April 14, 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
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

Member Of The Board Of Education Absent Mr. William K. Irwin, Jr., Wilmington

Also In Attendance

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

Chairman John Silber said the Board of Education is pleased to be in Springfield and welcomed officials Mayor Albano, Superintendent Peter Negroni, Principal Efraim Martinez and Attorney Ken Shea, Vice Chairman of the Springfield School Committee.

Mr. Martinez, principal of the German Gerena Community School, welcomed the Board to the school, which is a pre-K through grade 8 magnet school serving 1000 students. He encouraged the Board always to keep children at the core of their leadership. Attorney Ken Shea, Vice Chairman of the Springfield School Committee, also welcomed the Board to Springfield. Attorney Shea said under the leadership of Superintendent Negroni, Springfield has been on the cutting edge of change in public education, as is Massachusetts under Dr. Silber's leadership. Superintendent Negroni also welcomed the Board and added that Springfield has benefited from almost $200 million in state funding for new school construction, and over $75 million in additional funding under education reform. He said when Chairman Silber visits the Springfield Public Schools, he will see that they are truly examples of good educational process.

Mayor Albano welcomed the Board to Springfield and thanked the Board for all the support that has been offered to his city over the years, especially in the area of school construction.

Dr. Silber said the Board is very pleased to be in this beautiful school and in a city that has been making a vigorous effort in school reform and upgrading the quality of the public schools. Dr. Silber stated: The initiative this city took and Superintendent Negroni took in creating the first charter school within the public system was a notable initiative, because it provided a charter school with a building which enabled them to move very quickly toward testing an alternative system for delivering quality education to children. All of us commend Superintendent Negroni for that initiative, and for the general atmosphere he has created in Springfield toward education reform.

Mayor Albano added that he thinks he and Dr. Negroni may be the only Mayor and Superintendent in the state who support charter schools, and that he is very proud of the Springfield charter school initiative.

Dr. Silber thanked the Springfield officials for their warm welcome.

1.Approval Of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 10, 1997 Regular Meeting.

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

2. Comments From The Chairman

Chairman Silber stated: On April 17, 1997 the White House is holding a conference on early childhood development, a very important conference and one that is extremely timely in view of this Board's recommendation for an increase of $100 million in early childhood education. The co-sponsors of that event are President and Mrs. Clinton. It will begin at 10:30 a.m. and end at 12:45 p.m. There will be a variety of experts on child development and education focusing on the development of the brain, the physiological, neurological and sociological factors in child development.

Dr. Silber said he hopes members of the legislature and superintendents will try to attend this conference so that they can have easy access to the information it will provide. This White House conference will be held in Washington but it will be down-linked by satellite to various parts of the country. One down-link will be at Boston University in our Boston University Law School auditorium and also there will be a small room set aside in the Boston University School of Medicine for the conference. Dr. Silber urged as many people as possible to attend the conference at BU Law School. He added: I hope this conference will translate into some initiative by concerned parties such as school superintendents, principals, teachers and parents, to urge the legislature to take the initiative of increasing the budget for early childhood education by $100 million.

The Chairman asked Commissioner Antonucci if Ted Sizer answered the questions we left for him at our last meeting regarding how he would deal with the problem of student mobility and transience in this state, in relation to his view that we should not try to specify what is done at any particular time in our schools. The Chairman asked the Commissioner to follow up on this since we have not heard from Dr. Sizer.

Dr. Silber next raised the issue of special education. The Chairman referred to what he called "an excellent report" by the superintendents' association, and noted their conclusions on pages 14 and 16 of the report. Dr. Silber stated: There has been a dramatic increase in the cost of special education despite the efforts of school systems to control these costs and to reduce the percentage of children enrolled in special education. After laying out the causes and the problems, they then indicated their recommendations for action. Their conclusion was to adopt the federal standards for special educational services, conforming Massachusetts language to that of the federal statute, to provide a definition of effective progress and common definitions of disabilities, and to adopt any federal changes in the area of discipline when they occur.

Dr. Silber continued: Those are areas in which we have serious problems. If a child has been designated a child with special needs, then it is virtually impossible to discipline that child because under federal law, once it is special ed, then expulsion can only be for a few days, and the student has to be readmitted no matter what he has done. So, they are looking for all of these improvements.

Dr. Silber continued: More recently there has been a coalition of people on special education in which they concentrated on how to more adequately fund it, which is to ask the legislature for a very substantial increase in dollars, but they have abandoned -- the superintendents, along with the other people -- the request to conform the language of Massachusetts to the federal statute. I think that is going to substantially weaken our opportunity to have any reform in special ed. I think it is illusory to believe all that money is going to come through, and in the absence of an effort to conform the special ed language to the national statute, I think we are going to be left with a growing crisis in that area.

Dr. Silber said he hopes there will be reconsideration of this issue by the superintendents, principals and all of those, including parents, concerned with education. He said no one is talking about reducing special education for those with serious physiological needs and with serious mental disabilities, stating: We see gathered at the hearings in Gardner Auditorium at the State House, persons with very serious physiological and psychological disabilities. We are not talking about changing the law in any way on that. We are talking about a reduction of misdiagnosis, a reduction in the amount of abuse that goes on in special education where persons with far above average intelligence, with no learning disabilities whatsoever, can misbehave so badly that they have to be sent to a private school at public expense. It is that kind of fraudulent practice that we would like to end. I think we should reassure parents who have children with serious learning disabilities, no one is talking about a reform that would in any way diminish the efforts made on their behalf.

Dr. Silber said something has to be done to control the misuse of special education funds or we are going to see ourselves lowering continually the quality of education available for 80 percent of our children while we continue to overspend on 5 to 6 percent of our children who do not have learning disabilities but who are racking up very expensive costs in claims that are not really honest.

Chairman Silber said he raises the issue of special education at this time hoping that there will be a reconsideration on that so we can make a united front. He stated: I have been asked to try to arouse public support to the fullest extent I can. I know the leadership of the legislature is fully prepared to back a substantial change that would conform the language of Massachusetts to the federal statute. In order for them to sustain that effort, they have to have widespread public support.

3. Comments From The Commissioner

Commissioner Antonucci referenced the most recent House Ways and Means budget released on April 7, 1997 which he forwarded to Board members along with a faxed summary. He noted it will be voted on this week. The Commissioner and the Chairman submitted testimony to the Senate Ways and Means Committee on April 4.

The Commissioner noted some items in the House Ways and Means budget. The Board's initial request to increase funding for regional school transportation over a three year period was not addressed; the account was level funded. The state wards account has been increased by $9.8 million which will fully fund this account. This is the largest increase in that line item in many years. School-to-Work has been level funded. We requested an increase in that account. The early childhood initiative was increased, but not to the level the Board proposed. The budget provides $55.5 million for early childhood education. This is $4.3 million above House 1. This year's allocation was $34 million, and we had requested a significant increase. In the testimony of the Commissioner and the Chairman to the Senate Ways and Means Committee we asked for a significant increase from the $34 million, in line with the Board's vote. Finally, the House adopted a block grant proposal which was different from the one recommended by the Board and different from that in House 1.

Commissioner Antonucci and Governor Weld submitted testimony to the recent hearing on charter schools. The Commissioner stated: The Chair has come out strongly in favor of the Board's proposal to increase the cap to 75. The Joint Committee on Education is currently studying that. They have not come out with a recommendation yet. This was not addressed in the budget because we filed an independent bill and asked that bill to be heard on its merits. We expect a report from the committee shortly.

The Commissioner announced the Department workshops on curriculum frameworks are completed and we are currently doing some workshops on student assessment. They are both going well. We have made it a priority for not only the Department and the Board but for districts across the state that our business now and in the future needs to be the frameworks and assessment and a focus on good, rigorous, academic study and an evaluation system to assure that the standards are met. Also, the hearings on the proposed amendments to the transitional bilingual education regulations are completed. Most speakers were against any change in the regulations, but we expected that. There was a lot of misinformation about what we are proposing.

The Commissioner also made note of the Technology Literacy grant. We received a $3.4 million federal technology grant and have sent requests for proposals to districts. The Commissioner said these grants will be presented to the Board in June for approval.

Statements From The Public

Wendell Bourne, 7th grade Social Studies teacher in the Weston Public Schools, addressed the Board in opposition to the process for the History Social Science curriculum framework. Mr. Bourne said the events that transpired since the January Board meeting shaped his concerns. The process was to include the Board's subcommittee, the authors of the December draft, together with the members of the framework development committee, the authors of the October draft, to work on the new draft. Mr. Bourne came to the first meeting where he was under the impression that the December draft was the only draft under discussion. Mr. Bourne urged the Board to ensure the openness of this process again by allowing a document that truly draws from the collective works of the two History Social Science framework committees.

Susan Szachowicz, head of the Social Science Department in the Brockton Public Schools, addressed the Board with three suggestions regarding the History Social Science curriculum framework. First, she said the content lists within each grade span are far too dense. She suggested returning to the universal learning standards instead of focusing on content lists. That will result in the rigor that includes content, and the research skills that historians use. Second, she noted the lack of integration of the other social sciences for interdisciplinary studies. She again suggested returning to the general learning standards as the organizing force of the document. Ms. Szachowicz stated: If the learning standards include all the disciplines, the integration will occur naturally and not in a forced, mismatched way. Lastly, she noted the omission of any discussion on pedagogy. She suggested issuing a companion document along with the framework. She also asked the Board not to mandate specific pedagogy but rather to push teachers to use different strategies in their classrooms.

Dr. Silber asked Ms. Szachowicz if the transiency problem can be adequately addressed if we have grade spans of K-4, 5-8, 9-10 and 11-12. Ms. Szachowicz replied it cannot be adequately addressed even grade by grade because we have students who go in and out within the same year. Dr. Silber asked how do you cope with it all if you have no specification grade by grade? Ms. Szachowicz replied that breaking it down by grade span allows schools flexibility. For example, instead of U.S. history one year and world history another year, the school can integrate both and that would meet the content requirements for the two-year span.

Dr. Kathleen M. Riordan, Director of Foreign Languages in the Springfield Public Schools, addressed the Board about moving forward on the framework and assessments for foreign language. Dr. Riordan said we need to resolve quickly the concerns about the frameworks. We first need to know what problems, if any, there are and secondly, we need to work together to resolve them. She thinks the next critical step is to work on the assessments so that the question tryout in grades 4, 8 and 10 can take place as scheduled on the Department of Education's time line. Dr. Riordan added Springfield is anxious to work with the Board on the framework and also on the assessments.

Rita Oleksak of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MFLA) addressed the Board. Ms. Oleksak urged Board members to approve the framework and to resume the work to develop challenging assessments in foreign language. Dr. Silber responded that we do not have a schedule for consideration of the foreign language curriculum; and he does not think we are going to have a framework for consideration by the Board before sometime in the summer.

Ms. Desiree Parker, Chairperson of the Parent Community Advisory Council to the Board of Education addressed the Board. She said there are good things happening because of education reform but systems are not taking responsibility for parental involvement. Ms. Parker added that special education needs to be reviewed. She also asked why the Advisory Councils have been suspended. Commissioner Antonucci responded and said that there was a change in the structure of the Board of Education as of July 1 because of a reduction from the size of the original Board to the new Board. In May the Board will vote to fill vacancies on the councils and then we will get back on a regular meeting schedule.

Dr. Silber addressed Ms. Parker with regard to parental involvement and said we have been looking into that. Dr. Silber stated: I don't know the extent to which it is a problem in smaller cities, but busing is the most serious factor in the decline of parental involvement in Boston. If you have an open house at a school to which your child has been bused, that means the parents have to go all the way across town looking for a school that they have never seen. It is not a neighborhood school, and to get them involved is very difficult. He continued: I think what we are going to have to develop in such places as Boston are parental evenings where the teachers and the principals come to the neighborhood from which the children are being bused so that they can meet the parents closer to the parents' homes. Some solution like that has to be found. Dr. Delattre added that he can offer Ms. Parker some words of encouragement, stating: Not every teacher and administrator in Boston or Chelsea is passing the buck. Many of the teachers and administrators I meet and work with are trying very hard to hold up their end.

4.Draft History/Social Science Curriculum Framework Discussion

Commissioner Antonucci invited Linda Beardsley, Susan Wheltle and Richard Bennett from the Department of Education to come to the table as the Board's subcommittee presented their report on the History/Social Science framework.

Mr. Peyser presented the draft framework prepared by the Board's three-member subcommittee. He thanked the staff from the Department of Education for their work over the last few months. He said the document presented to the Board is a slightly modified version of the March draft, and that most of the changes over the past month have focused on improving the framework's accuracy and internal consistency.

Mr. Peyser gave an overview of the major structural elements of the draft, stating: First is the four strands tied to distinct academic disciplines (history, geography, civics & government, and economics). The purpose of this structure is not to drive schools to teach separate courses in these disciplines. Our intent is to ensure that each discipline is taken seriously in its own right, and is not treated merely as a subset of some other discipline. There is no one best way to structure a curriculum that integrates these disciplines. Moreover, developing linkages among the disciplines so that student understanding and appreciation of each is enhanced, is a creative act over which teachers must have ownership if implementation is to be successful.

Mr. Peyser continued: The second major structural element of the draft is its chronological presentation of historical topics. We present the core knowledge topics in history in chronological order for two reasons. First, a chronological framework for the teaching of history is important. Second, the presentation of the material in chronological order makes it easier for the reader to see exactly what is to be covered. A structure in which historical material is presented piecemeal in various sections has the effect of obscuring exactly what is included and what is left out. However, presenting historical material in the framework in chronological order does not mean we are insisting that teachers and schools march through history in lockstep to the beat of a linear historical clock. We have left it to the teachers and schools to determine how best to design the curriculum. We are simply presenting the material we expect students to know by the time they

reach the 4th, 8th and 10th grades.

Mr. Peyser went on: The third structural element is the partial integration of learning standards with core knowledge in history. After months of trying, the committee concluded it is not possible to fully integrate core knowledge in history with learning standards. These are decisions that teachers and curriculum designers must make for themselves. This draft offers some suggested ways in which the history covered in each grade span might be used to improve students' historical skills.

Mr. Peyser continued: The fourth point is the grade spans versus grade-by-grade structure. We adopted a grade span structure, rather than detailing the material to be covered on a grade-by-grade basis. This is consistent with the other frameworks. Also, the sequencing of courses and material within courses is not a problem for which there is one solution.

On the issue of U.S. history, Mr. Peyser stated: We have created a framework that is predicated on the legislature's mandate for a 10th grade statewide assessment in all core subject areas. We moved at least part of the 11th grade U.S. history material into the 9-10 grade span because, since passage of the 10th grade assessment is a prerequisite for high school graduation, we did not feel it appropriate to exclude U.S. history. After all, the only statutorily required course in the Commonwealth is U.S. history. It would be incongruous to allow students to graduate from high school without demonstrating any knowledge of U.S. history. Moreover, we were not convinced that an 11th grade survey course should be considered sacrosanct. If we are going to raise our expectations for students' understanding of history, it is not unreasonable to ask that students be introduced to certain topics related to the founding of the United States at earlier grades. We did not choose to challenge the legislature's mandate for a 10th grade, rather than 11th grade assessment. Our concerns centered around the delays and confusion such a move would cause while we waited for the legislature to consider our request, in addition to the possibility that asking for statutory relief might lead to other unintended legislative action.

Mr. Peyser went on: On the issue whether we have included too much material, the current draft contains fewer than 30 major subject areas to be covered during 14 years of schooling. We also introduced greater flexibility by giving teachers some choices, rather than requiring treatment of all topics in the framework. We have consciously raised the bar, as we believe education reform demands, by placing a stronger emphasis on specific content knowledge than is often the case in today's social studies classrooms. We do not think we are asking too much.

Lastly, Mr. Peyser addressed the question whether the framework is too Eurocentric. He stated: This draft strengthens the study of non-Western history. It strikes a reasonable balance between the centrality of Western civilization to the American experience and the importance of other cultures and societies to the story of our common humanity. In closing, Mr. Peyser said: This document is not perfect. Editorial changes have been suggested that should be made. But overall, it reflects a reasonable middle ground which balances our shared desire for more rigorous academic standards with the needs of teachers and administrators for flexibility to design courses that fit the needs of their students.

Board members then discussed the draft framework. Dr. Koplik asked Mr. Peyser about the opportunities for public comment on the draft, and about issues related to moving the study of U. S. history to grades 9 and 10. Mr. Peyser responded that the subcommittee had numerous meetings with teachers and administrators and a couple of meetings with the October revision committee, and also reviewed hundreds of letters commenting on the earlier drafts. There were also two public hearings in March. As a result, this draft is considerably changed from the December document. On the second issue, he said the amount of U.S. history to be studied in grades 9-10 is not massive. It goes from about 1783 to World War I. In grades 5-8, students will have studied U.S. history up to 1860, so much of the study in grades 9-10 will be a review of familiar material. Some districts already offer U.S. history in grade 10, and texts are available that can be used at that level.

Dr. Thernstrom added that the framework has been greatly improved as a result of the public comment, and she feels very good about the process and the product. She said the document reflects compromises that were made. Teachers and social studies department heads reacted positively to the March draft, and are urging the Board to adopt the framework so they can plan for the fall.

Vice Chairperson Crutchfield noted that Strand 5, Society, Diversity, Commonality and the Individual is not in the latest draft. She said she thinks these issues should be addressed in the framework. Mr. Peyser responded that the subcommittee felt more emphasis should be placed on the things we hold in common, not the things that divide us. Ms. Crutchfield said in response: I look at these issues in a positive and inclusive way. Diversity and the individual and society are not negative terms. I am not arguing for a fifth strand, but that we should address these issues from language and from a paradigm that is positive and that is reality-based.

Dr. Delattre spoke in regard to Mr. Peyser's report on the draft framework, noting that he sent each Board member 17 pages of remarks on this framework draft on Friday. . *(Dr. Delattre's written comments are attached to these minutes.)* Dr. Delattre stated: An overwhelming majority of teachers and administrators who have talked with me about the drafts, including the March draft, are not satisfied with the process. They are not satisfied with the substance. Of course there are people who welcome the compromises in this draft. I think we have lost by some of the compromises. But it's certainly not true that there is anything resembling uniform public assent to the wisdom of approving this draft or even considering it without dramatic change.

Dr. Delattre continued: With respect to the content and amount of content, I think it is something of a problem that the April draft cuts historical content from the March draft and that we lose some of the advantages the Virginia standards achieved in earlier drafts by doing that. The more serious problem is that I doubt that any school can adopt everything in this draft and hope to cover anything more than superficially.

We want schools to strive for high levels of academic rigor and good opportunities for students, but I am concerned that there is in many respects so much covered in this draft that schools will not be able to do justice to what they try to teach. There are dreadful risks of superficiality, and there will not be enough guidance from this draft about assessment and the appropriate focus in the classroom. This draft removes the language of the March draft that says students will learn this or will learn that. We need to be more helpful about the content and capacities or skills to be achieved.

Dr. Delattre continued: The second point is the question of organization by grade span or by grade level. More states than not, and most of the foreign school systems that have been of greatest interest in education, specify grade level courses beyond the primary years. I think that the framework's commitment to grade spans simply does not address the problems of children who move among districts. We run the risk of profound unfairness to students by having it structured in terms of grade spans. We need grade level specificity if we are to have an assessment program that gives us high standards. The grade span arrangement does not address either that or an assessment that is fair or the problems of children who move from district to district.

Dr. Delattre concluded: Finally, trying to change the 10th grade test to an 11th grade test defeats the purpose of having the test early enough in high school that it sends an appropriate wake-up call to students and their parents about whether they are progressing adequately toward graduation. I think it would be a bad mistake as well to try to force schools to move U.S. history down below the 11th grade. I make no brief here for a mere 11th grade history survey course. I am making a case against the disarray and the problems and expense that would arise for schools in insisting that students will be tested in the 10th grade on U.S. history beyond anything they may have covered through the 8th grade. So, in terms of the structure of fundamentals of this framework draft, I am in disagreement with the April draft and with the position that has been taken in articulating this History/Social Science draft for the schools and teachers and students of Massachusetts.

Student Board member Alexis Vagianos commented that school districts vary in what they cover in 11th grade history. She added that using grade spans rather than individual grade levels leaves the decisions to local school districts, and that is important. Ms. Vagianos also stated that the Student Advisory Council is very pleased with the March draft as it incorporated their comments. She thanked the committee for addressing the students' concerns.

Dr. Thernstrom said she wants this April draft to go out to teachers so it can be tested in the field. She stated: It is time to end the top-down process that has been in place, and move to a bottom-

up process in which we get the kind of feedback from teachers that we need. This framework will be changed over the next few years as teachers discover what works and what does not work.

Dr. Thernstrom said: In that spirit I make a motion that the Board approve the framework as currently written, with the modification that -- as we did with the English Language Arts framework -- in the next weeks we once again look at suggestions that have been made, and incorporate what we think is appropriate to incorporate. Dr. Silber stated: I am not going to recognize a motion of that sort until we have completed the discussion of this issue, and the discussion is not yet complete.

Dr. Silber continued with his remarks on the framework: There are 900,000 students in Massachusetts. Perhaps 15, 20 or even 30 have heard from Alexis Vagianos about this subject. The students in this state are in no position to vote on this document because the students in this state have not heard it. With regard to the mail, I suspect I have more extensive correspondence on this subject than any other member of this committee. I send you a selection of the responses that I receive, and it is only a very small tip of the iceberg. My correspondents are at least 10 to 1 stating their reservations and concerns about this document. It is not because anyone fails to recognize the progress we are making. I think our procedure has been a good procedure. I think the product that we have is continually getting better.

Dr. Silber stated: If it were the case that what we should do is stop the so-called top down approach by working on the draft and turning it over to the classrooms to perfect it, we could have done that last October. But last October, Dr. Thernstrom and several others were not in favor of sending it out to the classrooms. They wanted to revise the October draft. At the same point, I think we can say there is further necessity to revise this draft. We had a lot of hard work, and I think we have made real progress. To examine this draft and say there are yet other improvements that can be made is not a setback, but it is a normal course by which we discuss something as complex as this.

Dr. Silber went on: It has not taken long to come up with this framework. This Board has been in operation with the present membership since last summer and in that period of time, we have in place the mathematics framework, the science framework, the English Language Arts framework, and we have made substantial advance on this one. It is not something that has been going on for more than two years. Indeed, if we have this framework in place by our June meeting, that will give teachers the summer in which to work on this and to make their contributions, and we can certainly live with that course of action. This framework is going to be in place a long time, and it would be a mistake for us to suddenly feel that we have to rush to judgment. We have taken this long, which is not very long, and we can take another couple of months and do the job even better. There is no reason why we should be pushed. Our discussion is serious and substantive, and is the sort of thing we have to do in order to hear from as many people as possible and in order to be able to provide a document that is as responsive as possible. We will never come up with a document that suits everybody, but we can come up with a document that satisfies more individuals than are satisfied at present.

Dr. Silber continued: One thing that concerns me is that on April 14 I received from the members of the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and the Humanities a document approved by 29 members in which they said, We urge the Board to convene a working committee of educators including elementary, secondary and college level educators to prepare a final draft of the framework for the May or June meeting of the Board. The committee should draw upon the strengths of all previous drafts to achieve a final History and Social Science curriculum framework. We ask also that the Board receive input on a nearly final version of the framework from the National Council for History Education which reviews state frameworks, or a similarly respected professional organization.

Dr. Silber continued: They went on to outline five issues which they hope we will consider, such as the following: The framework should have a reasonable pacing and number of topics to allow students to revisit topics with increasing perspective and sophistication over the years of schooling. This is an objection we have heard from any number of witnesses who commented that the density of this framework is simply too much. I do not believe anybody could achieve an assessment on everything that is in there in economics without having a college major in economics. It is not that I am in any way critical about the inclusion of economics in this draft. I think economics and understanding something about a free market economy as opposed to a

regulated economy is absolutely essential. People need to know something about the gross domestic product and gross national product. I do not have any quarrel with this. It has to be measured in such a way that we can realistically say students who study something besides economics from K-12 have time to learn all that is required on economics. The same is to be said about history and sociology, civics and the rest.

Dr. Silber went on: The second point the Joint Committee makes is that the framework should take into consideration patterns of scope and sequence common throughout the Commonwealth, and available curriculum material. They have raised the issue of the dysfunction that would result if we pushed American history into the 10th grade. This framework would mandate that every school teach American history in the 9th grade and 10th grades, and that would be extremely disruptive. I do not see any reason why we should go out looking for problems that are not necessary. I do not know why we should be so locked into the idea that American history has to be pushed down to the 10th grade or somehow it cannot be done properly. I should think that we would be willing to concede on a point like that. That would seem to me to be a compromise that costs us nothing in principle.

Dr. Silber continued: The issue raised by Mr. Peyser about the 10th grade exam is simply a misunderstanding. I have had extensive talks with President Birmingham. I say, I have to be clear on this; do you mean that the 10th grade exam satisfies the requirements for high school graduation? He says, No, not at all. It is a diagnostic test. It is a *sine qua non*. You have to pass it in order to graduate from high school. You cannot graduate from high school without it. It is a necessary condition. But he has never suggested to me in any conversation I have had with him, and he was one of the key drafters and agents to pass the Education Reform Act, he has never suggested that the 10th grade exam is a sufficient test for graduation from high school. They have to learn something in the last two years of high school. If it were all that was required, children would pass the 10th grade exam and say good-bye. That is not what it is about. Consequently, we can easily test what they have learned about American history, which is a required course in Massachusetts, by giving them an examination in the 12th grade. A 12th grade examination will be absolutely necessary.

Dr. Silber said he wished to address the substance of this framework, for which he has a high regard. He stated: I am concerned with how we can take a document, improved as it is, and make it better. We begin on page 2 and 3 saying we study all social sciences every year. I do not know why that is dogma. I should think we have to study some of the social sciences every year but I do not know why every single one of them has to be studied every single year. On page 2 there was an excellent statement of what children should know at grades 4, 8, 10 and 12. I think we could all be proud of it. The vignettes that they offered, two of them, I thought were superb. On page 16, it is not clear to me what cannot be learned before grade 6 that can nevertheless be usefully forced into the curriculum at early ages. Take the language after page 16 which is very important. In their study, kindergarten through grade 6 students were asked to place paintings and photographs from various periods of United States history in chronological order. Even the youngest made some basic distinction between historical time, and these became increasingly differentiated with age. Correcting the correct order of images to dates and background knowledge, however, was difficult for students below grade 5. These are facts about child development, about intellectual development. There are certain things that children have difficulty grasping at an early age. Developmental strands have to be borne in mind. There are philosophical concepts that are being pushed into K through 1 and 2 that I do not think are realistic because of the way in which the child's mind develops. I think we ought to go back and look at this document and see where we push those in a little bit later, where they can grasp things clearly - a kindergarten kid can learn about George Washington.

Dr. Silber continued: This document states the principle correctly on page 16, but there are aspects later on that ignore that principle and we need to just clean that up. On page 17 we have an excellent statement, and it is repeated later on page 97. This document ties in what we are learning in history and social sciences to what we are learning in English and language arts. On page 19, I suggest introducing some music. There are songs from the Revolution, Civil War and the civil rights movement that could be tied into the history pattern to give it relevance and excitement for children.

Dr. Silber continued with some suggestions on pages 22, 23, 88 and 91. He noted that this framework is drafted by people who understand that Western civilization was not monolithic but multicultural in its origins and in its outreach. He said: I think this document looks to the other

cultures, the African origins, the Asian origins and so forth, in a very adroit way and I think that we can defend it handsomely in that regard. He added that on page 97, the draft discusses the importance of having good textbooks. He suggested listing some textbooks that we think would be useful.

Chairman Silber added: In light of these documents, I would suppose that the members of the committee would, now that have now completed this fourth draft, recognize that I am not in any sense disparaging the work or the accomplishments of that committee in expressing my concern that we do not yet have a document that is ready for adoption. We have no vote on this document on the agenda and I do not think that it would make sense at all for us to have it.

Dr. Silber proposed to appoint a working committee of educators, in line with the recommendations of the 29 members of the Joint Committee. He said: I think that their advice and recommendation was right on point. I am going to ask Pat Crutchfield, Ed Delattre and Bill Irwin to serve on that committee. I will pick an elementary and a secondary teacher, and a college educator to complete the framework; and suggest they come back as soon as they can with a further revision of this document. We look toward the approval of this document in May, if possible, but no later than June. I think that is a sound way for us to operate. It gives us the time to continue to have public discussion and to move in a highly responsible way. Dr. Silber noted this is the most difficult framework, because it touches everyone's lives and everyone has an opinion on it. If we meet that proposed schedule, we will have it in the hands of teachers so that they can begin to go to work on it and in subsequent years to teach it in time for its being operative in the following year.

Dr. Koplik said he still has confidence in the subcommittee's work and is generally pleased with the document they produced. He said he is not sure if another committee will do a better job.

Dr. Silber replied: This is one authority I have on the Board. They have completed their work and I have dismissed that committee. I have the authority to dismiss that committee just as surely as I had the authority to appoint it. They have now gone through four drafts and made a substantial contribution in which we can all take a great deal of satisfaction. I think now it is time for another committee to take a look at it, a committee that is made up of the sort of people that were recommended by the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities. I choose to proceed in this fashion and I think that is the responsible way to proceed.

Dr. Schaefer pointed out that the National Council on History Education that the Joint Committee members have suggested we turn to is the same committee that endorsed the National History Standards that were soundly rejected by the United States Senate 99 to zero, and that were rejected by the President of the United States himself. She said she would feel very uncomfortable involving that organization. Dr. Schaefer referred back to the motion made by Dr. Thernstrom which was to approve this framework subject to revisions, and reiterated that motion.

Dr. Silber stated: That motion is out of order by our By-Laws. It was not on the agenda of this meeting to have that vote. There is not an emergency involved and, consequently, it would take a two-thirds majority vote to succeed on a motion of that sort. Dr. Schaefer appealed the judgment of the Chairman on that matter. Dr. Silber said: You cannot appeal the judgment of the By-Laws. The By-Laws state that clearly. It was not on the agenda. It is on a matter that has not been before the public before. This fourth draft was never seen or discussed by this Board until last Tuesday when we received the copies. This is the first time we have met as a body to review it. Dr. Schaefer said it was a continuing item of discussion. Dr. Silber responded that it is a continuing item of discussion but there is not a continuing item of discussion on this particular version of the framework. It is a new document.

Board members discussed whether the draft framework is a new item on the agenda or not. Dr. Silber ended the discussion by stating: This is a new item. We have already been criticized any number of times on procedure. This is the first time that we, as members, have reviewed this document and the first time that the public has had a chance to hear about this document. It was just put on the Internet this week and was not distributed to members of this Board until Tuesday. By no stretch of the imagination can you say that this is a discussion of the previous work. It is a discussion of a new and fourth version of this.

Commissioner Antonucci clarified that there is no statutory requirement other than the By-Laws themselves. He said the policy issue is not new, since the Board has been discussing versions of the framework for three or four meetings, but the document itself is a new document. He said the decision whether it is a new or old item rests with the Chair of the Board. Board members continued to debate the issue. Dr. Delattre listed items that have been changed from the March to the April draft. Dr. Silber stated: It is amazing that some members of this Board are as indifferent as they apparently are to the views of 29 members of the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities. If we want to have an effective working relationship with the legislature, it would be nothing short of folly to be so arrogant as to simply say we waive all of that consideration. I think it is imperative that we pay attention to the 29 members of that Joint Committee, who can vacate anything we accomplish if we show such arrogant indifference to their opinion. In light of that fact, we would be well advised to take their opinion seriously and see if we can respond to it. This is not to throw away what we have accomplished so far, but it is to see if we cannot make additional improvement.

Dr. Schaefer stated: The leadership of the legislature has made it clear that they would like to see this passed as soon as possible. The Board is under a mandate from the legislature to develop frameworks for the teaching of history and social science which can be used as a basis for the assessment tests. Following the rejection by the previous Board of the set of proposed frameworks which were widely perceived to lack sufficient emphasis on the learning of historical fact and the nonpartisan teaching of social studies, the present Board has rejected two subsequent drafts for similar reasons.

Dr. Schaefer continued: Subsequent to those rejections, the Chairman appointed a committee of three members of this Board which was charged with developing a more suitable set of frameworks. Using as its starting point the widely acclaimed history and social studies frameworks adopted by Virginia, the committee revised those frameworks so as to meet the needs of Massachusetts students. Following consultation with teachers throughout the state, the committee's draft was further amended to address concerns raised by those teachers. Although no set of standards would be expected fully to satisfy the wishes of all members of a committee like this, let alone the wishes of every teacher and school administrator throughout the Commonwealth, I believe that the draft before us comes as reasonably close to meeting our criteria as any that might be imagined. It is clearly superior to the drafts that were produced and previously rejected. Given the urgency of adopting a set of frameworks, I do not think we have two months to wait. Teachers need to work now to implement what they are going to do in the fall, so as to allow a statewide assessment project to proceed. I expect the members of this committee to set aside individual concerns or pet peeves to expedite this process.

Dr. Silber interjected: That is exactly what we are asking you to do, to set aside your pet peeves and get on with this project.

Dr. Schaefer continued: [Reading from a typewritten prepared text.] Yet there are a couple of members of this committee that continue to criticize the drafts we have developed despite the process of revision that they have already undergone. Reading through the 17-page memorandum criticizing the draft which Mr. Delattre has given to us, it is difficult to find any unifying thread of concern which would explain the vehemence of his opposition. The memo does everything from distort the draft's account of how economics is distinct from other social sciences, so as to create a merely verbal dispute, to complain about the failure to include Joseph Story's early 19th century commentary on the United States Constitution. Some of Dr. Delattre's recommendations have merit, but this seems to me to be entirely beside the point. If every member of this committee claimed the same privilege, refusing to approve a set of frameworks until they incorporated all of his or her pet concerns, we would continue to debate every framework until doomsday.

Dr. Schaefer added: Given the multifarious specifics and sometimes picayune nature of Dr. Delattre's criticisms, it is difficult to see how they supply an adequate ground for his refusal to accept the draft that is before us. This leads me to wonder why he has been so vehement in his opposition as well as why, over the last number of months, he has not come to us and talked about the criticisms and sought some way of working out a compromise. It seems to me that there will be members of this committee who refuse to compromise, unlike the members of the subcommittee. At this point, the only explanation that readily offers itself is the repeated insistence that appears even in today's paper, and by Dr. Delattre and by yourself, that Paul Gagnon, a member of the faculty of the School of Education that Dr. Delattre heads, must be included in the committee that produces the frameworks. That despite the fact that two of Mr.

Gagnon's previous efforts in this regard have already been found to be thoroughly deficient by a majority of this Board, and I cite you the October minutes where Dr. Delattre seriously criticizes the October draft. If this is, in fact, the concern underlying Dr. Delattre's criticisms, I wonder whether the fact that Mr. Gagnon is an employee of the school that he heads does not constitute a factor influencing Dr. Delattre's judgment of the sort that should not be allowed to influence the decision of this Board. Given the involvement of the two of you and Mr. Gagnon in Boston University, and that there may be pecuniary benefits to Boston University and to Mr. Gagnon as a result of any standards that he may offer, it would be wise for the Board to seek a ruling from the Inspector General on whether this constitutes a conflict of interest under Massachusetts law.

Dr. Delattre stated he is not responsible for what The Globe prints and he was not interviewed by The Globe in any of the aforementioned matters. He stated: Given that I have been attacked personally, I would now ask that my 17-page commentary on the April draft be attached to the minutes of this meeting. There is no mention of anyone as a drafter of the text. It is a straightforward analysis and criticism of the text. I stand by it and by the intellectual honesty of it and I simply deny that Ms. Schaefer has the slightest conception of my motivations in serving on this committee. I hasten to add that the objections to this draft that I raised in March by correspondence with the entire Board were summarily rejected in the only Board reply that I received from anyone on the subcommittee. A suggestion that I have not sought to raise these points, fundamental structural points of the kind that Mr. Peyser and I spoke about this morning, is a straightforward falsehood.

Dr. Silber stated to Dr. Schaefer: I think also that you may wish to consider, or reconsider, the incredible statement that somehow my position and that of Mr. Delattre's is a function of some financial advantage for Boston University. As a matter of fact, Boston University and I do not get paid for my service on this committee, we do not get paid for the time that the secretaries spend or the postage that has been spent in trying to correspond with the literally hundreds of people that write me. I think that the libelous statement that you have made, since it is written down, and the slanderous statement that you have made, since you have spoken it orally, should be withdrawn. I think an apology from you is in order and I think when somebody says something which is so patently false as that, it can certainly be revoked.

Dr. Silber continued: As a matter of fact, on the objections I made, I have not heard any refutation to them. I have spent a good deal of time reviewing my concerns. I did not make that review with any vehemence. I do not find any vehemence in the account made by Mr. Delattre. It is my understanding that he had several conversations with Mr. Peyser during the week, and Mr. Peyser is nodding in affirmation concerning this, so the idea that somehow he was keeping these secret to spring on members of this committee is patently false. The objection to shifting U.S. history from the 11th grade to the 10th grade is something that he made before, that I made before, that many observers have made before. The statement that too much is being expected has been made before. My point that many of the expectations which are excellent are being forced down into the K-4 period is not an unreasonable objection. One may disagree with it, but if they disagree with it, I would like to have some refutation, some explanation of how children at those very early ages are actually capable of achieving what has been set forth for them. We have tried to engage in a rational discussion of this issue, pointing to facts, pointing to the knowledge of human development, childhood development, to see how best to reform this to make it more accurate.

Dr. Silber added: I do not see any effort on the part of some members of the subcommittee that did the drafting to try to respond thoughtfully to the criticisms that we have made. For that reason, I think it is time I appoint another committee to review this document and see if they cannot come up with something that can meet those objections. I am sorry to see such rancorous response on the part of some members of this committee, but I think the videotape will indicate that the rancor has not come from those who have offered some thoughtful objections to the way in which this document now stands but rather those who wish to defend this document against any criticisms whatsoever. The document is an improvement, the document reflects a good deal of hard work, the document is not perfect, and it is sufficiently imperfect that I believe our criticisms have indicated ways in which it may be improved. Consequently, why should we refuse to take the time to improve it?

Dr. Silber continued: I also point to the political expediency of not simply throwing the letter from this Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities back in the face of the 29 signatories, but rather to accept that letter in good faith and see if we can respond constructively to what they have proposed. I do not have to be lectured to on what the leadership of the legislature believes. I

think I have been in more frequent meetings with them than any member of this committee. They are more concerned that we get the right framework in history and social science, the best one we can come up with, than we meet a deadline of the April meeting of the Board. I hope we can have a document we can approve by May, or certainly at the latest by June, but I see no basis for trying to accelerate the process, and I do not believe that any effort by a member of this committee to vilify other members of this committee is in any sense constructive.

Mr. Peyser stated: I believe the comments offered by Dr. Delattre and yourself today on the changes that could be made in these documents were made in good faith, and I happen to agree with many of them. There are two levels of discussion here, one editorial and one structural, such as the issue of scope and sequence. The fundamental question is the structure of the document. If the Board finds it inadequate or inappropriate, then we should reject it and move on to another process as has been suggested. On the other hand, if the structure is adequate and appropriate, we would be well advised to approve it on condition that editorial changes are made.

In response to a question from Ms. Vagianos, Dr. Silber stated: I will add two school teachers to this committee and we will get the committee underway in the next few days. The specific individuals I would not care to name, not having had the opportunity to find out whether they are available for assignment or not. We will move as quickly as possible. We have to remember that the framework we establish is going to be around for quite some time.

Dr. Silber continued: There are serious but by no means inexorable deficiencies in the present draft. I believe with a little hard effort these deficiencies can be overcome and I see no reason why we should be complacent at this point and not take the additional steps that are necessary. I think we have exhausted this subject; I doubt seriously that we are going to throw any additional light on it. This is the fourth iteration of that subcommittee's work. I had the authority to appoint that subcommittee, and I have thanked them for their work. Now I think we could have it looked on by new eyes and see whether they cannot come up with a document that we can support.

In response to a suggestion from Dr. Koplik, Dr. Silber said that if Mr. Peyser wants to continue to work on the framework, he should do so, and submit whatever he comes up with to the other committee. Dr. Silber added that he expects there will be a public hearing on the document as well.

Commissioner Antonucci clarified several points relating to the By-Laws, for the audience, stating: First, Article 1, Section 3, on Duties of the Chair of the Board, gives the Chair the right to appoint committees and, when he considers their work done, to put that committee aside and move on. Also, under Article 2, Section 7, when the Board talked about the two-thirds vote, there is still confusion about whether this is new or not new. The policy is old and the document is new. Finally, I was put on notice as Secretary of the Board, prior to this meeting, that under Article 2, Section 2, certain members of this Board may appeal for a special meeting of the Board. I say that openly because they asked me to make that known.

Dr. Silber suggested that the Board move on to the next item on the agenda.

5. Student Performance Standards - Initial Discussion

Commissioner Antonucci stated this was not meant to be an in-depth discussion of student performance standards, but rather to introduce the topic. The Board will discuss this further as we move ahead with the assessment program for grades 4, 8, and 10. The Board will establish performance levels, and it will be important for teachers and parents to understand what those levels mean. This is similar to what the Board did with the MEAP program, where four levels of performance were established.

The Commissioner noted that the Board materials include background information on the process for setting student performance standards, with details on how different proficiency levels were established by NAEP, and samples of the Pennsylvania standards in two different areas to show how that state does it. We have to identify the number of levels, define the criteria that describe each of the levels, and then offer examples of students' work which make those descriptions more concrete. In essence, the materials describe a process that would enable the Board to address the

policy concerns, then move into broad academic criteria, and finally establish specific academic criteria for the various performance standards. We need to decide on what kind of standards we want, and then describe what each level means.

Mr. Jeff Nellhaus, the Department's Administrator for Accountability and Evaluation, asked the Board to keep in mind the issue of competency and what performance is all about. Mr. Nellhaus referred to the Board package that outlines a proposed process, starting with general criteria and moving to specific criteria. Dr. Silber noted if we can develop a standard as specific as the sample in the Board package, we will be on the right track. The Chairman added that many standardized tests are now reported on four levels of proficiency. He said if we can have two levels of deficiency and two levels of adequate and superior performance, it will help us with our requirements for graduation. The graduation requirement would be a level 3 minimum, and the requirement for the certificate of mastery would be the top level.

Commissioner Antonucci said there is a more work to be done and this issue will be brought back to a future Board meeting.

6. Regulatory Reform

a.Proposed Regulation On Dispute Resolution Under Parental Notification Law - Initial Consideration To Seek Public Comment - 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, and G.L. c. 71, Section 32A, 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 Regulations on Dispute Resolution under the Parental Notification Law.

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

b.School Building Assistance - Annual Approval Of Rates - VOTE

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education, pursuant to its authority under Chapter 645 of the Acts of 1948, as amended, and M. G.L. c. 69, Section 1B, and having complied with the notice and public comment requirements of M.G.L. c. 30A, adopt the proposed amendments to 603 CMR 38.06 increasing school construction cost standards by 4% effective July 1, 1997, and the proposed technical amendment to 603 CMR 38.12.

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

Dr. Silber noted that the cost of school construction in Massachusetts is about 90% higher than in other parts of the country.

7. 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
508	District-Based Teacher Certification	6	$75,000

509	Beginning Teacher Induction	18	$125,000

The motion was made by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield and seconded by Dr. Koplik. The vote was unanimous. Dr. Silber and Dr. Delattre did not participate in the vote.

There being no further business, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 12, 1997 at 9:00 a.m. at Melrose High School, Melrose, MA.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED:that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

The motion was made by Vice Chairperson Crutchfield and was seconded by Ms. Vagianos. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert V. Antonucci
Secretary