COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FORUM ON EDUCATION REFORM

APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
350 MAIN STREET
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2001
1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT:
James M. Peyser, Chairman, Board of Education
Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-Chair
Alan Safran, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education

PANEL:
NADYA ASWAD HIGGINS, Executive Director,
Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association

MILDRED COLLINS PIERCE, Director,
The Principals' Center,
Harvard Graduate School of Education

ROBERT J. RADER, Executive Director,
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to welcome you all to this forum which is entitled Approaches to Leadership Development. This is another in our continuing series of forums on various topics related to education reform. This is the second forum on the subject of leadership that we have had in the last several months. The first one was focused primarily on those attributes, qualities, and standards of leadership that are necessary for excellence in our schools. The focus of today's forum is to go to the next step and try to understand how we might recruit such individuals into the profession and what we can do to develop their skills and talents so they can achieve excellence and help their students achieve excellence in school.

We are fortunate today to have three very well-respected, highly qualified people on our panel: Nadya Higgins, Mildred Pierce, and Robert Rader. We also want to note Roberta Schaefer from the Board of Education is here. Alan Safran, Deputy Commissioner, is here for the Commissioner who is unfortunately detained in a prescheduled meeting. Let me turn the floor over to Alan for any comments he might want to make on behalf of the Commissioner or himself for that matter.

MR. SAFRAN: On behalf of the Commissioner, thank you, Jim. The Commissioner has said he has a previously scheduled meeting. It's important for him to stay, and he'll be here a little later. If he misses this, just as anybody else, there's a transcript of this forum. There will also be a video of this forum, which we aggressively distribute to

education policymakers, parents, educators and others in the state and out on the web to let folks know what was stated here and help them use this in their practice and work.

One other thing the Commissioner wanted me to mention is that here today is a group of 12 interesting people, others as well, but this particular group I want to single out are the members of the Education Policy Fellowship Program. This is a statewide program which is co-sponsored by Northeastern University. People involved in education policy both at the Department of Education and at other state agencies and school districts are selected by their agency for a year-long professional development opportunity to learn about educational issues. We have three members of the Department staff in this program this year. I just want to ask you all to stand as we recognize you for your participation. What better opportunity to get education policy information than at this meeting. I hope you learn a lot from it and take a lot from it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any opening thoughts, Roberta, or comments?

DR. SCHAEFER: No. I would like to hear from the people who are participating and hopefully I will have something to say after.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just as a preface, I was looking through a report recently, called "Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship" by the Institute for Educational Leadership, and there are a couple of sections in it that I think are worth quoting from. One is a reference to a 1998 survey of 403 school district superintendents, half who reported a shortage of qualified candidates for principal vacancies. The study cited a wave of principal retirements as a major cause for this shortage, a phenomenon that is expected to worsen by 2005, according to the report.

The report also talks about traditional principal preparation programs and states that those so-called traditional programs offered by colleges and universities are disconnected from the daily realities and needs of schools. Principal training seldom is anchored in hands-on leadership experience in real schools where principals in training might learn valuable lessons in shaping instructional practice, sharing and delegating authority, nurturing leadership ability among school faculty and staff, and exercising community and visionary leadership.

I think the combination of these two things indicates that we have a lot of work to do, not only in recruiting high-quality, talented people into this critical job, but also in providing the kinds of developmental and support structures that are necessary to ensure that those people who do enter the profession achieve the kind of excellence that we all need for themselves and for our children.

Let me go through brief introductions of our three panelists, and once that's out of the way we'll begin hearing from them. First is Nadya Higgins, who is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association. She is also head of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Education Foundation, and the MESPA Technology Center. She's an educator who has had teaching and administrative experience since 1961. Prior to coming to Massachusetts, she served as Executive Director for the American Association of University Professors for the New York State Conference.

Sitting next to Nadya is Mildred Collins Pierce. Milli Pierce directs Harvard's Principals' Center at the Graduate School of Education, where she also earned her doctorate. In addition to leading the Principals' Center, she's a full-time faculty member where she teaches courses on leadership and the principalship. The Principals' Center focuses on leadership development for an international body of exemplary school leaders; assists principals and aspiring principals throughout the United States and overseas; assists school districts in strengthening leaders and their teams in their efforts to improve schools; and provides a forum for the Harvard Graduate School of Education researchers and public and private school principals to collaborate in bridging the theory and practice gap by and sharing research and craft.
And finally, Robert Rader has been the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, CABE, since 1996. Prior to his work at CABE, Bob served as assistant counsel to the New York State School Boards Association in 1981. He worked at the New York State School Boards Association in a variety of positions,

including legislative representative, director of risk management services, and director of policy and employee relations services.

With that, let me turn it over to Nadya. If each of you could take somewhere around 15 minutes to tell us about what you're doing and address some of the critical questions before us, we'd be grateful.

MS. HIGGINS: I appreciate it and thank you for the invitation to be here to talk about this topic. It's a critical topic. As someone who runs the Principal's Association for the elementary and middle level principals, we have been grappling with the issues that you've identified for some time. I'm glad you read the excerpt off of the report which talked about preparation programs needing to have more clinical aspects to them.

What I'd like to do in my remarks is to talk to you a little bit about the MESPA certification program, a program entering its 11th year this summer, which is a preparation program approved by the Department of Education and which meets all the state standards for preparation of educators to become principals K-12. And then I'd like to talk a little bit about what my association believes are obstacles to people getting into a principalship, and then perhaps offer some suggestions as ways this might be addressed by both of Department of Education and other organizations.

It feels almost like a deja vu. In 1988 the National Association of Elementary School Principals came out with a ten-year study and has been doing so every decade for a number of decades in which they talked about the impending loss of principalships due to retirements. They came up with some of the reasons why they felt it was important to change preparation programs, and our association took that as a challenge and as an opportunity to develop a program that would be very different from what traditional preparation programs look like. And we still believe today it is different from what traditional programs look like.

We wanted to find a better way to train principals, and so we convened a group of what we felt were some of the best principals in the state. Those people took a look at their own preparation programs, what they had to prepare them for the job; they determined what was good, what was not good; and then they looked at what their experience in the field really required if you were to become a principal, as the society is changing, as family structures are changing, as the role of the principal is changing -- what was really needed in order to make this a better experience for people and to prepare them.

So it was from that, through those lenses, that we developed the MESPA certification program in 1991. I'd like to focus a little bit on content, on structure, and the delivery of that content and then the support that was developed in order to make those folks feel as though going through a program would make them really ready for the field.

We developed the content with a philosophical underpinning of leadership, and it was an integrated curriculum so that when those areas were being addressed, leadership wasn't one course that you took for a month and then you went into finance and then you went into supervision. Everything was integrated so that no matter what is being taught, there is still the lens of leadership in what has to be done. Whether it's supervising and evaluating teachers, whether it's developing school budget, whether it is attempting to lead a staff of teachers in the area of curriculum, everything was done through that lens of leadership.

We have a strong emphasis on the clinical aspect of how this theory is implemented, and that is done in several ways. We have a mentor program that goes along with this certification program. We select highly skilled principals to serve as mentors for the students as they are going through the program. As the information is being delivered in a theoretical way, the mentors translate that for the students and say, This is how it really happens in schools, and these are some of the obstacles, and this is what is needed to implement it.
The curriculum meets all standards, and I really want to emphasize that point because our feeling is that the instructional leadership component of being a principal is crucial, and I know there's a lot of talk currently about bringing people into the principalship to solve this potential shortage from other walks of life. And although that could work in certain circumstances, the concern that we have is that the instructional leadership role be carefully looked at and that people who enter this position of principal really be well qualified to be the instructional leader in the schools.

We also, in terms of supporting what students are learning, have two facilitators. These are people who sit in the classroom at the time that various people are teaching, and these are all credentialed people, people who are either consultants or faculty members from other universities, but they are all credentialed people. As those faculty are teaching, the facilitators are in the room as well, and so when the next module occurs, they are able to help with the integration of this curriculum by these faculty for students.

In a traditional program you might take a course with one faculty member, you select another course, you take it with a second faculty member, and those faculty members don't necessarily speak to each other. Our program has a strong integrated component not only for the curriculum but with the faculty as well, and the facilitator who sits in that classroom for every module helps the students to pull all of the information that they are getting together, not only in a theoretical way but also as it relates to the practice.

Thirdly, there is a supervising principal in the schools that helps that student to engage in the practicum activities. So there are three people that support that student as they go through the program which is only a 10-month program, incidentally, and are able to be there as mentors, as helpers, and as coaches for those people as they are learning the information and receiving the information about how to be a good leader.

We looked not only at the curriculum in developing this program, but we also looked at how it's delivered. In most preparation programs it takes a couple of years to go through it because not all courses are offered at the same time every year. So we developed a cohort group from 12 to 20 students, and the cohort nature of this program is extraordinarily strong because all the students go through the same training at the same time with the same faculty. Not only do they develop a common language, but they begin in this program to provide support for one another. The program now is in its 10th year. We'll start the 11th year, as we said, early in the summer, and many of our former graduates are still acting as mentors for each other, doing sanity checks, just helping one another, as they have the same framework around leadership and around practice.

We decided that we would meet as a cohort group on weekends and holidays and in the summer so that this would not interfere with an educator's work year. It's very hard when you have taught school all day, been a supervisor or a director all day, to suddenly go and spend two hours in a course at night and try do the readings and written work as well. The times that they meet are eight-hour days, so this allows for a lot of reflection and a lot of immersion in the materials, a lot of activities so that you're not stopping your professional life, trying to get something in a graduate program, and then going back to your professional life basically in the same day. This is a weekend that they can immerse themselves in this information and really begin to reflect and share their information and their experience.

The coursework is completed in ten months. We even have an alternative way of paying for this program. We charge them monthly but they don't have to come up with a full payment for the program at the very beginning as in other traditional programs which helps them a great deal in terms of their ability to handle the cost of it. Another unique feature of it is the journal writing. At the end of each module, which is either a week in the summer or a weekend, they write, they do a lot of writing, and they reflect on what they've learned, and teachers are leaders too, so a lot of the information that they get can immediately be applied to how they handle their classrooms. So they begin to reflect on the information that they've gotten, write about it, then the facilitators receive these journals, comment on them, probe and push their thinking, and it's a dialogue that goes on throughout the entire year. We have found that to be a very valuable part of the program.

Incidentally, I should say that our placement rate over the past ten years stands at about 90 to 92 percent. Superintendents call us frequently to ask for the names of our graduates because they are well trained. We have gone back many times and tried to get information from those that are serving as principals and asked them what we didn't do that could have been helpful to them, and it's very minor recommendations that they have. Most of them feel very well prepared. It's almost a turnkey solution for them, when they walk into their buildings as principals or assistant principals.

I think I would encourage the Board and the Department of Education to clearly look at and analyze why the principalship is not being sought after to the degree that it has been in the past. Historically, principals came out of the teaching ranks and I think that this impending shortage that we're talking about is not just due to the fact that a lot of people are about to retire. I think it has a different component now than it did in 1988 when we were first talking about starting our program, and I think the reason is that it's not an attractive position anymore. There are a lot of

elements, and I'd like to take a couple minutes to talk about that and stretch the Board's thinking a little bit about not just trying to find a solution for how we get more bodies in the schools as these people leave, but to really think about what the job is today and why people don't want it anymore. If you begin to change the conditions under which principals, and I would even stretch it to superintendents, although I don't represent superintendents, if you look at the job and you say what it's become and what are some of the downsides of it and begin to think about strategies to correct that, I don't think we'll have the shortage that we think we're going to have.

So let me just tick off a couple of reasons that our members tell us why the job is no longer an attractive job, because they are not only not having the people come into it, but a lot of people who could stay in it longer are also leaving. Number 1, they are overworked. Their day is longer; their year is longer. Every initiative, albeit they are good initiatives, the development of frameworks, the development of the new assessment system in the state, technology initiatives, you could go on for quite a while with the list, falls on the shoulders of the principal to be able to implement it, develop it, and integrate it into their schools. They are finding that for most of them they got into the position because they wanted to work with teachers and they wanted to work with students and deal with that instructional leadership role. Two years ago we did a survey and we found that 70 percent of our people who became principals became so for that reason. And when we asked them what they were spending their time on, coincidentally, 70 percent of them said they were spending it on management issues and not instructional leadership issues, and that's a very serious turnabout because it is not what they intended when they took that role.

There's clearly more accountability. There are clearly more consequences for the work that they do. I don't know many people who aren't willing to be accountable, but the consequences, I think, are consequences that can be very devastating. Often they find that being able to manage and become accountable for, what they are accountable for is out of their hands. For example, the Education Reform law says that principals hire and fire their staff members with the approval of the superintendent. Principals don't believe that they have that authority to hire and fire staff members, but yet they are held accountable for the performance of the school. And so that becomes a really serious issue for them.

On top of all of this public scrutiny, the accountability, the longer hours, longer work year, in 1993 under the law they lost their job security. They no longer can collectively bargain. Some people would say that's a good thing. For them they don't think it's a good thing. At the same time very few have an opportunity to participate in the negotiations between the school boards, school committees and the unions of people who the principals supervise. So they are handed a contract they have to implement, but often they have very little opportunity to participate in what that contract says.

So if you look at historically where principals come from, that being the teaching ranks, what would a teacher say in looking at that job? I'm working longer, I'm working harder, I'm under more scrutiny, I have more accountability, instead of a ten-month year or nine-and-a-half-month year, I have a twelve-month year, and I have no job security. If you look at the school year of a teacher and the school year of a principal, the senior teachers who form the pool that you would draw from in order to become a principal, is on a per diem basis making almost as much and sometimes more than the principal.

So if you aggregate all of those factors, there are a lot of people who say, Why should I leave my position and then have no job security as well? So I think those are some of the things that we are hearing from our members and I think contribute to this growing shortage. If we can somehow take a longer-term view of this and look at the job and try to see what can be done in order to make it a more attractive job and a more doable job, I think it will help to dissipate the problem that we think we are facing.

So what's needed? I think in addition to reviewing the position and seeing what the job really entails, we need to look at the fact, and I can only speak right now from the elementary point of view because I don't represent secondary principals, and it might be a slightly different situation for them, but elementary schools do not have assistant principals by and large, so all of the mandates that come down generally fall on the shoulders of one person. I think it would be very useful if somehow we could get assistant principals in the elementary schools in this Commonwealth to help to share some of the managerial responsibilities and almost in a sense act as interns for the principalship. If you learn a lot by observation, you learn a lot by doing, and if we can begin to identify good teachers with leadership

potential, and train them and put them into the role of assistant principal, I think you very clearly would begin to develop a pool of people who could walk into this role.

The state has now passed regulations around mentoring. We believe in mentoring very strongly, we see that it works really well, but if resources don't go with it, resources that provide for the training, resources that help a principal to mentor and still do all the other work that he has or she has to do, that won't be a successful program. So that mentoring piece is critical, I believe very strongly that it's critical, but it has to be developed in a way -- and I know the Department of Education is working on this, so I'm encouraged by what they are doing -- but the resources to support schools in providing that mentor for a new principal are very important.

Our association has a mentoring program, we have an Aspiring Principals' Program; we try to deal with all of that. I think that for those programs that are really solid, that do what you want them to do in terms of bringing in not only the theoretical underpinnings but clinical practice, state support for some of those programs which would get the cost down for people who want to participate would also be something that I would encourage you to look at.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I thank you very much. Dr. Pierce?

DR. PIERCE: I don't know what else to say. She said it all. She was really pretty good there. Let me see if I can say something that Nadya didn't say. There are 93,000 principals, a little over that actually, across the United States. Half will retire in the next five years. The goal at Harvard is to try and figure out how to create a pool, to go out there and really meet the needs across the country, not just locally, but everywhere.

We have been certifying principals at Harvard for the last 17 years. Two years ago we decided to ratchet up our program, which I think was pretty good to begin with. So two years ago we started the Harvard School Leadership Program which is a three-part program that bridges theory and practice.

We take people who want to be teacher leaders, people that want to be staff developers, and people who want to be school principals, and put them in a year-long program together where they spend one day a week in a school seminar, a seminar class, where they talk to each other about their learning out in the field. All three groups are required to spend time in practica. However, the principals spend the most.

Our requirements are much more than what the state requires. We require students to be in schools for 400 hours during the course of one year where they spend at least two and a half to three days a week with an exemplary principal. Those students, much as Nadya's program, as Nadya has already said -- I don't want to be repetitive -- those students are engaged in the kinds of courses that meet state requirements but also the kinds of courses that are going to give them the clinical and theoretical approaches that they need to run schools.

Our classes are framed and based on instructional leadership. It's about learning how to help teachers do their jobs better. That's basically what we are hoping to do. Yes, we want principals to be good managers but we believe that our people can help with that. You can bring on other folks in your school to help get the buses running on time, make sure the cafeteria is clean and that it's quiet, that kids are happy, but honestly, it takes the principal, that kind of authority, to go into classrooms, to coach teachers, to help teachers understand what they are doing, to help teachers really work closely with children.

It's about relationships as well as about practical and theoretical knowledge, and to give teachers candid and open feedback about what the principal is seeing and how they can improve, and then providing that kind of improvement, the principal working with a group of teachers to really turn the school or the classroom around so that teachers -- we believe teachers can improve, but it really takes someone there to help the teachers see what they are doing and how they can do it better.

It's a year-long course, and it's just one of the things that we do. We also have a summer program, it's pretty much national and international. We bring aspiring principals and new principals in from all across the country. It's called "The Art and Craft of the Principalship", and for those people that are just starting out, we put them through the paces in ten long days of looking at adult development, what kind of people will you find in a school, how to nurture

those people and how to develop them and help them be the best that they can be, looking at student efficacy, what kinds of children do you have and how do you help those children believe in themselves, how do you help parents believe in their children.

We are really urban-based, I will say that. I'm not ashamed of what we do. Most of what we do is encouraging people to go into urban schools because if we can solve some of the issues in urban schools, we'll be able to solve a lot of other issues in schools. So we really work on efficacy issues, we work on issues of evaluation, how do we help principals again go into classrooms, be able to talk candidly with teachers about what they are doing and help them improve? How do we help principals schedule, along with their teachers, so that teachers have time to look at other teaching? It's the old Judith Warren Little stuff. If you provide an atmosphere where teachers talk to each other about teaching, if they can coach each other, if they have the opportunity to really spend substantive time talking about the issues that are important in classrooms, then improvement will happen. So we try to encourage that.

I feel like everything else that I say is going to be redundant. I want to touch a little bit on some of the things that Nadya talked about, about how to think about this for the future. We are asking principals to be much more accountable, but we are giving them not much more authority. This isn't just locally. This is in a lot of other places. We tell principals that they can hire and fire; they really can't. They negotiate for their positions, teachers do not, at least not individually, and they are working very long hours.

Many of the elementary principals and high school principals I know tell me they work an average of 70 hours a week. If you prorate that out -- as Nadya says, we have to figure out ways to make this attractive for teachers. Why are they going to want this job? Because a senior teacher with a Ph.D. or a couple of masters degrees is probably making close to that and doesn't have to put in those hours and still gets part of the summer off. So we have to figure out ways to make it more attractive for principals, and I actually believe that there are lots of principals who really love their work and would like to stay in this work, but they want more authority along with the accountability. If you're going to ask them to deliver, then you have to give them some opportunities to have some leverage in how the school is run.

I also think they feel very isolated. We keep talking about ways to give them opportunities to talk to each other, but the truth is, when you're working 70 hours a week, you don't get a whole lot of chance to socialize. You're usually home in the evening, doing your paperwork that you didn't get to do in school, and when you're in school you're in classrooms and doing the kinds of things you should be doing, you just don't have a lot of chance to reflect on your work. One of the things we ask our students to do is really pull their mentors away for reflective time, and our mentors are pretty good about it in the schools that they run, but it takes an effort to do that. So we are always very appreciative when we find exemplary principals that really want to play the role of mentor.

I think we have an untapped pool. I believe that there are lots of minority teachers out there that would love the opportunity to be in some of these leadership roles. I think as a profession we do pretty good, but not as good as we could. You know, in the education field, people of color actually have more degrees than in most other fields. They are highly qualified, and yet you don't see that always reflected in the leadership pool. And I think that has a lot to do with the kinds of search committees we set up and whether those search committees are really trained in how to look at diversity and what diversity can bring to a school. The State Department ought to be looking at that and thinking about ways to make that happen. I will stop for now.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you. Bob?

MR. RADER: Thank you. We are certainly in an interesting position as far as the superintendency, and before I discuss a report that we put together with the help of the Northeast Regional Lab, I just want to say thank you for having me and it's an honor to be on the panel with two such fine and distinguished educators.

Let me talk about what we did along with Glenn Couture and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees as well as the other school board associations and superintendents' associations around the northeast. For many years we have gotten together at various events and said, We have to work closer together. So we had a meeting about two years ago in Maryland, the first time we brought these groups together, the executive directors from the

school boards and the executive directors from the superintendents, and we said, What is the principal problem you are facing in your state? It was the administrator shortage. It cut across all lines. Everybody agreed that it was a problem.

So we came up with a couple of recommendations in the report, then we went to the Northeast Regional Lab to get them to help us strengthen the report. What I want to do is share the report, called "Leadership Under Pressure." It talks a little bit about where we are going in Connecticut, in particular, since this was put out.

Let me tell you what we found across the whole northeast. All northeastern states stated that they were having a problem finding superintendents. Now, why we were doing this work was because it was the superintendents group we were working with. Certainly we were not saying there was not a problem in the principalship, and we certainly have found it in Connecticut and across other states. There are all kinds of surveys. But a lot of problems that have to do with the superintendency, as I said before, are the ones we have already mentioned in terms of the principalship.

Let's talk about why there's a decline of interest in the superintendency. The first thing that always comes out is the narrowing of the gap between building-level administration and system-wide administrators and teachers as far as salary, and I think Dr. Higgins said it very well when she was talking about when you really end up looking at the per diem rate, it's just not worth it to many of the superintendents. And again, much of what I say will also obviously reflect or have the same effect on the principalship. So I'm just going to talk in terms of superintendency.

Going from a ten-month year to longer days, certainly the nights. On Monday nights, I'm lucky enough to stay at home and watch my Board of Education at work in our district on Monday nights, and they start out about 7:00 and I turn them off after having watched other things on TV, I must turn them off around 8:30, 9:30, and my understanding is they go and go and go. And the people, the administrators in particular, have to be back at school the next day and so on. So there's a question of time.

What we have found and the other associations have found is that the superintendents, especially in Connecticut and other states -- I assume it would also be true in the Commonwealth -- is that the superintendents are the lightning rods. If there are problems in the district, you go after the superintendents. I've got to tell you that many of the board members who get on boards of education, I'm talking about the people I represent, are sometimes people very concerned about the superintendent, some of who run on a platform that the superintendent is not doing what we like, and it's time to change. We see a very quick turnover in the superintendency these days. It used to be many, many years, very often, the superintendent would be there. We've seen very, very quick turnover, especially in the inner cities. That's not only in Connecticut, but across the country as well.

We have seen a loss of a whole generation of potential leaders as there was downsizing in the seventies and eighties. In the schools, as the number of students enrolled went down and schools closed, you had a downsizing, from what we can tell, also in the number of people who are actually working in the schools.

Again, Dr. Higgins mentioned graduate programs. We have found that many graduate programs are ineffective. While they might teach a lot of the instructional information needed and maybe some of the management needed, so much of the job of a superintendent this day is political, and these are the kinds of things that are very difficult to teach and may not get the attention that they should at the graduate level. How do you deal with your board of education, how do you deal with your town? How do you balance the needs of the district with the understanding that nobody wants higher taxes? Very, very difficult issues.

Mandates. Heavy paperwork. Certainly from what I have heard, I'm lucky enough to have a former superintendent who is also a principal who works at the association with me, and he always talks about, especially with the requirements that have come out of the IDEA, special education. There are so many paperwork requirements that we don't have time for the principals as well as the superintendents to get out into the classrooms as much as they should. They just don't have time. I think there has to be some kind of an understanding that the mandates that any state puts on its administrators, as well as those that are put on by the federal government, have led to superintendents or principals who can't get out of their offices as much as we'd like to see. And certainly when you

talk about evaluating teachers, you talk about the necessity to document what's happening in the classroom, it doesn't happen to the extent that it should because there isn't enough time and there probably is not enough training that's been done.

One of the other issues that got a lot of attention was the non-educational expectations of the schools. We are not, as you all know, dealing with just teaching anymore. We are dealing with food programs, special education, after-school programs, the understanding that the schools have to be open many more hours, and certainly what we have always said as a school board association and school boards have said across the country, is we understand that if kids are going to learn, we can't just be about learning. We have to make sure kids come in ready to learn. That's become part of the responsibility of school committees and of superintendents and that adds extra pressure. Certainly we have always said that we understand that there are higher expectations in these areas. On the other hand, we need the resources and the resources aren't always there to be able to do these things and do them right.

Public accountability issues, turning into blaming the administration. We know we see that in Connecticut. We have a very heavy testing system. It is not the type of testing where if kids don't pass they are required to spend another year in the classroom at the same grade, but there are understandings and there is tremendous competition between towns for those extra couple of points on some of our tests. And what we have said, and I'm very proud of our Commissioner of Education who has said this, is that we have to look beyond just the test scores. We have to talk about what kids are learning content-wise, what kinds of people come out of our schools, and what kinds of extracurricular activities they are involved in. Let's not judge people by single scores, and certainly our association would agree with that as would I think all the school board associations in the northeast.

Lack of community and parental support is another issue. I have a wife who's a teacher and there's nothing worse than getting into a battle with a parent because the community and the parent will very often back up a student even if the student was wrong. It puts principals, teachers, and of course superintendents in very awkward positions.

We mentioned the longer hours, the greater stress. Lack of job security was another issue that was mentioned before. Stringent, often restrictive certification rules. One of the issues that we have discussed quite a bit in Connecticut has to do with our certification requirements. At a time when we are trying to beef up the standards, we are trying to require more of our administrators and that is running head long into the time of shortage. We are very careful to say, Hey, we have to think about this. Everybody wants higher standards, everybody wants the best for their kids. But if there aren't going to be enough people who reach those standards, then what do you do? Certainly that's an issue in Connecticut and I'm sure in the Commonwealth as well.

Obviously there are unique issues in every state that have to be addressed. We talked a lot when we did this report about how the northeast region can cooperate, and some of the suggestions we came up with through this report include the following. Education and leadership academies to teach some of those schools what people might not have gotten when they were in school. The ability to handle the politics of the job. Certainly recruitment and training to create a feeder system to middle-level and higher-level administrative positions both within districts and possibly on a regional statewide level. When I'm thinking of regional, I'm thinking of a number of districts together, but perhaps we do it regionally, meaning the northeast does it. If there is interest. Joint recruitment, bringing people in from other parts of the country. We know, we are very lucky and Massachusetts is very lucky in that we pay fairly decent salaries for superintendents. Certainly many would argue that they are not high enough, and I don't want to get into that, but have I to tell you, when you go north of Massachusetts, it's even tougher, and getting people to come into New Hampshire or Vermont or Maine is very difficult and we should look to talk about the benefits of living in the northeast part of the country.

There's certainly a feeling that was echoed throughout all the superintendents associations that boards of education have got to be able to work better with their superintendents. I think it goes both ways as a person representing school boards. We see it as a real team. The training we give to our members, boards of education, talks about how this is a team. You've got to collaborate, you don't surprise each other. You have different roles and responsibilities, and you have to look at those as very crucial if things are going to work.

Another thing is pooling information on available candidates and providing training opportunities for Board members and potential superintendents. Within the various states, certainly some of these are appropriate, some may not be to Massachusetts, but maintaining interagency cooperation and mutual support and making sure that there is a cadre of people coming through the system, might not only be the state board of education but might be people at a lower level, who also have the same direction and goals.

Reviewing school system governance. Certainly we govern differently in Connecticut than you do, and the authority, or I should say the presumptive authority that you see for your principals may not be there, and certainly we have a very different system. But one of the things that has come out is the idea of, as you said before, separating out, if possible, instructional from the management roles. To expect that a superintendent or a principal will spend a lot of their time in the kitchen or watching the bus schedules, that might be where parents scream the most, but that's not the job of the instructional leader. And I know that's expensive because you're talking about possibly more bodies.

It always seemed to me when we down-sized -- especially I know this happened in Connecticut, but I'd say all over the country -- when we down-sized at the beginning of the nineties, the first thing to go in those kinds of situations are the people who support the central office and support the principals. We are talking about fewer guidance counselors, social workers, assistant superintendents, and assistant principals. These are the people who help prevent the kids from falling through the cracks. When we don't understand and support them, it becomes very difficult.

Superintendents' pension opportunities. This is a very big issue among superintendents. When you come over from one state and go into another, you may not have time to fully vest in the system, and that has become quite an issue. Certification, reciprocity of certification between states is another issue that should be looked at, not only by the individual states but by the states all together.

The last thing that we came up with, and certainly you can have the executive summary, is recognizing and celebrating excellence in the superintendency. We talk about money as being the reward, of course that's a very easily quantified reward, but people need more than that. People need to feel that they are successful, have the encouragement of their communities and their boards, and learning to do that and remembering to do that is crucial.

Since we wrote that report, Connecticut has, actually over the last three months, gone through a couple of different ways of looking at this issue. The Commissioner of Education brought together a panel to look at these issues. Most of the issues that were brought together and discussed were the same as were the recommendations, so pretty much what I have given. In addition, in the last couple of weeks, there is a final report of another committee, a commission that was a legislative commission that worked on both teacher and school administrator shortages as well as minority recruitment, and many of the things they talked about, and this is sort of hot off the press, will be looked at by our legislature in the coming months.

I hope that gives you an idea of what's happening in the northeast as a whole. We see ourselves as individual states; certainly what happens in Massachusetts, what you do as far as paying bonuses to teachers who are looking to ratchet up credentials, has an effect on Connecticut to the south of you, has an effect on New York to the west of you. Certainly what I would encourage the State Board here to do is to be in communication with the state departments in Connecticut as well as the other states, maybe work through the Northeast Regional LAB, and let's really come up with some situations so we are not constantly in competition while at the same time doing things that are mutually beneficial to all the states in ensuring that we have good administrators and superintendents into the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, Bob. Roberta and I will ask you some questions, you should feel free to ask other questions if you have any or make comments. Then we'll also open it up to people from the floor to make comments or to ask questions of the panelists.

One of the very basic questions here has to do with the adequacy or inadequacy of the current training and development programs for principals, to some extent for superintendents as well, in terms literally of the numbers. How many people are going through training programs, is the volume sufficient, are we talking here about the need

to scale up by doubling or tripling our capacity for training new principals or new school leaders? Is the issue really one more of quality than of quantity? Any thoughts on what the scale of this issue is in a quantitative sense?

MS. HIGGINS: There are 15 preparation programs for administrators in the state right now and our capacity for the MESPA certification program is one we initially agreed to keep the cohort somewhat small.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You said it was 12 to 20.

MS. HIGGINS: Yes. We said we don't want to take more than 20 to 25, but typically, this year we have 16 students, for example. Surprisingly, in the last couple of years we have had a few more students, and that might be because word of mouth is very powerful and people get jobs and that's a powerful incentive for them too, but the word of mouth saying this is a program that really prepares them is causing our numbers go up a little bit.

But I think if you're asking whether we could scale up, we could scale up, if we had the appropriate resources to do it. MESPA is a nonprofit organization. Everything we do, we have to create our own revenue streams in order to do, and I think that there's a capacity to scale up but there's not always the capacity for the students to participate at the cost that it takes. Our costs when we first started were sort of in the middle of what other preparation programs were charging. I, for example, don't know what Harvard charges right now.

DR. PIERCE: A lot.

MS. HIGGINS: But the tuition we charge includes all the resources, they get fed twice a day for breakfast and lunch and snacks. Our tuition this year was $10,400 and they get 24 graduate credits from Northeastern University. Angela is here and we have worked with her to see that. So they get a certificate and receive 24 graduate credits which they then can transfer into other programs if they wish.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: By the way, is that tuition actually covering the cost of the program?

MS. HIGGINS: No, it covers the cost, but each year -- it started out ten years ago at $7,500 and we typically don't increase it by more than three or $400 a year, but that includes all of their materials as well, any textbooks, any fees, it includes the mentoring. It's a real comprehensive set of services that they get for that fee so you can't compare that fee to another university and look at their tuition because --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Harvard is probably still more.

DR. PIERCE: But it is a different program. First of all, it's a degree-bearing program. Our students --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It's a full-time program. Yours is weekends, holidays, summer.

MS. HIGGINS: But they still do the 244 hours that are required for certification.

DR. PIERCE: Our students -- I think I have one part-time student. We have actually scaled down. We were moving toward 40 students a year, and what I found is every student that came in that really wanted certification was coming through the door to my program, and when we started the School Leadership Program two years ago, I made a conscious effort to find people that really wanted to be principals. I didn't want to just certify people so they'd walk out the door with certification, but I wanted people that would be prepared to go out in the field and take the positions.

This year we have 15 very-qualified students that I feel very comfortable will go out in the world and will get jobs as soon as they leave Harvard. The same thing happened last year. I think we had 17 and they are all in either principalships or assistant principal positions getting ready for principalship. It is a different program. They all leave with either a master's degree or a doctoral degree if they stay for several years, or a certificate of advanced study. So they are required to earn 32 credits and a lot of that time is spent in the field.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe it's coincidental, but both the programs are approximately the same size. Is there something about that size that is related to the quality of the program itself? If you were to go to 40, 50, 100, would you suddenly be trading off the quality of the program?

DR. PIERCE: The benefit that I've learned is that the cohort system is really important for the students. They need to be able to spend substantive time reflecting and talking to each other about what they are learning in the field. If we were to go to a larger system, I would want to break it into units very much like you think about a large high school, you break it into small learning communities. I would think about using that model. So again, based on what Nadya said, we would be talking about more resources to do the same work because I wouldn't want a cohort of 50 students or a hundred. It just wouldn't work.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If we are presented with two options, to invest in existing administrator or principal or superintendent programs in order to scale them up, versus trying to fund the creation of new programs, perhaps spin-offs or affiliated with existing ones, but essentially trying to create some new ones, or maybe there's some geographic issues to address, which would most likely be the best strategy?

MS. HIGGINS: I think if you were to do one of those options, which would be to create new programs, I would want to be very sure that some of the elements in at least the program that Milli has described and the one that I've described were maintained. I think the capacity to do the job as principal really depends upon thoroughly understanding that role, and you can't do it if you're watering down the content. I think the content as it relates to curriculum, as it relates to understanding how you lead diverse groups of people, as it relates to not only leading your staff but leading the community beyond your school in order to gain support for the school, that means community people and certainly means a parent community, those are all skill-building activities that some people may be born to them, but most aren't. Most really need some steady-handed instruction.

So I don't know enough about all of the 15 programs in the state, but you've heard about two that could scale up, and I would agree with Milli that I would never go to a cohort of 50. I would always cap it at between 15 and 20. But you could run several of them.

DR. PIERCE: I would raise the question back to you, and that is what are you trying to accomplish? There are programs now where you can obtain certification in I believe it's ten weeks. I hear about these programs. I have real concerns about that. I mean, it's sort of like saying anybody can be a principal, let's bring in the McDonald's manager and make him a principal, and I don't want to stop growth because I believe that we are in a shortage. I get calls every day. Nadya probably does as well. Give me the names of some qualified people out there, we are doing a search.

So I know that on a national level this shortage exists and it's only going to get worse. However, I'm not willing to have anyone come through the door and say, Let's put them through a program and send them out there. So I think that you can learn a lot from existing programs, and I don't know, again, out of the 15, if there are 15, I don't know what everybody else is doing. I think that we do a really good job at what we are doing but we also bring in the kinds of students that we believe are going to be successful. So we start with an applicant pool that's going to be able to go out there and do the kind of work that's necessary. I would simply caution you about thinking about creating a lot of little programs and then bringing in anybody that wants to walk through the door to do the job.

DR. SCHAEFER: First of all, you have given us an awful lot to think about. I really appreciate your coming here and doing that. But I want to turn to the other part you raise, namely the obstacles. Why is it that we don't have more people interested in the principalship? You refer to this problem of holding principals accountable and yet not giving them the authority to carry out what they are going to be held accountable for.

You raised one issue in particular which I think is a sore point with all of us as well, namely that principals do not have the authority to hire and fire, and I think you probably know that this issue -- well, there is what the Boston issue was all about, and this has been raised at the legislative level, and we haven't gotten very far. Do you have any suggestions? Frankly, I'm sorry that this exists but I think it's very helpful for the public to hear it from people who

are in the business of trying to train principals, that this is a serious issue to recruiting principals. Do you have any suggestions for us, number 1?

Number 2, are there any other issues of that sort? For example, do you find that principals would like to have more authority over the finances of the school? And the question for you, Bob, would be, What would be the superintendents' reaction to giving more authority to the principals over budgetary issues?

DR. PIERCE: I want to start with central office. If you ask me if there are some cures, I think there are some. One is, when I think about the amount of busy work that comes from central office, I think it needs to stop, and I can say that because I'm not in school right now. A lot of principals tell me all the time, I take home an enormous amount of work, and when I go through it sometimes I'm looking at the stuff for the fourth time and I'm saying, Why is this happening? So I think there are some things that the superintendent's office should be doing to look at making the work more manageable for the principal.

If I think about the principal's job, when I think about teachers, I think there are two ways to look -- at least two, probably more, to look at teaching. One is anecdotal and the other is quantifiable and data-driven. We are asking principals to be accountable for what's now shown on tests, and you can name the MCAS or you can go to Connecticut or California, you can go to Texas, but when the principal does that, when the principal becomes accountable for what those tests show -- and we can get into a whole conversation about tests, I want to put that aside. But there's data there and why isn't that data, some of that data used to think about teachers that are doing their job and teachers that aren't? Because some people just aren't doing their job.

DR. SCHAEFER: We certainly do hope it gets shown that way.

DR. PIERCE: But it doesn't get translated into we need to have the kind of conversation that means that a principal can sit down and say to a teacher, You know, if things don't improve pretty soon, and there should be real dates tied to that, we are going to have to do something about that. In most states right now, any principal that leaves Massachusetts, and it probably happens in Massachusetts as well, you get a one-year contract. You get one year to turn the school around. That's really six months. So if you're going in and those same people exist in those classrooms and you're the only different factor, it's not going to happen.

So along with the anecdotal relationships between teachers and students, we ought to be using the data for real purposes. Principals don't have -- let me say it differently because I was a principal -- principals don't have two years to keep running records on a teacher before you can take that information to someone else and say, Okay, I think I have enough data now to sit down and negotiate this person out. Very often that still doesn't happen, but you spent two years following this teacher around. It's got to happen quicker and the data should be used in that way.

MS. HIGGINS: Let me add a little bit to what Milli said. There is so much public pressure right now on schools to perform. It's coming from a lot of different directions, and principals are finding that they cannot select the people to serve in those schools. There are union issues that are difficult. Everybody knows about those. There are issues of process, which way does it come. I believe I'm right when I say the Ed Reform law said that a principal was to determine a candidate for the position of teacher in the school. That position would then be, or that person would then be offered to the superintendent for approval.

In many places that's not happening. It's coming from another way around -- pick from this group of people. In larger districts I think personnel offices are selecting them, not individual principals. But more personally, I think if the superintendent doesn't want that teacher, and the principal, who has to work with that teacher and truly understands what is needed in that school, decides that this is the right candidate, that person can be overruled. Yet as a principal, you're still held accountable for the performance of that school. So how do you solve that? I guess maybe you try to get more authority for them. There's language in the law that can be changed.

DR. SCHAEFER: It comes down to the legislature.

MS. HIGGINS: I mean, the law is the law until it changes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think if we had the superintendents, especially in Massachusetts, engaged on this particular issue, some of them might say that the problem is the principals are just not qualified to make that choice. We have been talking about principals in the system almost assuming the fact that they are capable of carrying out especially the instructional leadership task. This is what we expect from principals. I think we all can recognize that the reality is more uneven than that, which gets to the next question.

We have mostly been talking about training new principals. What about the existing principal workforce? What can we do in terms of providing meaningful professional development opportunities, not sort of the more traditional kind or the kind that they are currently perhaps taking in fulfillment of their recertification requirements? What kind of additional opportunities can we provide them to improve and extend their leadership capacity and maybe expand their vision of what their role really is in the school?

MS. HIGGINS: What MESPA is doing, we are a professional development organization and we went a long time ago from one- or two-day programs to more intensive programs, six- and seven-day programs throughout the year. If you look at it, all good staff development says that you engage people over a period of time and stay with them and provide ongoing support to them, and that's what we have done both with supervision and evaluation institutes and principalship institutes. But the one we are most excited about just happened this year.

For three years, we have been developing a doctoral program for principals, and it started in August in collaboration with Boston College so that, again, it's a cohort model, it works on the weekends. We do a lot of work on the weekends and we are paid to get very dark circles under our eyes as a result. But it's a very terrific program that is really, again, taking the theoretical and connecting it to the clinical practice of being a leader and extending it. We just believe that principals have to be ongoing learners and often if you give them a degree with it, it is more attractive to them.

So we have a cohort of 25 administrators, both principals and central office administrators, who are going through this program and seeking their doctorate and will complete it within three years, and the district has become their learning laboratory where they are taking some issues, they are using a lot of data-driven information from their schools to look at how they can make them better and how they can become better leaders.

But I do think those kind of extended opportunities, whether they are institutes -- I know Harvard does one full institute in the summer where there is the opportunity to run it over an extended period of time. One thing that I do want to add here is the professional development monies for principals and teachers and superintendents. There is a formula in the state that decides how much money a school will get based on enrollments, and frequently what we are hearing our principals say is that we don't have enough money to do some of the things that are out there that are being offered to them. We simply don't have enough money in the budget. So I think the state would do well to look at how those monies are being distributed and for what purpose.

MR. RADER: I would recommend that you also look at is how many certified administrators you have that are not doing that kind of work. What we found in Connecticut was there might be a shortage, and we certainly agree there is a coming shortage, but there are a lot who have just decided for whatever reason to not make use of their certification and not be principals and not be superintendents and really, those are people out there and ready. It's a pool that might be very helpful. So I would suggest you look at that issue too while you're looking at all the others.

DR. PIERCE: Our professional development happens in two ways. First we have a think tank of principals from around the country that serve as an advisory board. They meet three times a year with us for several days each time, where their task is to come together and talk about the challenges that principals are facing and will be facing, and out of that grows a professional development calendar that we put together and implement every year, and all of the items in that calendar feed on each other. So it is all an interrelated calendar that's about becoming or being an instructional leader.

Typically, the kinds of people that come to that are people that are usually experienced principals or people that have been on the job somewhere after their third year when they have had time to maybe breathe a little bit and really now

are thinking about, what's my long-term plan for my school and how do I want to put that together and what kinds of skills do I need? Most of our activities are three days and start in October and go all year to May and so they sort of build on each other.

During the summer we have two institutes for principals that are experienced. One is called Leadership and Evolving Vision, and the other is Focus on Accountability, which really is for principals who want to come with teams that want to talk about high-stakes testing, issues of accountability, what's happening in classrooms, and they just do it in a more substantive way than what happens in Leadership and Evolving Vision where we tend to talk about over the course of ten days several interrelated topics. But Focus on Accountability is really just about accountability issues and how to bring people up to speed and help principals to do that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Again, approaching this dichotomy where you have a couple of choices to make and a couple of alternatives: if you were to advise the state on how to invest its leadership development resources, would it be on developing the next generation of principals or trying to expand and improve the capacity of the current set of principals, or superintendents for that matter?

MS. HIGGINS: You have to do both. You really do. I think there really are three things. It's trying to get more quality preparation programs that aren't quick-and-easy shots at trying to just run people through and put them in schools, because basically if you do that, I don't think those people will stay. They won't be prepared enough to deal with the struggle that happens every day.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One of the things I think that I would assume we'd need more of are programs actually structured, in terms of their schedule, similar to yours, which are built around people's existing work schedules. And while we should assume that most of those people are working in schools, some may not be, but nonetheless, figuring out how to create opportunities for people who currently aren't principals but are employed to get access to this without having to take a year or more off, and obviously not only incurring the cost, which ultimately becomes the minor portion, but defer the income that goes along with that kind of commitment. Obviously there are certain people who will want to do that and are able to do that, and we need to have opportunities for them, but I would assume that most people would be in a different situation which would be trying to figure out how to do this around a pre-existing work life.

MS. HIGGINS: Frankly, I don't know how easy that would be to change programs that are existing that are not developed that way. I don't know what the challenges of colleges are right now that would have to do that, but it seems to me that you have some evidence that it works, and to extent that that can be developed, I think it would take some time to do it, or to expand the existing ones, that would take a little time as well. So I think you have to invest in looking at that as one action. As another action, though, it's just looking at trying to maintain some of the people that are already there and helping them to do what they are doing better.

You make the comment that you hear that there are a lot of principals that aren't really good at what they do. I think any population in any job you're going to find that curve. But I would say there are some outstanding principals in the schools of this state and what they need is continued professional development where some vehicle for providing them a more intensive, more ongoing basis for support is developed. I think that would help. But you know, what really, really would help is to somehow in the course of the day or the week, in the public schools of this state, to try to make available time for principals and teachers to sit and talk with one another and work together and be reflective and talk about the students that are in that school. They don't get that time very often.

We have a coalition called MCAL, Mass. Coalition for the Advancement of Learning, and what we have done with about a dozen schools is bring teachers and principals together once a month and they sit around the table as equals, shoulder to shoulder, talking about what good practice is. Teachers have visited each other's schools, principals have given some of the leadership to those teachers. What we are finding is that a lot of those teachers are saying, This is great, I don't have time in the course of a day to talk to my principal in the way that we're talking about through this effort, and I'd love to be a principal if I can get to do that.

So I think it's going back to my earlier remarks, which is to look at the job itself, to see what you can do to help the people in the position right now to do some of the things that they know they have to do and don't have the time to do. I don't know, does that mean a longer day? Does it mean a longer year? Does it mean you have to restructure schools in a different way to allow for that? But it's critical for teachers and principals as colleagues to sit down and have that opportunity to talk about very specific children in that school and the practice that they have. And when you do that, I think everybody rises a little higher.

DR. PIERCE: I would agree. The quality of the learning community makes a significant difference in whether you find teachers aspiring to be principals. Opportunities to really talk about and reflect on what's happening in classrooms is going to make the difference for teachers who either see themselves as in an isolated little place by themselves with the door closed, and I'm just going to take care of my kids, to, you know, this notion that we are really here to talk about all the children in this building and to really think about what progress means for kids as they move through a K-5 or K-6 school.

I would say you have three populations. You have aspiring, you have experienced, and you have retired. Those retired folks, some of those people would make terrific mentors for people who want to start out in this profession. Finding ways to create programs for people to come together to have those opportunities to talk to each other, or some retired principals who really loved the work that they were doing to really encourage people about what the possibilities can be in education and in the principalship, would be very important.

Experienced principals right now are somewhere in the 50-year-old range. They are sort of at that cusp, most of them, where I can either stop and think about what my next profession is going to be, or I can do a hell of a good job and be here for another 15 years. All of that, unfortunately for many, is going to depend on the quality of the response that they get, both from central office, from the public, from the state.

How do you nurture people and make them feel important? It's not always money. Money is one thing people would like, but it's not the only thing. People want to feel valued for their work. Right now you don't see a lot anywhere in the newspapers, in the public, you don't hear people saying, Gee, you're a principal, that's a great thing to be. Mostly what you hear from parents is, I love my school and I love what happens at my school. So why doesn't that translate to how we think about school leaders across the country or even across the state? People are almost embarrassed. You go to a cocktail party and you don't want anybody to ask you what you do because someone is going to make some remark about, Aren't you lucky, you get a lot of vacation time, or something.

The point is that I believe you could put together a program where you really could encourage people to be part of this profession, but you have to find the people that really value the work to come back and talk about it and to nurture those people that are in it, and I don't know why we don't use more of the retired people out there because there are people if you can get to them, who are quick to say, Yeah, I will jump into a school for six weeks while something is happening. Yet those same people say, Oh, I don't want to do much more than that because -- I'm sure there are a whole bunch of reasons. But I believe you could nurture some of those people who come back and they in turn could nurture the next generation.

We have a gentleman, I was coming into this room and I saw a gentleman sitting here who is a retired principal, and he's gone off to do something else, but it was just because someone recommended him very highly that I chose him as a supervisor, and I will tell you what. Over the last four years he has been one of the best supervisors I have ever had for aspiring principals. He is reflective, he is smart, he knows schools and he knows how to encourage people in this profession in ways that I don't hear coming from a lot of other people. I look at people like that and say, I know there are lots of people out there like that. Why aren't we bringing those people back and asking them to do something, to work with people that are aspiring or might aspire to the profession?

I think it's hard because all we hear are the negatives, and yet I know there are principals that want to stay, but they are 50 right now, what they are thinking is, when is the first retirement package going to be out so I can get out of here? I'd rather do plumbing. I'm serious about it. I know people who want to try something else not because they don't love what they do but because they are not rewarded anymore.

I know a principal, to provide some anecdotal information, his school increased so much on the MCAS scores, now I know that's just one way of looking at what's happening, but he had gotten all this money and provided all of these resources for the teachers, and as soon as he started to succeed, his colleagues became a little bit jealous, shall we say, professionally, and the central office pulled back some of his grant money. It's sort of like, You're doing enough now, so let's take this away. I bet if you ask other principals out there that are getting resources for their schools and making sure they are terrific places, you get the same kind of response. I was told I'm doing okay now so I don't need this support anymore. That's not a great reward system and it's not a way of encouraging people who stay in the business. So we need to think about how we reward. In big bureaucracies we are not very creative.

DR. SCHAEFER: Let me follow up. I read some states have these retreats. What is your impression of that?

MS. HIGGINS: For practicing principals?

DR. SCHAEFER: Yes. And teachers and superintendents.

MS. HIGGINS: I think the format is fine, you get people together for a sustained period of time and you begin to have an opportunity to talk about things that are important and maybe valuable. But it depends on what's done at the retreat. Just a retreat?

DR. SCHAEFER: Actually, the one I was thinking, it actually has a place where teachers and principals can go and not necessarily work on something in particular, but rather just the time to go and reflect and just be with other people. Not necessarily a formal program.

MS. HIGGINS: There are some of those. Our national association does a few of them, and I think they are helpful. People do need time for reflection, and reflection is really lost, I think, in the current structure. There's just not enough time to do it, so that's fine. But you know something? I think Bob mentioned this. We were talking about the salaries of superintendents and principals rising pretty rapidly. That's a byproduct of the competition for good people. There are good people who -- I think if you are a successful principal in this state, you can pretty much pick the district that you want to go to and the salaries keep going up in order to attract these people. So the money is going to be spent one way or the other. It's going to be spent on trying to attract a smaller group of people or it can be spent providing the resources and good ongoing support and enough of it for those people who are in the field to make them better at what they do. One way or the other school districts are going to have to spend money to attract good leaders. So the question is how do you do it and where do you get your greatest advantage.

DR. PIERCE: Entering legal associates in Massachusetts right now are make $125,000 a year to come into a law firm. I don't know any principals in Massachusetts that make $125,000 a year to do good work, and some of them are doing terrific work. So when I talk about money, it's not the only thing, but it's a standard that we use pretty much across the country to decide whether a job is worth having or not.

In terms of retreats, I would just say that quality of life is important for everyone, but a retreat is a short-term measure. If there's not some follow-up back at the school, if there aren't raises to support people when they get back on the job, if there aren't ways to think about all the bureaucracy that a principal has to go through, the paperwork, if there aren't ways to cut that down -- we give principals computers and we don't train them how to use them to make their lives easier, so you give someone equipment but you don't give them the training, that kind of thing. So a retreat is a wonderful idea but unless you're going to retreat them once a month, you have to figure out a way to support them once they are back at work.

DR. SCHAEFER: Can I come back to that budget question which we got sidetracked on about whether you think that principals would like to have more authority over the finances of their schools and certainly what would the superintendents' reaction be?

DR. PIERCE: The principals that I know, and I'm talking outside of Massachusetts for the most part, that have authority over their budgets -- that means they can sit down with a team and actually decide whether they are going to spend money on a capital improvement or whether they are going to spend it to hire a teacher -- they are happy

with their work because they actually are making what they consider the kind of substantive decisions that are going to impact student learning in a classroom. So if I just judge it on what people tell me, the answer is, Yes, they want the authority, they want to be able to decide how to spend their money.

MS. HIGGINS: And yes, initially under the Ed Reform law, that was to be the case. They were supposed to be in charge of their budgets. I also think if you add to that the school councils, and I'd love to hear Bob's reaction to this, that school councils develop plans, sometimes that involves money in order to implement those plans, and yet they don't have the authority to finance that, they have to go through a school committee in order to do it, and sometimes it's accepted and sometimes it's not. So there's this illusion. When you read the language of the law there's an illusion that you do have control of your school, but in actuality you don't because there are other layers of decision making that impact what you do. But maybe Bob can respond to that.

MR. RADER: First I'd respond in a couple of ways. I don't know Massachusetts law and I can't speak for the superintendents, but I would say that obviously in a district that is trying to pull together the money needed for the education of the students, there has to be some overarching oversight board or committee to make sure that priorities are set in a good way. Certainly there's been a lot over the last few years about shared decision making and so on, a lot of it has not been real shared decision making because when you get to some of the tougher issues, it's got to be made on a district wide basis.

Certainly when it comes to salaries of teachers and so on, certainly principals or superintendents who want to reward certain people for extra hard work, it's very difficult because of the constraints of the whole system. I don't know that principals necessarily want to be making these kinds of decisions. Certainly they want to have input in any decisions made. You know, the example of what I'm saying is that I have seen with shared decision making a real belief that with some of the groups, teachers in particular, they don't want to run the schools. They want to run their classrooms.

DR. SCHAEFER: But we are saying the principals, if they are going to be held accountable, then they want to have the authority to make the decision. Surely budgetary decisions are an important part of that.

MR. RADER: Are you talking about just budgetary; are you talking programmatic?

DR. SCHAEFER: That goes with it.

MR. RADER: Certainly if you have a school district in the way I would see a hard-working creative district, the superintendent works with the principals to help develop these and they are part of the team as they go forward and make recommendations.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There may be some distinctions here between smaller districts and larger districts.

MR. RADER: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Larger districts may have 50 or 100 or more schools. Attempting to manage that through a central office and creating a team, if you will, cooperative effort, is an entirely different thing than managing a district of three or four schools.

MR. RADER: Absolutely.

DR. SCHAEFER: Do your programs give principals backgrounds in management of finances?

MS. HIGGINS: Yes.

DR. PIERCE: Yes.

DR. SCHAEFER: So graduates of those programs could take on that responsibility if it were given to them?

DR. PIERCE: Our graduates are often disappointed because they are led to believe that they'll be doing -- I mean, they actually take an intense course where they learn how to do that only to get out and find out what they really have is they are only in charge of the amount of money to buy the textbooks.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In thinking about the state trying to invest in this area in some way, what kind of outcomes ought we be looking for in terms of principal or leadership development programs? What are the measures of success? What are the things we ought to be identifying up front as being those things which -- I'm talking about reasonably quantifiable measures -- those things which can indicate to us that we are dealing with something that's actually working? You mentioned surveys of graduates which obviously is one piece, but what might the others be?

MS. HIGGINS: I think you have to go back to the field and talk to the principals and find out what it is they are doing, what they are having trouble with, and what they think they need that they are not getting. That's one way of doing it. I know that the variety of preparation programs across the state, if they are approved by the state, have to meet certain standards. There are certain standards that everybody's program has to address or it's not approved. So regardless of what form it takes, whether it's an alternative program like ours, ours is not -- it's not an alternative certification, it's an alternative program leading to certification. And so we have to meet those same standards. What concerns me a little bit, in an effort to address the impending shortage, is that we're going to water that down somewhat so that people can get through a program more quickly but may not be prepared well enough.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I guess the question is, I went through this program, I got whatever it is I got, now I'm a principal, am I better for it? Am I better in practice for it? Which is really a separate question from the standards we put in place for most of these programs and most of the program approval kinds of criteria that we use where we are looking not to simplify, we are looking mostly at the input side versus the output side. I'm interested in trying to understand what we should be expecting of schools, of these development programs or training programs on the output and outcome side.

MS. HIGGINS: Tom Girvani talks about learning communities where teachers and principals are learning together, where teachers know their students, principals know their students, the schools and the communities are small enough that you can do that. Students are feeling that not only are they getting the academic instruction that they need, but also they are in a community which is valuing them as a human being as well. I think, How do you measure that? I can tell you how I think you don't measure it. It's not by just a single score. I know that's a very touchy topic and I don't mean to get us into something you're not intending to get us into, but I think it's really whether students are learning, whether students are growing, whether they are developing habits of learning that intelligent people need to have in order to continue to be life-long learners.

DR. PIERCE: I'm not sure how to answer this question, but when I think about what I want to see, if I were sitting on a search committee looking for a principal, I'd want someone who has a belief system about how kids learn and how you get the school there. I'd want someone that understands relationship-building and what it means to have a community where people feel a sense of belonging, but from little people to big people. I'd want a person that understands how to disaggregate data, look at it and figure out what they need to do once they see it. I'd want someone that understands what good teaching looks like, you walk into a classroom and you see kids are engaged or they are not engaged. Sometimes when they are engaged they are really not engaged, and sometimes when they are not engaged or look not engaged, they are, if you know what I mean. You want someone that understands that.

How do you measure that? It seems to me like you've got to look at the quality of instruction in the program. You have to look at a year out what people think they got out of the program. I don't know if you can do it right away. I don't know if someone walks out a door as a graduate that you can say, That's a quality program because I have 50 graduates. But I bet a year out you can come up with some data, and it won't all be quantifiable. Some of it is qualitative data. How well do I feel prepared to do the work that I'm sent out to do? Am I able to do some of the things that I thought were important and that they taught me were going to be important? I'm not exactly sure, but I think there are ways to put it together so you get some of both.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Bob, I don't know if you have any thoughts on this, but one idea, should we be surveying superintendents and finding out what their opinion is of people who come through these various programs in terms of the qualities of their leadership and the success of their work?

MR. RADER: Absolutely, and I would ask principals what they think of how superintendents are working with them. I'm specifically thinking of that because I know that one of the groups we talked about before, Nadya, the Connecticut Association of Schools did a survey of their principals and they had some rather strong things to say about the relationships between the principals and the superintendents. So much of this -- and the reason I think everybody struggles with quantifying it, it's about relationships. It's not all about money, it's not all about test scores. It's about how people function with each other to end up helping a kid. And they are very, very tough issues. So the more surveying you can do, the more asking of superintendents and boards, Are the people you're getting now for the principalship fulfilling the needs that you have? I think you might find some very interesting information.

Some of the issues in the shortage paper came out because of a feeling of those who were doing searches for superintendents that the pools were shrinking and the quality of the people who are applying were shrinking as well. And what we find is there are great people out there, it's just you have to go further and further to find them. Maybe that's because we had a great economy and inflation, unemployment is so low and people are deciding they are not going to make sufficient at the superintendency or the principalship, they'd rather do something entirely different. But certainly surveying those end users, so to speak, both the principals as well as the superintendents and the boards --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And the teachers.

MR. RADER: The teachers as well, because you may find out some great information.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me at this point open it up to anyone out there who might have a question or a comment. Juliane?

MS. DOW: I'd just like to probe a little bit about this question about whether school principals really want to be school business managers, because it seemed to me something of a contradiction between saying the principals really find themselves spending 75 percent of their time on management, which is one of the early things you said, Nadya, and really instead that takes away from their time to be instructional leaders. And yet if they were to have to assume the business responsibilities that currently go on in district central offices, they would be spending even more time working with those things. So I just wonder if that's a real issue.

It seems to me, something that came out earlier on, which is the lack of opportunity for principals to participate in the collective bargaining process and to really help get through that process. 80 percent or so of the school's budget is personnel, and sometimes higher than that, so I think that's really a set of decisions, perhaps. I just wonder, I'm not sure how much that's the place where principals want to have more control.

DR. PIERCE: I actually wrote an article where I ended the article posing the question about whether we need to have more than one leader in a building. While I believe principals want control of the budget, I didn't say they wanted to be business managers, because I don't believe that's what they want. But I believe it could be another person working with the principal in the building so that the principal could still have budgetary decision making about how things happen.

And even the personnel issues. You know, there are some personnel that many principals would like to say, Let's cut that line item and do something else. You know, if you're planning professional development, if you're really looking at curricular issues and trying to figure out what's the best route, if all you have is control over the $4,000 or $10,000 for textbooks, and textbooks aren't really what you want in the first place, it's difficult. I don't think they have to do it all. I think we have to do away with the notion of the principal that we knew in 1950 or 1960, and come up with a new model. But that doesn't mean that the principal as instructional leader wouldn't have control over the money.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One other thought on that. It seems to me that in a lot of districts, and it is true of a lot of organizations, probably particularly true in big agencies and schools perhaps more so than others, there is a whole lot that's happened in the areas of information and financial systems that has not yet found its way down into the schools. Therefore the complexity of actually managing the budget at a school level and a district level is such that it's a huge amount of work. And perhaps if the information and financial systems in school districts were better developed, that principals or the business managers might find it easier to actually do the work without getting tied up in the complexity of trying to administratively manage it.

The other thing I suppose is that undoubtedly, no matter how you think about school-based management and the autonomy of individual schools, there are going to be support services that districts are uniquely positioned to deliver, maybe not as the sole provider, but perhaps as the principal provider or primary provider for the district, and somehow moving districts towards a culture of providing service rather than establishing policy or dictating the nuts and bolts of the way things get done may get to us the point where school principals will be able to take on more authority for running the school without having to take on all of the administrative burden around essentially recreating this from scratch.

MS. HIGGINS: That's the decision, and if I can add something you implied in the last statement, which is there are new ways of doing things that principals need to look at all the time. That comes with the opportunity to both have the time and the mental capacity and the energy to learn new systems. We have a large project director, the Bill Gates Foundation Grant, to train principals and superintendents in technology and technology leadership. And it is really stretching their thinking about doing things in different ways and not necessarily always doing it the way they did 20 years ago. But you need to have the time, you need to have the energy and the opportunity to access this. I think it will change the way schools are run, ultimately.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any other questions or comments? Would any of you like to make a final comment or observation?

MS. HIGGINS: It's a very difficult thing to come up with answers to some of the questions that have been posed here today. But if we can work on it together, I know the professional associations are very willing to work with the Department and the Board to come up with solutions. I'm sure the other panelists are willing to do so. If we can have an avenue in which to get and give information on an ongoing basis, I think we might creatively come up with some solutions to this.

I'd really in my closing remarks encourage you again to look at the complexity of the job and what needs to be done to change it so that it becomes a job that is wanted again, and not just what might appear to be a band-aid approach of trying to get more people in in a shorter period of time less prepared.

DR. PIERCE: I would agree. I think that there needs to be a restructuring of the position, and this is a good time to be thinking about it because we want to bring new people in. So as we are bringing new people in, new people that will have creative ideas, we have to have ways of supporting those ideas. And I would, as Nadya has suggested, think about forming a task force. I don't want to serve on another task force, but finding a way for people to have the conversation, maybe it's over e-mail, where we continue to talk about this. Because I think we have got to be creative in thinking about what a school needs and how to best serve the role of the leader. And it may not be one role anymore; maybe we're talking about leaders for a building.

MR. RADER: I would echo what everybody else has said. You know, the time of crisis is the time you can make the biggest changes sometimes, and I think that's what you have. Certainly the northeast states, as I said before, ought to be working together on this. I hope you will help with that, and I know Glenn Couture and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees is very willing to work on this with you. So I want to thank you again for having me, and good luck with this tough problem.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to thank you all for coming here and giving of your time so generously, and for your informative and insightful comments. I will assure you that both in terms of the Board and the Department, we are very anxious to engage in an ongoing dialogue on this very subject. There is some money that's already been

appropriated for the purpose of creating, I think in the statute they are called Leadership Institutes, but we haven't divined what that means and we need to be about starting to put some meat on the bone, and we certainly will be turning to you and others and others you may suggest in trying to do just that.

So thank you all for coming, thank all of you for being in attendance. The Board of Education will reconvene at 4:00.

DR. SCHAEFER: I echo Jim's sentiments and I will keep on him to make sure we follow through on this.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The Board of Education will reconvene for its monthly business meeting in an hour in this same place. Thank you for coming.