COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
*****REGULAR MEETING*****
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
26 COURT STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Wednesday, June 20, 2001
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT:	Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Worcester Mr. J. Richard Crowley, Andover Dr. Judith I. Gill, Boston Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington Ms. Jody Kelman, Concord Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington Mr. Henry M. Thomas, III, Springfield Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ABSENT:	Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
ALSO PRESENT:	Mr. James Madden, Randolph Maryellen Coughlin, Registered Professional Reporter

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning everyone, and thank you all for your indulgence in this change of venue here to Boston rather than Malden as previously scheduled. We're here basically because of a hearing that's going on this morning starting at ten o'clock on the various bills that are pending before the legislature involving MCAS. I will be leaving, I hope temporarily, at quarter to ten to go to those hearings, and then I'm planning to return as soon as I'm done and close up the meeting here. In my stead, Vice-Chairman Schaefer will take the gavel. However, that does mean we need to move somewhat quickly to get through at least a couple items on the agenda before I need to go, and therefore the one thing that we are going to push back is the statements from the public. I believe we only have one person signed up to make comments, but we're going to try to do that after at least the first item on the agenda, which is the high school history and social science curriculum framework and assessment discussion. With that, let me turn it over to the Commissioner.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate what you're going through trying to be in two places at once. I appreciate the fact that Betty Castor, who's the

President and CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, is here today, and we're delighted to have her. She's kind enough to hold her remarks until after the discussion on the history and social science framework. We would like to begin by taking a moment to recognize this as a special occasion whereby one of our Department of Education employees is receiving an award, and I'd like to call Roger Young forward who will introduce a couple of guests and make the award.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you very much. It's my honor to represent the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials and the President's Award that we have bestowed upon Jay Sullivan, a longtime member of the Department of Education and a longtime friend and companion with the MASBO organization. Riso Products of Boston has been providing this award for the past ten years in cooperation with MASBO, and I would like to introduce Robert Raffa, President of Riso Products of Boston and ask Jay Sullivan to come up. We also have Jack Ford representing Riso International and Bob Mavelli as well. What's important to note here is that this award has been in operation for about ten years, but this is the first time that someone outside of being a business official or a past president has received it, so it's a special recognition for Jay.

MR. RAFFA: Let me enable you to get to your meeting on time and be as brief as I possibly can and congratulate Jay in front of this audience. If you would have heard the applause and the recognition that he received when he first received this award at the MASBO meeting, it was quite an honor. The talk of the group was the fact it was the first time that anyone from the state had been selected. So, if I may, I'm going to read you this award that is being presented to him. "The Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials President's Award 2001 presented to Jay Sullivan for contributions to the growth and improvements of Massachusetts School Business Officials in their profession. Presented by Riso Products of Boston and the Massachusetts School Business Officials."

MR. FORD: I have the honor of presenting Jay with the check from Riso Products of Boston for $500, and Jay has donated that to the Wilmington High Scholarship Fund.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's great. I also want to pay tribute to Chris Lynch, his sidekick. Both Jay and Chris do a phenomenal job in responding to the needs of school districts. At this point we want to move right to the history and social science framework discussion.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Why don't we just dispense with the minutes, and then do that. I want to make sure that I publicly thank the Boston School Committee and the Boston Public Schools for making this room available to us on pretty short notice. It's greatly appreciated.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the May 22, 2001 meeting as presented by the Commissioner.**

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

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK AND ASSESSMENT

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As board members know, we've been talking about this for quite some time, shortly after the framework back in 1997 was first implemented, and there were questions raised, and I think there was a consensus that there needed to be some changes made in the framework, and so we've been about that business. The key issues are, what is it that the state is going to require and test as part of our competency determination in particular, but what are we going to have as part of our assessment program? Secondly, what kind of sequence and/or subject matter content should high schools be expected to include in their four years? We're moving towards end-of-course assessment, as we've seen in science and so on. That was the context in which we went about the business of surveying high schools across the state. They were quite pleased to be asked. So I want to take a minute out for Sue and Anders to go over the survey, and then I'll make a very brief statement, and then I would love to just open it up, Mr. Chairman, to you and members of the board.

MS. WHELTLE: My name is Susan Wheltle, and I'm the Director of the Office of Humanities, and this is Anders Lewis who works in the Office of Academic Affairs. Anders and I along with other members of our staff and 18 teachers and administrators and others have been working on a review of the history and social science framework, and I'm going to turn it over to Anders to talk about the survey.

MR. LEWIS: Good morning. I'll be as quick as possible. I have three main points to make about the survey. The first point concerns the purpose and outline of the survey. The purpose of the survey was to give teachers a voice to give them an opportunity to shape the history and social science curriculum framework. The survey itself consisted of two parts. The first part asked teachers to give their preferences regarding core knowledge topics and subtopics of world history and subtopics of U.S. history. The second part of the survey consisted of a list of six questions. Those questions related to years of study for U.S. and world history and assessment options and formats. The report that you have before you summarizes the teachers' responses to those six questions.

The second point I think that should be made about the survey is that the Department made every effort possible to make sure that teachers across the state had an opportunity to respond to the survey. In early April, the Department mailed a copy of the survey to every high school department chair in history or social sciences. In addition to that, the Department mailed a second copy of the survey to every K-12 curriculum coordinator. The Department also posted a copy of the survey on the Department's web site, and Commissioner Driscoll notified all superintendents of the survey in the Commissioner's mailing. The response that we have received so far has been significant and representative. The Department received responses from teachers across the state. These teachers came from a representative mix of rural, suburban, and urban schools. We received responses from 161 high schools or approximately 60 percent of the total number of high schools in the state. And finally, we received responses from almost a thousand teachers.

My final point concerns the major findings. As you can see in the report, about 50 percent of the respondents favor two years of American history to be taught at the high school level; about 59 percent favor two years of world history to be taught at the high school level; and 59 percent

respondents favor a test in both U.S. and world history as part of the competency determination for high school graduation. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just want to mention that Anders has done just a tremendous job, and I really want to thank him for that. Just before I turn it over to the Chairman, I'd like to frame it in the following way: Clearly the issue is how do we fit it all in and what should we fit in a four-year high school career and what is it that we would expect by 10th grade or 11th grade in terms of a competency determination? The framework as it exists, of course, calls for two years of world history, and many school districts, most, have adapted to that framework. There's a lot of concern that it's so much, it's just too much, for the average high school student to be able to deal with that much material in any meaningful way, so that was the first issue.

The second issue is how do we deal with United States history. I think clearly not only the Governor, but I would suspect the general population, would want students to be tested on United States history. In fact, it's still part of the law. Even before education reform, it was still a requirement that all students take United States history. I'm not sure they have to pass it, but they must take it. So clearly the Governor, and I think it's reflective of an awful lot of people including myself, feel that there should be an emphasis on United States history. We want to make sure that students know something about their own country as well, and that leads to another issue, which is how do you cover all United States history? If you just deal with the Civil War forward to the current time, then you're really missing out on a very crucial part of knowledge base from our founding fathers and so forth, so therein lies the question.

The issue is that we need to change the framework, no question about it. How do we change the framework? Try to keep faith with what has been taught in the past, but I think make the kinds of changes that need to be made to go forward, and with that I'll turn it over to Chairman Peyser.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I thank you for the survey and for the report that you just gave. I think the information, while very interesting and useful, doesn't solve the problem, doesn't make the decision for us, but I do think it informs the choices that we have. One of the things that comes through in looking at the data I think is that there is broad agreement the status quo is not adequate or acceptable. If you look, for instance, at the question about continuing the present test, emphasizing world history, you've only got 9 percent support. I think that's a pretty resounding vote of no confidence in continuing the status quo.

The question of course is, what do we do to replace or improve that status quo? And it seems clear the message from the field was "Don't stop testing world history." I think we need to probe a little deeper on that in terms of exactly what kind of world history test would be acceptable in the field and would ensure from their perspective that world history continues to have an important and central place in a high school history curriculum. Having said that, I think we need to get away from the notion, and this is obviously a very recent notion, but the notion that unless the state is testing a subject, it's not important or it shouldn't be taught or that schools and districts ought to blithely choose one way or the other in trying to decide what kind of courses to offer. World history is and should be a common part of everyone's high school experience. The question is what level of testing should the state engage in in order to ensure a requisite level of accountability, and, in particular, whether that accountability ought to be driven down to the student level. I think those are the issues over time that we need to wrestle with.

But, jumping back to U.S. history, I think the one thing that comes through in this survey as well as in discussions we've had on this board as well as with other people outside the board is that we need to have a U.S. history assessment. It should be an end-of-course variety, and we need to begin the process of putting it in place, and, in particular, adjusting the frameworks to accommodate such an assessment. The one practical question that emerges is when would you offer the test? My inclination at this point is to prepare an end-of-course U.S. history assessment and provide the option to the school or the district to administer it either in the 10th or 11th grade. At the moment, it's not obviously part of the competency determination, and wouldn't be for some number of years regardless of what choice we make over the next few months.

Therefore, I think we ought to be keeping our options open at this point. It could be that at somewhere down the road we want to go to the legislature and seek a revision in the statute. It could be that we find other ways to integrate history assessment in the competency determination. Whatever that might be, I think that's a decision we can save for another day. But I think the issue we need to give some guidance to the committee on, and to the assessment folks in the Department is, are we committed to or do we generally agree that we should have an end-of-course U.S. history high school assessment? And then I think the other piece of it is, should we provide that kind of flexibility that I just described of administering that test in either the 10th or 11th grade? And then beyond that I think the only counsel or instruction we might give to the Department is to be creative and thoughtful about what our alternatives might be in world history, and then come back at a later date and let's have a further discussion of that. With that as the opening comments here, do other board members have something to say?

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes, I do, Jim. It seems to me there's a further question. It says here that most of the U.S. history courses, that is the high school ones, cover only from Reconstruction to the present, but most high school teachers believe all high school students, not just the most academically advanced ones, should have the same opportunity to gain a sophisticated understanding of our nation's basic principles, their origins, and founding documents, particularly the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers. This is the issue of equity. So it seems to me there's a further question of exactly what are we asking that high schools cover in the way of American history in high school. I would be very unhappy with a message that it's fine to drop all of American history up to Reconstruction after 8th grade.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You're absolutely right. In part I think the challenge that the frameworks committee has as they work on this over the summer is designing a course -- and one of the questions which is implied by some of the questions that were asked in the survey is whether we ought to be pointing towards a year and a half course in American history, whether it ought to be a two-year course, and that plays very importantly into when the assessment might actually be administered -- but I would agree that an American history test that starts after the Civil War is not much of an American history test.

DR. THERNSTROM: I would be happier with one that stopped with the end of the Civil War than one that began there, if we had to choose, which we don't.

MR. THOMAS: I have two observations. One with respect to the starting period for American history. Starting at the Civil War creates some stresses that I think often are overlooked, and that is we have a large number of African Americans within the public school system, and usually when you start with the Civil War, you start with slavery. When students identify themselves in the

curriculum, and in this case within the history curriculum, to identify themselves in the context of the scourge of slavery, it is not a very reinforcing and progressive way to study a particular field with the sensitivities that are going to be naturally associated with that particular period of our history. Not to say that that's not important to study. But to start with American history at that particular point I think has an impact on not only African-American children but also non-minority children in terms of their perceptions and views and outlooks of who they are. That may be more of a philosophical/politic point than an academic point, but I thought I should share it.

The other thing I was concerned about was that in reading the various letters that came in with regard to our seeking adjustment, it seemed to be pretty pervasive that social study department heads and superintendents and principals are consistently, or the common thread is that they feel that there has been some significant hardship perpetrated on them. Since this issue predates my presence on the board, I'm curious as to whether the board has considered that as a real issue and have we done or as the Department done anything to accommodate that particular concern?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think it is a real issue, at least it's one that is consistently voiced as those letters represent. Essentially when we made the decision that we made around the frameworks four years ago, we forced many districts -- I don't know if it's the majority, but it's many districts -- to move American history from 10th grade to 11th grade and have two years of world history. Now, a lot of schools and districts were doing that anyway, but a number weren't. In addition to that, the content that was expected to be covered in world history was broadened quite substantially in a number of districts to make good faith efforts to try to bring their world history curriculum into line with those standards and frameworks.

So there has been a lot of work that's been done. I'm sure there have been a lot of textbooks that have been purchased. That's one reason that I think we have to be very careful about simply saying, okay, we know we said there should be two years of world history in grades 9 and 10, but now we're changing our mind and going back and please undo what you have done. I don't think we can do that. That's why I think we need to continue to provide options to schools to administer a U.S. history test when they think it is most appropriate, in either the 10th or the 11th grade.

Over time we're going to ultimately face this somewhat complicated decision about how to integrate whatever history test that we're doing into a competency determination. I guess what I'm saying is I think we can put that decision off until a later date. But I think at minimum today we need to be very sensitive about not forcing districts to undo all the good work that they have done over the last four years to try to do what we asked them to.

MR. THOMAS: Yes, that would be my concern as well.

MS. KELMAN: I guess what I've heard over the past year in terms of the history discussion is the one resounding theme is that there is no agreement, and so all of you have a proposal from the State Student Advisory Council in front of you that suggests that what we do is return a lot of that flexibility to the districts, because different schools decide to focus on different things. And I do agree that we need to test U.S. history. It's a requirement at the state level, and so the State Student Advisory Council has agreed that U.S. history should be a requirement for -- should be a part of the competency determination, if there is one.

But we should return that flexibility to the district by dividing U.S. history into two time periods, whether it's the Federalist Papers to the Civil War and Reconstruction to the present or however you want to do it, and then dividing world history into different sections, and then creating, if you're willing to, other social studies and social sciences and history tests that would allow students more flexibility and districts more flexibility in taking these tests and in really developing a love of history and the social sciences, that hopefully would last them through their adult lives. So I think returning flexibility -- you can have accountability and flexibility for districts at the same time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to commend the advisory council for the position statement they've issued, because I do think it presents some interesting and creative approaches that the curriculum committee ought to consider. For instance, on the assessment side it raises the question of requiring students to pass tests in at least two of the topic areas. I think there are many possible scenarios we could pursue around assessment, that's one of them, and we ought to be thinking about it as we try to put some alternatives together. Again, getting back to one of the points I made earlier, I hope that schools and districts don't take the position that unless we test it they don't have to teach it or they shouldn't teach it. But by the same token, I think we need to introduce some greater flexibility, especially around history assessment. We ought to consider various local options, whether it's for local choice on the kinds of tests they administer or whether it's local scoring options for some or all of the various tests that are administered around history. I think the field is pretty open here, and I think what you've provided is a good starting point.

DR. SCHAEFER: I had the opportunity to attend a few of the meetings of the curriculum committee, and first of all, I thank them for the opportunity of attending and also of hearing a number of points of view expressed. I think that we're in the position of having to balance a number of things, among which the claim that there are too many tests, and on the other hand these people in history and social science saying, well, we want more, not just the world history but break that down into two separate tests, a year-end test, plus a U.S. history, and I can imagine the outcry if the state were actually to try to increase the number of tests at this point. So I think that we're left with a real balancing act here, and I think that there is agreement that U.S. history does need to be tested, and I think also that the suggestions of the flexibility in terms of the other tests and suggesting what they might be and more local options seems to me to be a reasonable way to go at this point, and that those tests don't necessarily have to be state administered, and that the districts do have -- can institute requirements on their own.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Do board members have any other comments on this subject? I guess if I'm hearing everyone, at least everyone who is speaking, there is consensus over the first point which is we ought to move towards implementing an end-of-course U.S. history test -- would anyone disagree with that? -- for high school. Is anyone in disagreement on the point of offering the options to the districts of administering it either in the 10th or the 11th grade?

MS. KELMAN: Would they have the option to offer it in the 9th grade if they wanted to?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't know.

MR. NELLHAUS: It depends on what you want to test. If you want to test Federalist Papers, you may not want to.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right. The other thing to keep in mind is we are testing in 8th grade. I'm not sure it would be that productive to test in that subject immediately in 9th grade. The other thing is the frameworks themselves, barring some change I'm not familiar with, are not going to reflect an American history course in the ninth grade, and I think in the survey there seems to be fair consensus that that's the appropriate sequence. I wouldn't totally shut the door to it, but I'm not sure that's an option.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: When you're asking this consensus about the end-of-course test in the United States history either in 10th or 11th, would that be assumed to be from the beginning of the country as opposed to from the Civil War on?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My opinion of that would be that, especially in context of anything that may eventually work its way into competency determination, the test really would need to cover the founding through the Civil War at a minimum. Exactly what the scope of the course should be, I'm more inclined to leave that to the curriculum framework committee to try to define what the right boundaries of that course are.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The reason I ask you that is because I'm sensing the consensus of the board that even in the area of United States history where our hope would be, leaving testing aside, that there would not only be a course, if you will, from the founding fathers up through the Civil War but from that period of the Civil War on. So I'm wondering if that's a consensus? And then if we were thinking about the test being just one of those two in an end-of-course situation, whether it would be the first part, and the other part I guess would be more of an elective.

DR. SCHAEFER: I would say that it should be from the founding on, but leaving the cut off point to the committee to see what you can fit in, but it certainly should go to the Civil War.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only other thing I'd say, which is one reason I'm hesitating here, is in the survey, as well as in the discussions we've had, there has been some talk of instead of thinking about this as a full-year course or only in the context of full-year increments is the fact it may be an issue where you do world history in 9th grade, and then the first half of the school year in 10th grade is world history, and the second half is American history, and then the next year is all American history. And if the test is administered at that point after a year and a half, that may apply a different breadth of coverage. I'm in basic agreement that the core of it has to be the founding through the Civil War, but I'm not sure if it needs to be limited to that.

DR. THERNSTROM: We're trying to take kids and turn them into American citizens, and it seems to me at the minimum to give a basic citizenship test here, what you should know to be an informed participant in the American political process and in the culture of the society, and it just doesn't seem to me you can -- the cutoff point, it seems to me, is important. I don't think you can end with Reconstruction. I think kids have to -- we just take African-American history alone, you've got to understand there was slavery, you've got to understand the Reconstruction Amendments, and you've got to understand the evolution of Jim Crowe after that and so forth, and there's something for me a little wrong with sticking with the notion that it is more important to have two years of world history than it is two years of American history. I wouldn't want to see world history go, but I certainly think our priorities here, and that priority is written into state law, should be to educate these students as Americans and for them to know the country in which they now live, wherever they come from.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm in perfect agreement with you. I think that we have a problem because of the frameworks that we're currently operating under and the degree to which we're in a position to change that as a result of what the districts have done over the past several years. So we are constrained in that respect, unfortunately, and I think that's the reality of the situation at the moment.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But there is another piece to it -- based on the feedback from the field, and also based on I think other discussions we've had, is there is agreement at least on the part of many people that if you were to have two years of American history in high school that the optimal time might be 11th and 12th grade rather than to force it down earlier in the curriculum when students may not be as ready to engage as fully in the concepts and in the material as when they're older. So I agree with you completely.

DR. THERNSTROM: That's going to be an elective in 12th grade, and second semester 12th grade, would you agree, is blown off, basically. You know, you cease to go to school by then.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My point is that I would agree that two years of American history in high school seems like a very reasonable thing to ask. The other question, though, is when those two years should occur and especially when in relation to other history, civics and social science courses they may be taking in high school. And so in thinking again in the context of the competency determination, what's the minimum requirement that we want to ensure that all students have at a point in time that we can assess and also provide students with enough time to take the test again, to get further help if they don't pass it? This is, I think, the difficult question we've been grappling with the whole time.

DR. THERNSTROM: And to which there's no good answer.

MR. MADDEN: My very first comment. I'd just like to agree with Abigail that the concentration does need to be on teaching our students how to be citizens, but that maybe what we can consider to do that more effectively is basing any kind of determination we implement more on thought and essays, maybe even a portfolio, rather than a multiple choice test, that perhaps would be more important to teach our students how the Bill of Rights affects them on a daily basis rather than who was there for the signing, what was the political motives by it and things like that. Rather than the facts that just kind of tend to be lost after the year is ended, teach the students how it affects them on a daily basis, and maybe giving concentration towards the civics aspect of it, and not so much shortchanging the history of it, but maybe not concentrated so much on the memorization of the enormous amount of history we have to cover, and that doing that might allow us to just do a year and a half course rather than two years, because the civics and the historical background for it could be adequately covered in a year and a half, I believe, which might be able to fit better mixed in with the world history so we don't have to sacrifice too much. This is something we discussed at the Student Advisory Council meetings, this idea a few of us have had kicking around in our heads.

MS. KELMAN: Good job, James. The other thing I'd like to say is, echoing what Henry was saying before, if we move to a two-year program in U.S. history, which I think optimally I would love to see kids get two years of American history because it's so important, but I know a lot of schools -- it's in the survey, or it was at least in some of the responses -- most schools are teaching reconstruction to the present. If we come to them now and say not only do you have to replace the

two years of world history textbooks that you just bought three years ago, but you now need to replace all the U.S. history textbooks you bought for 1865 to the present with ones that start with the founding of the country, I don't think it's fair to the school districts to keep coming back and back and back and changing what we want them to do, and I think that the best way to deal with that problem is the best word for it is to give them the flexibility. To require that they do take a U.S. history, because I don't think we can -- Massachusetts doesn't let kids graduate high school without having some knowledge of U.S. history by taking a U.S. history course, but by giving them the flexibility in when that U.S. history -- what period that U.S. history covers.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Some of the issues that we're grappling with here, not all of them but some of them, are questions that will relate to how the framework itself will be constructed and what the panel recommends in terms of an adequate and appropriate scope and sequence for an American history course. I guess my view at this point is that I'd like to see what they produce. I don't want to sidestep the issue, but I think it may not be right to make a final choice about exactly what the scope or breadth of the American history test should be, especially taking into consideration my original point, which I still think is valid, that we don't need to test for everything, that we shouldn't assume that if it's not tested it's not taught, that there are certain things that we need to be able to hold students and schools accountable for as threshold requirements for graduation or for just overall school performance.

And so the question is, given the number of things we might be able to assess and might be interested in, which ones are really at the very core that we can't let go to entirely local assessment and local control? My inclination is to think that it's more in the founding through Civil War/Reconstruction period, but, again, I'm open to hearing what the framework committee reports back in terms of the kind of course that they design or course framework that they design and the kind of connection from one year to the next.

DR. SCHAEFER: I do think that they're looking for some guidance as to where to start, and I think that we need to express some sense of the group as to whether it starts with the founding.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: If I may, Mr. Chairman, and Susan can help me with this, we're all struggling, of course, trying to figure out all these factors together, but it does seem to me that -- and we're saddled a little bit with some decisions that were made in the past and some costs that were incurred at the local levels certainly, but we're also charged with trying to make sense out of it all going forward. I would refer to the science technology/engineering framework as perhaps a place to suggest that this board, and I would say all of us, are starting to move in a slightly different direction. A) Looking at end-of-course assessments and giving more flexibility at the local level, and B) I hope to see much more of a shift to options and involvement at the local level in the assessment.

We know that we have long range plans to have science experiments, et cetera, done at the local level and scored at the local level. The composition, long composition scored at the local level. We want this to be more of a partnership. We're living in 2001. We're living in this time, and there's this tremendous focus on the competency determination, the graduation requirement. I hope we understand that historically. But as we go forward, I certainly see much more of a partnership between what the state is doing and what the locals are doing, that there has to be this guarantee that kids are graduating with at least basic skills in English and mathematics. I would suggest basic knowledge of their country and citizenship.

So I would just offer the following, Mr. Chairman, to see if this works in trying to give the panel some direction. It seems to me as we look at end-of-course, as we did in science, and flexibility at the local level, that I would like to see the panel go forward with looking at world history two years, kind of end-of-course, if you will, World History I course, and World History II course. It seems to me that the same could be true of United States history, and that could be adapted to a year and a half if that's what has to happen too. And then I think it allows the panel at least to go forward and with your idea of allowing some flexibility with respect to the grades. If we can keep faith with those that want to have two years of world history and maintain that, we can allow, and I think we would welcome the challenge of helping districts develop a test, really locally scored perhaps. We wouldn't want all of these to be part of the competency determination. But that's a decision this board would have to make at the time, what would be the minimum, so to speak. I'm certainly hearing that that first end of course from the founding fathers up through, if it turns out the panel thinks up through Civil War seems reasonable and comes back to this board and the board agrees with that, maybe that's the competency determination that's chosen either in 9, I guess, but certainly 10 or 11. I think there's enough there to go forward. And if I've captured it right -- I just wondered, Susan, would that give the panel enough to go forward?

MS. WHELTLE: I think it does. For some of our new board members I just would like to say that the 8th grade curriculum is pretty much from the founding fathers through Reconstruction, that's the period that we're asking 8th graders to study. Certainly this period could be studied for the rest of your life at increasingly more sophisticated levels.

Just a comment on what Jody and the Student Advisory Council recommended, the state of Virginia has a plan very much like that in which there are a number of different end-of-course tests and schools and districts and students presumably choose which ones.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We tried to follow Virginia once before.

MS. WHELTLE: I think our review panel, which includes a number of high school history teachers, has a good sense of what is doable within a year, so I would really turn to them. I mean, we can just develop the standards, and then make some recommendations of what possible cutoff dates might be or, as I listen to you, I keep thinking too that there may be something not quite right about the way we're thinking completely on a chronological basis, that some of the civics that a number of you talked about might be a component that not exactly stands by itself but that we would --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It's possible in crafting this, in crafting the framework, that there's a certain amount of modularity so that you can kind of take pieces. Not make it kind of a meaningless patchwork, but that there are components that can be moved around at local discretion to suit whatever their requirements or what they think the best practice is. I'm going to have to go, so I'm going to turn the gavel over to Roberta here, and you can clean up all the loose ends that I have helped create.

DR. THERNSTROM: You mean we can settle it in your absence?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Exactly. Whatever you think is best. And the other thing I just want to mention on my way out is, just one final instruction, Roberta, is once we finish this discussion you might want to go back to the beginning not only with respect to public comments, but also with

respect to introducing our soon to be new student member, already initiated student member. So go back to the beginning before going on to the end.

DR. SCHAEFER: Now that I have the gavel, I have had my hand up, so I'd like to make a comment. I wanted to make a comment on what Susan had said about 8th grade American history. Correct me if I'm wrong, do the students in the 8th grade actually look at the original documents?

MS. WHELTLE: Yes, they do. They certainly -- well, I wouldn't say certainly, but I would assume that they read less of them than you would in a more advanced class.

DR. SCHAEFER: They are reading the Federalist Papers?

MS. WHELTLE: No. I doubt it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: They're being exposed to them. They're being exposed to the actual Federalist Papers, if that's your question. It's an 8th grade course, so they're not majoring in it. So that's why some are nodding yes, because they deal directly with the Federalist Papers. I think Susan is saying no in that they --

MS. WHELTLE: How much of them they read I think is the . . .

DR. SCHAEFER: This is for clarification, please. They actually have the whole text of the Federalist Papers, and they're reading the important ones in the original text, not abbreviated versions of them? This comes to the point that I did want to make with respect to something that James said before. He mentioned an issue about memorization. The purpose is not to memorize who signed what but rather what the intent of the framework was, and the working out of that intention over the succeeding 200 years or so, and that's the important thing to get at, and this is why it's important not to start, as Henry I think was implying, not to start at the point of the Civil War but to understand the beginning, how we got to where we were at the time of the Civil War and after that. So that's the importance of actually looking at the entire text, not just abbreviated versions of the Federalist Papers or whatever, and that's why I think that at the 10th or 11th grade level that is certainly, you know, more realistic and that we are not really repeating what happens in 8th grade.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, I do second that. Working out the intentions of the -- following the intentions of the Federalist Papers, the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, what does it mean to you today? Well, you really should know the historical background of what it first meant, what it meant in World War I. So I am very, very committed to a chronological look at this. And it seems to me, Dave, that the analogy with science is not really a perfect one because the fabric of American democracy is not affected by whether students take a science assessment at the end of the day in biology or in chemistry or in physics, but knowing American history really is absolutely essential to an informed democratic government.

Henry, did I understand you right, let me just make sure I did, that you're in agreement with me, that you not only have to understand the appalling history of slavery and indeed the appalling history that followed the end of Reconstruction but also the opening of opportunity for African-American students -- the Civil Rights Movement of the '50s and '60s? The sweep of this history is important for students to understand. Did I understand you correctly?

MR. THOMAS: I would add just one more layer, and it kind of goes back to Roberta's comments previously. I think you have to understand the context, not just the event.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, of course.

MR. THOMAS: And the context is really the beginning of American history, and I think that the context going forward is what were the manifestations, what were the inspirations, if you will, the provocations that came out of a negative experience, which is what you are alluding to when you talk in terms of --

DR. THERNSTROM: Absolutely. I completely agree with that, and I think one of the neglected stories, and this is perhaps getting off the track, is the survival of an incredibly segregated people who developed a culture, a very vibrant culture, et cetera, and eventually end up with a Civil Rights Movement. But, you know, it's important to cover all of that.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Abby, as we wrap this discussion up, I will certainly say to you -- I'm certainly not going to argue that it's equally as important as basic United States history, but I would mention there are people who do think science is important, and I would simply say that I'm trying to keep faith with the law which clearly suggests that the four major subject areas, now five, will be on the test. I agree with you that the analogy is not exactly the same. In fact, by the very fact that United States history had been and still is a requirement of law even predating education reform show its importance. I think everybody understands that. I was simply pointing to sort of the trappings of going to end of course and allowing more flexibility at the local level, that is how do you handle all of science, earth science, biology; how do you handle all of history, world history, African history, European history or whatever, and maybe this idea of going forward to end of course.

MS. WHELTLE: I think that's enough for a month. I just want to thank Roberta Schaefer for coming to our meetings. She thanked us. I think it should be the other way around.

DR. SCHAEFER: I would like to ask the Commissioner if he would introduce our new board member.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, I'm going to give the pleasure of introducing our new board member, although I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon with him, and I simply want to tell you it's not going to get any better. He's as obstinate as Jody in his views. No, we had a delightful afternoon with Marcel as well, and so we had a very nice discussion. But, Jody, let me turn it over to you to introduce our newest member.

MS. KELMAN: I am more than proud to introduce James Madden, Jr. as the new student board member. He will be a senior at Randolph High School next year.

MR. MADDEN: I would just like to say thank you, and I feel honored to be part of this board, especially this year which should turn out to be an extremely pivotal year in education in Massachusetts, and I'm just very, very honored and thrilled to be here for it all.

DR. THERNSTROM: We welcome you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And I believe, am I right, Rhoda, he has to get sworn in at some point?

MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We'll arrange for that. You haven't been sworn in yet, have you?

MR. MADDEN: No.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Then you can't vote.

MR. MADDEN: I guess the school improvement plan can do without me.

DR. SCHAEFER: As soon as I become chairman, my friend leaves.

MS. KELMAN: At some point can the Student Advisory Council just give a quick update?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes. If you wouldn't mind, I do want to do this. I guess maybe we could go right back and you can give that report.

MS. KELMAN: No problem.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'm delighted to welcome Tom Johnson here who has been our liaison with the National Board and of course Betty Castor who's the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In 1998, I announced that I wanted to have a thousand master teachers. By master teacher, I define that to be people that had entered into and had passed the National Board Certification Program. At the time we had seven, and I announced a thousand, and since 1998 we have been certainly one of the fastest growing states in the country in terms of National Board Certified Teachers. They get a $50,000 bonus: $5,000 for ten years as long as they agree to mentor, and each year I greet and meet the newest candidates, and it's quite an up-lifting experience. We have outstanding veteran teachers who have availed themselves of this terrific program. So, Betty, we welcome you to Massachusetts and are pleased to have you address us for a few minutes.

MS. CASTOR: It's nice to be here, and for your information in one of my former lives I was the commissioner of education for the state of Florida, so your deliberations this morning are very familiar to me. You have some difficult issues in these days of high-stakes accountability, and I sympathize and respect all of you for the work that you're doing.

We are particularly pleased with the progress of the National Board process here in Massachusetts. You have been very, very supportive. We have more National Board Certified Teachers here than any other state in the northeast. You have to go all the way west to Ohio and all the way south to North Carolina to find a state that has more certified teachers and more candidates, so we're very, very pleased. Just to give you an idea of what is happening, your support is similar to that in some other states. North Carolina has a 12-percent salary enhancement. My home state of Florida provides over 10 percent when teachers achieve National Board Certification, and then another $4800 if they mentor. So we're finding that in most states it is a combination of helping teachers with support and some salary enhancements.

For those of you who may not know, this is a tough process. It takes the better part of an academic school year. Teachers build portfolios of their work. They analyze student work. They really reflect on their practice in a way I think that not many other professional development programs are able to achieve. Our pass rate is still on the first attempt a little over 50 percent. Candidates may retake, as they are here in Massachusetts. But we're delighted with our progress. Nationwide we have 9500 National Board Certified Teachers, but this summer over 10,500 are completing candidacy for this year, and we expect that will probably increase to about 20,000 candidates next year. So we're spreading our good fortune, tough system, good results.

We're doing more research than ever on our National Board Certified Teachers, and we'd like to encourage their use in collaboration at the school level, particularly in those lower-performing schools. Tom Johnson is our man in Nevada here in the northeast, and we've just opened a regional office here, and he will be our key contact. I want to say a special thanks to Elizabeth Pauley as well. She is the nuts and bolts person in the Department who has worked with us, and we appreciate her good work.

MR. JOHNSON: It's nice to be back here. I started as a Boston teacher in 1963 at English High School, and then I went to Copley Square, and I was here till 1975, and I spent the rest of my career in public education, but I can tell you this is the most important work I've ever done. I think for the first time we have all of the elements to promote teaching as a national profession, and I see teachers all around the country, and in the northeast there is an excitement about this. It goes well beyond what is traditionally known as professional development. This is not an expenditure as much as it is an investment. Teachers that go through the process tell me that they're better teachers, their teaching has improved, and something happens to them as they go through the process. So it's a rare opportunity, and I am very enthusiastic about this. And if I could ever help anyone with more information on this, I'd be happy to do so. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Tom, and thank you, Betty. I appreciate it.

DR. SCHAEFER: I just wanted to ask about the numbers. Is that that were the highest in the northeast as a percentage of the total teachers or of the raw number?

MS. CASTOR: The raw number.

DR. SCHAEFER: Considering that we're probably one of the smaller states in terms of the number of --

MR. JOHNSON: I think that the issue is that that was a clear investment, and monies have been set up as incentives for teachers going through this. What we find is there's a direct relationship between incentives and rewards and fee support and the number of teachers that are willing to go through it, because it's high stakes. It's rigorous. It's time consuming. Teachers spend between 200-400 hours of their own time on this, looking at their own practice. And one of the things that I love is that they don't have to leave their classroom. They don't have to go to a workshop. It's not a sit and give thing. It's analyzing their own practice using standards, standards for accomplished teaching. But Massachusetts stands out because it has made a commitment, and also the Commissioner and the staff are really our best salespeople for this.

DR. SCHAEFER: Thank you very much.

MS. CASTOR: Thank you.

DR. SCHAEFER: Jody, your report.

MS. KELMAN: Just quickly to talk about what the State Student Advisory Council has accomplished this year. James, feel free to pipe in at any point. We filed three bills in the legislature, one of which is being testified on today, House 991, a bill to end the graduation requirement associated with the MCAS. That was filed for us by Representative Wolfe. We also filed a bill to place a student voting member on school committees, which was also filed for us by Representative Wolfe, and has since had its hearing and been voted down. And the third bill was a bill to give compensation to teachers who wanted to take courses at Massachusetts state colleges and universities of higher education. And that bill has yet to come to a hearing, and James will probably be more familiar with it much more than I would. We filed it towards the end of the year.

In terms of non-legislative work, we have created an outreach video that is going to be sent to schools across the state that explains what the State Student Advisory Council does and what its role is in the Commonwealth and with the Board of Education, and we also created a school climate packet which is going out to schools across the Commonwealth that will explain different opportunities that students can have and that schools can offer for enrichment workshops and nonviolence workshops and tolerance workshops and all sorts of different kinds of programs and activities that will make the climate of individual schools better. Is there anything I've left out, James?

MR. MADDEN: I think you covered it pretty well.

MS. KELMAN: So we've had a very successful year, that is if you tend to equate by a lot of big ideas and not a lot of tangible accomplishments, and this year was a big year for actual production of a product, so we were very pleased with the way the year turned out.

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPATIONAL PROFICIENCY: PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR FOUR OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTERS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Next, Fran and Karen will do the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency. As members know, we sent this out for public comment, and we did summarize the comments for you. Most of the comments were positive. There were a couple of comments about particularly the automotive as to whether it's too much. Karen may want to address that, Fran. But generally speaking, we're very pleased, and I see John McDonough here and John Roper from the center and Ralph Devlin from the MTA and David Cronin from MAVA who have been very, very active in this process and the process for vocational schools and vocational education in general. So, Fran, maybe you ought to quickly summarize what we learned, and we will be looking for the board to support these as the first four COPs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MR. KANE: Good morning, and thank you for allowing us to be here again today. I will keep my remarks brief, but I just wanted to bring you up to date on where we are presently. With the approval of this, we'll be able to move forward and continue on with securing someone to do the field testing, which we hope to have in place by spring of 2002, but also it continues in the other

areas of the competencies here that we continue to develop. As you know, besides these four, we have -- we have one major change, by the way, which has been made to this document which I received Monday, are the updates on the occupational outlooks. We had it through 2006, and now they've gone through 2008. So we feel that we would like too, if this is approved today, just add those changes to that, and we have dropped the wage indicators as recommended by the board last time. So we're really here to answer any particular questions that you may have today on what has been done.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Could you just address that question, either you or Karen, that I think that the only major point that I saw, and there were some other points, I think some of them we could address, but this issue of is the automotive, seems to be too high a competency for kids.

MR. KANE: I'll let Karen address that, but, no, we don't know think it is because the testing is not required at this point, the ASE testing.

MS. WARD: The Automotive Service Excellence breaks automotive training into eight areas. The certificate of proficiency the competency description sent out would address four of those eight areas, the suspension, steering, brakes, electrical, electronics and engine performance, which basically is everything that makes a car run. The other four areas delve into things like air conditioning, other systems within cars, high-performance areas of automobiles. The question centered around whether or not some of skills on the higher end of the four areas that are included should be removed and saved for a later date, that was a comment issued by two or three individual teachers. The committee's feeling was that, no, that wasn't an area that was too difficult for students to master, and on the contrary to that we found it interesting that they wanted to eliminate some but then add some from the other four areas of Automotive Service Excellence. So it was more of creating a balance, I think, of what are the most important elements in automotive education.

There was a minimal amount of comment that in fact we should be testing all eight areas, which would be in the feeling of the committee far too aggressive for the time frame available in automotive education certainly to cover that material well but also to be able to have them be technicians that are educated in all the areas. There was some concern about the Automotive Service Excellence testing being required for the certificate of proficiency, and that was not part of the proposal. But because it reflects the Automotive Service Excellence areas, there was that concern. Some students at the high school level certainly can take Automotive Service Excellence tests and pass them and receive their certification in that area. The style of the testing, the readability of the testing is on a very high level because it is an industry test. So the comment from the Department, as you saw, was that, no, the Automotive Service Excellence tests are not going to be the assessment for the certificate, which I think was an answer that they were looking for, certainly, but it will test the same standards. So we think we've hit it pretty clearly with automotive. It is a very aggressive competency list, certainly, but one that for the most part people seem to feel is pretty realistic for a trained technician in automotive.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I would assume that that position is agreed to by our partners in the industry themselves. They recognize that this is a reasonable certificate of occupational proficiency for kids to get to that level. As you suggest, some kids could go all the way. But as a requirement for certificate to show proficiency, our industry friends would say, yes, this is a level that we would consider proficient.

MS. WARD: Right. In fact, they were the ones that -- obviously the first draft that we brought to you was what came out of their committee. But also when we made these comments, when we put them together, we sent it back to them to make sure that, yes, this is what we want to say, this is the direction that we're going to go in, and so they've given us the approval, and that's what you see before you today.

MR. THOMAS: First of all I wanted to compliment you and the committee for the work presented. I think it's comprehensive and hit all of the issues that were raised in a fair and equitable way. I was interested in a little more of a clarification on the general benchmarking of awarding the certificate of occupational proficiency. There was an issue around whether the benchmarks are age appropriate or age of the learner compared with I guess what the older learner, I guess level of competency, and I think in the assessment the steering committee acknowledged it, but it indicated that the Department develop some cut scores that would address that particular issue, but I wasn't really clear on that response.

MS. WARD: Again, that's something that will be worked out as we go forward into the development of assessments, and for each assessment in itself the cut scores will be different based on the amount of material that students are going to be required to be proficient in. For culinary, it may be a little bit different. For automotive, it will be a little bit different. But also, you'll be adding to this, into the portfolio, a component of the assessment and the validation piece of the assessment for a total package. So we'll be back before you certainly with proposals surrounding that, and I'm sure we'll have a lot more comment from the public in terms of how the assessment will be developed in terms of what the cut scores will be. It's a little bit difficult to say that a pass score will be X. I think it's going to be more on the attainment of competency, the number of competencies attained by the student demonstrating competency. So I think it would be easier to look at in terms of the number of competencies that you're able to master.

MR. THOMAS: So it's still a work in progress?

MS. WARD: Absolutely. You bet.

MR. KANE: That's right. And the pilot testing will help us determine that also.

DR. SCHAEFER: I have a question. At what point in the automotive field do people who are in that field take those tests that you were talking about?

MS. WARD: Again, some of our high school students take and pass Automotive Service Excellence exams. In a technician setting if you're in a dealership, they'll take them, maybe one year in take some of them. Some of them are master technicians, can be as many as eight or ten years in. Depending on the motivation certainly of the candidate, the dealership support. In many cases we do have students that take and pass two, maybe even three of the Automotive Service Excellence exams at or shortly after high school.

DR. SCHAEFER: We have a motion before us that we adopt the proposed standards for the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency being four occupational clusters: automotive science service technology, cosmetology, culinary arts and horticulture.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. Chapter 69, sections 1B and 1D, and having solicited and reviewed public comment, hereby adopt the proposed standards for the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in four occupational clusters: automotive service technology, cosmetology, culinary arts and horticulture, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The motion was made by Ms. Kelman and seconded by Mr. Thomas. The vote was unanimous.

IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR UNDER-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Next we have the Fall River Superintendent of Schools, Bob Neeley and the principal of the Kuss School, Darline Devaney here. Welcome Bob and Darline, and we thank you. Darline has certainly faced a number of challenges educationally and personally since she's been principal of the school, so we thank you for your special efforts, and I thought it was important to at least get this report before the board, and there are some questions that board members have. I have some myself. But I thought it was important to get it before the board and get the process going so that eventually we can bring it back to the board and get it approved. So I don't know if you want to make any introductory remarks, Bob, or Darline?

MR. NEELY: If I can just briefly, and then I'm going to turn it over to Darline for maybe a brief review of the plan. My name is Bob Neely. I became Superintendent of Schools about nine months ago in Fall River, and one of the first things that we had to do was of course address the issue of this Kuss School Improvement Plan and the under-performing nature of the school and that sort of thing. I then got a team of people together, teachers. We looked at a number of candidates to get a new principal because there had been a series of principals over a number of years, and I guess that was a first for Fall River having teachers involved in the selection of a principal. They did a great job, and we chose a great candidate in Darline Devaney, who began her work in October. She walked into the school about 45 minutes before the second visiting team came to look at the Kuss Middle School. So she didn't even know where the bathroom was before the Kuss visiting team began asking her questions about the school.

She and her staff worked very hard on this plan. I think it's a good plan. We're open for constructive suggestions so long as they're friendly. And with that, I'm just going to turn it over to Darline. We also have here, by the way, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Bill Malloy, who was appointed about three months ago, and has been at the high school for 30 years, and we have the two curriculum directors for math and English language arts. Kathy Driscoll and Eileen Mack are here. They were appointed about two years ago. So we're all kind of new to this district. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Darline.

MS. DEVANEY: Good morning. I'm also glad for the opportunity to come and speak with you this morning, and I'd like to also keep my remarks brief and give you a chance to ask any questions you might have. But just a little background. As Bob said, I was just selected to start work the beginning of October, and I moved to Massachusetts, so I've had a really interesting learning curve this year, learning all the issues and MCAS and all those things, as well as, of course, about a thousand people in Fall River, the local community and so on. So as well as the personal challenges in my life this year, it's been a very interesting -- I've been a very good model of a learner, that's for sure.

For me, as I faced that first morning when the visiting team arrived, we all learned together what was happening. And since then, of course, it's been really a lot of learning for me, and that -- well, the first thing I think I needed to do was establish consistency. As Bob mentioned, there had been a lot of change in leadership, so the organism that is Kuss Middle School was really in disarray, so to speak, because of the fact that they've had such a lack of consistency of leadership and so on, which was nothing deliberate. It just happened. That's the way things have happened. So I've really worked on establishing the fact that I'm there to stay and getting to know people and getting to know the issues to move towards really the important reason that we're all there which is the learning of the students. So we've done a lot of that this year.

We've done a lot of reflecting. We've done lots of focus groups and so on, and all that stuff is in the plan, but I just wanted to kind of, to lay that out for you, and we are looking at focusing more specifically into math and English language arts, both the literacy piece and the writing piece, because as you can see from our data, that's where our kids have the most glaring needs, and so we have put together a plan to address those issues.

You may have questions. In my learning, I understand this is a new process for all of you sitting up there also, and so we're all learning together here too. I know that you don't want to read a tome of 300 pages, that's too onerous for you. That we have -- we don't use that much data collected and stuff written down, but I was trying to distill it down. So there may be things that I didn't put in there that you might want to know about, so honestly, please, feel free to ask us any questions, and we'll do our best to answer them for you.

MS. KELMAN: I was just wondering -- congratulations first of all on your percentages. I was looking at the Terra Nova data. How much better they've gotten over the past year. I was just wondering if you have any idea what accounted for the change?

MS. DEVANEY: Well, the fact that Kuss was named under-performing was not an issue that was news to Fall River. As I understand it, people had been working to improve things anyway, and they made a number of curriculum decisions, introducing new series and so on, and that we have -- I think about two years ago curriculum directors were appointed in Fall River, is that right, Bob?

MR. NEELY: Yes.

MS. DEVANEY: About two years ago. And you can certainly ask them more directly too. They're more than happy to answer your questions. But I think that they had begun work on addressing the issues of needs in the MCAS and so on, and so I think that may be attributable to that.

MS. KELMAN: Congratulations.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just want to get just a broad context from my perspective, and you're quite right, Darline, about this process. When the first school came forward, I think board members and I and Julianne were struggling with just how does this process become helpful and at what level of detail, et cetera, and I think as a result of the first couple of schools that we talked to and examined we got the sense that -- it's kind of a broad outline of identifying what the issues are, not the excuse issues, kids come from bad homes or, you know, you have more suspensions than

any middle school, but what are the actual data, what's the data, where is the weakness in mathematics, where is the weakness in English language arts, et cetera, and then what are the action steps that are going to be taken, and then how do you measure to make sure that you're making progress. And my only comment would be that this kind of nibbles around the edges, and I think there is some more detail that you did not include, and maybe we could work to include where the detail might be helpful and so forth.

For example, adopting Turning Points or using Connected Math or whatever is all fine, but to me it just sets the -- it's just the materials that you're going to use broadly. The question is, how are you going to take it and make a difference, what kind of intervention? One of the areas identified was the fact that the teachers don't seem to have common planning time, and I would suggest to you there's a common planning problem in all schools. There's a scheduling problem. There's a resource problem. So the question is, not that you don't have it, we understand that, what are we going to do about it? Are people willing to meet before school? Is it the coordinators that come in?

So I guess what I would recommend, because this is a work in progress, and I know the tremendous personal effort that you made in meeting this deadline. But I think as we go forward, I'd like to see more details all around, not just what you're using but how are you taking the Connective Math and how are you adjusting it so as to emphasize geometry, if that happened to be a weakness? And I would only comment on the Terra Nova results as to whether or not that's symptomatic of something that's going to continue or is it a one-shot deal, so we need to look at that. But that would be just my broad sense was that we need to dig in a little deeper and get it down to what do they do, as Bob said, to incorporate -- when they come into school Monday morning, we know there are these issues, we know people are working hard, we know there's a lot of sincerity and communication going on, but what are the specific steps to make this plan come alive?

DR. SCHAEFER: I was going to ask about the professional development piece of it, and I noticed in what your priorities were that there wasn't an area for teacher content institute kind of things, teachers engaging in learning more content. Did you not feel that that was necessary at this point, that that was not one of the priorities?

MS. DEVANEY: I believe it is in there. I could check for you again. I have so much data, and I know that you probably read it with all the other materials. But, definitely, of course, absolutely. For instance, we go back to CMP, which the Commissioner mentioned, that's just being phased in right now, and so there are content workshops that happen on a regular basis around that, the new units. The teachers are all in service in the new units in the content and how to teach it and so on in a cycle that's very well outlined, and I could certainly have the math teachers help you some more if that's, more information that you need, absolutely.

As I see it, and the group agrees with me, we need professional development in basically two areas. One is the content for some teachers, and also in the issues of what we call climate and so on, that how do we get students to -- you know, let's talk about the geometry. We want them to know all these things about geometry, but how do we structure a classroom, how do we structure a learning environment so that kids are engaged and they too want to learn these things, so there's that piece of it as well that needs to happen.

DR. SCHAEFER: You mentioned that you're just starting the CMP now, that you're just instituting that program now. Was this on the basis of looking at a lot of programs before you chose that one or --

MS. DEVANEY: I believe so, but I think Eileen Mack could do a better job of answering that.

MS. MACK: That program was actually chosen just before I was hired, and several different programs were looked at. It was a combination of what that program could offer us in terms of flexibility because it's built around individual units so it's very easy to mix and match and cross grade levels if needs are identified, and the professional development that was going to be available to the district as a result of going with that program. And to just go back and comment on the content specific professional development for math, we have two institutes running this summer. One is going to address the Grade 5-6 units, and the second one separately is going to address the grade 7-8 units, and then in addition we have ongoing meetings and discussion groups during the year, and we have a person who comes into the district and actually visits classrooms on a weekly basis.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Those institutes are district-wide, not just the Kuss?

MS. MACK: That's right.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And is it mandatory?

MS. MACK: No, unfortunately.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So it may be that not all of the Kuss teachers are taking the institute?

MS. MACK: That could possibly happen. I will tell you they have all signed up for this summer's institute.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Those are the kinds of details I like to know.

DR. SCHAEFER: Any other comments or questions? Thank you very much for being here, and we look forward to working with you.

MR. NEELY: If I can just say one last thing. I just want to thank Juliane Dow for all of her work. I really feel like it's a cooperative effort between you folks, the staff of the DOE, and ourselves, and I really feel that, and I just want to say thanks to her.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, Bob, I want to thank you as well and Darline. It's not easy, as you well know. I had a number of discussions with the people in Fall River. It's not easy to be under the gun as to whether you're under-performing or not. It's not a fun process. But I think you've reacted to it in the right way, that we have issues. We know you have tremendous challenges. We recognize that. But working together we just got to overcome these issues, so I thank you as well. And thank you, Darline.

MS. DEVANEY: I appreciate all your support.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SCHOOL FINANCE REGULATIONS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This is the issue of the proposed amendments to our school finance regulations, particularly around the issue of the audits, and we have given you a motion, and essentially what we're looking for is for school districts to comply with our compliance supplement which we've established for school districts, so that we are requiring locals to kick it up a notch, if you will, in terms of what they're auditing at the local level for, but not only data but for assurance of good finance in each district. So I don't know if you want to add anything --

MR. SULLIVAN: Just to give you a brief history of how this whole thing came about, we had talked to some auditors who had been doing what they call A1-33 audits, which is a district-wide audit that's usually done annually if a district has a certain amount of federal funds, and what we found was that there wasn't much being looked at in terms of the local school expenditures. All they were looking at were basically federal programs, and we were somewhat concerned by that given the fact that usually 50 percent of the district's expenses are usually school related.

So as a result we crafted this compliance supplement about a year and a half ago. We met with the Massachusetts Society of CPAs and worked with them to help craft it, and we test piloted it in about 15 districts back last year, and this year we implemented it full force requiring all districts have this audit done. We planned it to be a supplement to what their annual audit would be so it would reduce any duplicative efforts. We haven't heard much in terms of -- you do hear the normal issues of things like administrative costs and what have you we did receive.

As it says in the memo, it talks about the different cost factors. I know the Chairman was very concerned about what this would cost. We've heard ranges from under $2,000 to as high as $9800 for the cost of this audit which was in a rather large school district, but the norm has been around the $3,000 to $6,000 range. And basically to articulate, we've given specific procedures for the auditors to perform as well as make comments on the financial management of the school district.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Rhoda, let me just ask you, do we need to amend the motion in order to allow this labor for districts or is it inherent in it?

MS. SCHNEIDER: It's inherent in it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So you have before you, Madam Chairman, the motion that we would like the board to vote.

MR. THOMAS: Before you vote it, I just have a couple of questions. Actually, the Commissioner addressed the issue of cost implications for the district to engage in this particular process. Let me make sure I understand, though, we're asking the districts to go into a A1-33 audit mode?

MR. SULLIVAN: The districts are required by federal law to have an A1-33 audit. What we hope to do is to have this audit done in adjunct to that, that's why we call it a required supplement. It's to be done somewhat piggybacked on to their A1 required audit for the federal government.

MR. THOMAS: As I understand an A1-33 circular audit the scope of the entire organization is looked at --

MR. SULLIVAN: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: -- but you indicated that the districts were looking more at the federal expenditures more so than their local --

MR. SULLIVAN: From all of our interviews with all the audit professionals, most of what was being looked at all at the school level was federal grant expenditures, but what was not really being looked at was any internal control system that may be in effect at the school department. Given the fact that a lot of cases the official records of the town or the city are really the city auditor or the town accountant's records, if you will, so they would focus on the control that would be in place at the town accountant's office or the city auditor's office, and they wouldn't filter down to check those controls at the school department level, and I think what this does is basically has them look just a little bit beneath that, kind of peel off the onion a little bit and look a little bit underneath that.

MR. THOMAS: And we're doing this because of fiduciary responsibilities that we have or because we've had some bad experiences that make us more cautious about --

MR. SULLIVAN: We've had some issues. The auditors that audit the Commonwealth basically talk to us about the fact that we get these reports in, and we use these reports for a number of different reasons. The end-of-the-year report is the report I'm referring to, that basically talks about all expenditures from the school district level. We use that to determine whether they have maintained effort, and to do it in terms of compliance with a number of federal programs as well as compliance with state programs. The auditors criticized us in terms of relying on the data sent in by the districts because the data hadn't been audited, and as a result that that was one of the facets of why we wanted to have the compliance supplement done.

MR. THOMAS: Madam Chairperson, I have another question. It goes to Counsel. Does this waiver limit itself just to school districts that have one elementary school? Does the Commissioner or the Board have the authority to provide waivers in other similar situations but not necessarily at a one district elementary school.

MS. SCHNEIDER: Mr. Thomas, we drafted the waiver provision to be specific to those very tiny districts that have only one elementary school, because those are the ones where the argument about mitigating costs is most pressing. The Board always has inherent authority to waive its regulations, because you create them you can waive them, unlike waiving a statute where the legislature has to give you that authority. We could draft this waiver provision more generally. It was Jay Sullivan's recommendation and the Commissioner's decision that we ought to keep it narrow lest everyone start knocking on the door and saying, well, we'd like a waiver too, but that's the Board's prerogative and the Commissioner's recommendation.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I actually have no interest in expanding the waiver. I think that it's high time that we require this kind of -- it's a small amount of money. You know, when you consider we've given $7,000,000,000 in money, et cetera, and we're being asked constantly how much money are districts spending on professional development as a requirement. All of this data that we collect at the end of the year we have to -- so to answer your question, Henry, certainly in the case of where it's a small district, we understand that, and I agree with that waiver, but otherwise I personally don't want to waive this at all. If someone had an extraordinary reason and

they brought it to me, I might bring it to the Board, but I think this is one that the cries of the local districts fall on deaf ears. I just cannot bring myself to have a district worrying about spending $6,000 when it's for auditing purposes. We're being told by the state auditor we ought to be more careful in this area, so I think it's our responsibility to see to it. It's no a financial burden really on most districts or any district.

DR. SCHAEFER: To add to that, there have been instances of some problems in various districts around the state.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I don't want to confuse it with the largest problem we had which was a business official that stole millions of dollars, that issue really was addressed with our support and others through a statute. That person was his own check, so that was a structural problem within the school district in which they had one person watching over himself, and so we've now seen to it through statute that that can't happen again. Our issues really aren't major in terms of financial irregularities as much as it is I think poor data and not the assurances that things are being looked at.

MR. SULLIVAN: If I can just amplify it. One of the things that the auditors look for is kind of what we need to do, is to put in the kind of controls that would stop that kind of thing from occurring in the future, and this is just another way at the state level of putting in those controls.

MR. CROWLEY: Jay, I have one question. This says that the supplement outlines specific procedures and tests. Are they required to do those tests? Because in my opinion -- Dave, I agree wholeheartedly that we absolutely should have this type of increased accountability. Also, in my experience in audits, $4000 - $6,000 is not a lot of money in the context of an audit. So are these guidelines that we are outlining or are they specific tests we're requiring them to do?

MR. SULLIVAN: The compliance supplement is specific tests that we're asking for a specific opinion whether it complies with our rules and regulations.

MR. CROWLEY: Good.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. Chapter 69, § 1B and chapter 70, §§ 2,3 and 11, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. Chapter 30A, §3, hereby adopt the proposed amendment to the Regulations on School Finance and Accountability, 603 CMR 10.10 (1), as presented by the Commissioner.**

The motion was made by Ms. Kelman and seconded by Mr. Thomas. The vote was unanimous.

DRAFT STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Members of Board, you have before you the proposed program standards for three and four-year old children. These will be going out for public comment, and in fact we're not in a rush-- I shouldn't say we're not in any rush, but this is going to come back in July, this is coming back in the fall. I suspect, Barbara, probably even November, and I do know that the Chair did ask me, which I'll ask you to address sometime later, to make sure that these

standards are not in conflict with the work of the Commission for School Readiness, which is going to make a report sometime in November. I would simply say, we're in a rush, but not such a rush that we couldn't let it go till December or something like that. We're anxious to get these in place. We think it's very important. I'll turn it over to Barbara to introduce our guests.

MS. GARDNER: Thank you, Commissioner. I'd like to introduce our team here. Elisabeth Schaefer, who is the Administrator of Early Learning Services, will be here to answer any questions that you might have. Mary Mindess is a professor at Lesley College and someone who has been involved in early care and education for a long time, training literally hundreds of kindergarten teachers in her career. And Sandra Putnam-Franklin, a member of the Department of Education staff, who will not say anything but is here largely just to be recognized for her good work on this document.

We're very pleased to be here on behalf of the Early Childhood Advisory Council two-year board to present these draft Early Childhood Standards for Center-Based Programs for Three- and Four-Year Olds. They apply to programs that receive community partnership funding. Our goal is to implement higher and more uniform standards that support educational outcomes as well as social and emotional development. More consistent curriculum standards based on developmentally appropriate practices and recent brain development research will better prepare our young children for entry into kindergarten and improve their transition from preschool to kindergarten.

I want to give you a brief history. Your board did adopt early childhood standards in 1988, and then in 1996 the legislature directed you to review and make recommendations for new early childhood program standards utilizing a multiagency approach and drawing upon the diverse perspectives of the early care and education community. As a result, there was a standard subcommittee that met for over two years to craft a common set of standards after extensive review of all the existing standards and licensing procedures. Another subcommittee was formed, the curriculum work group, that developed the curriculum standards two years after that which brings us up to the year 2001.

The process has been completed, and you have before you a document that contains health and safety standards that are identical to those that are used by the Office of Child Care Services, but in addition retain curriculum and teacher qualification standards. The teacher qualification piece is a departure from present practice because it requires teachers in these settings to have an Associate's Degree within 7 years and a Bachelor's Degree within 14 years of the adoption of the standard. Teachers who are presently employed would be grandfathered. And many other states are moving in this direction, and we believe it's imperative to have strong staff qualifications knowing that there's a big correlation between staff qualifications and the quality of a child's program experience. However, the provision of requiring degrees will engender debate among practitioners in the field, and I wanted you to be aware of that possibility.

Guidelines are also attached to the standards. They're called Guidelines for Preschool Curriculum Experiences, and they're designed primarily to provide a broad balanced foundation for learning in all of our content areas. They'll provide a valuable tool for staff development and reflection and for communication with families. They help to translate our existing frameworks into a user friendly, age appropriate format. They have been extremely well received out in the field and have helped to focus on improvement and learning, and I think can also assist to ease transition into public school and foster school readiness.

As the Commissioner said earlier, our plan is to elicit comments from our sister state agencies, from interested parties in the early childhood community, from public schools and from the public at large over the summer and early fall, and then come back before the board in October or November of this year, or in December, whenever. We're anxious. We feel there's a great demand out there on the part of the people who are teaching in these programs for these standards, and so we're very anxious to move in this direction. I'd now like to turn it over to Mary who's going to talk very briefly about the educational value of adopting these standards.

MS. MINDESS: Commissioner Driscoll and Members of the Board, it's my distinct pleasure to be a part of the presenting team. It's very exciting to me to see the standards, the physical standards, the standards for health and safety, the standards for child ratios in classrooms, to see those combined through the curriculum, because what we need in programs for three- and four-year olds is really care and education.

I'd like to tell you a story. I had a telephone call recently from a distraught mother who told me that her four-year old son had been expelled from the preschool that he was attending. This is a four-year old child. He was expelled from the school because he was showing aggressive tendencies, because he was disturbing the rest of the class. We talked a little bit about what the situation was like and how these people really didn't like having this child in the classroom. And I would submit to you that if I described the situation, you would recognize, that while ostensibly this was a very high quality program, it had the materials, it had the ratios, it had the health standards, the curriculum in this program was really very flat. And for a youngster that was just bursting with energy and bursting with the desire to know, this program left him totally unchallenged, and expelled from school at age four. So, Commissioner, while I appreciate the need to keep things in step here with the Readiness Commission and the need to wait, there really is a urgency to try to get these standards and these curriculum guidelines together out into the field as soon as possible, because teachers, families, communities really need to have the standards.

I think that the document that we have here is really more than a document. It really represents a challenge, and I would like to share with you three aspects of that challenge. The first has to do with the school reform movement. I don't think that it's really a discussible item to talk about when school reform really needs to begin. I submit to you that school reform needs to begin with children at the youngest levels. As you mentioned just a few minutes ago, we know a lot now about development. We know about brain development. We know that during the earlier years neuropathways have to be set into the brain in order for children later on to make connections, and these early years are very important years for later learning, so I urge you to think about it.

You really should reassess school reform efforts to look at these early years and try to be sure that programs are available for children that will enable them to go forward. We know that children who go to school who live in impoverished living environments, language environments that are very meager have much lower vocabularies than children who are in rich environments. We know that reading scores depend a lot on the kinds of preschool experiences that children really have, so that's one aspect.

The second aspect of this challenge has to do with figuring out how to make really meaningful change, and I submit to you that the way that the document is put together really stimulates discussion and thought, and the quicker that we can get it out the quicker people will have a

scaffolding for really creative kinds of discussions. It is amazing to me as I look back over the document to see how powerful it really is in, one, giving you a scaffolding, and, two, stimulating you to read and go further. So that's the second aspect of this challenge.

The third aspect of the challenge is a very important one. This document could serve to help the people in early childhood and in communities in general to have a common language. I was sitting yesterday in a grant writing meeting, and you probably know that grants now want whole communities to cooperate, so the school and the library and -- well, whoever else you can get to cooperate should be part of the team. And one of the people who was doing the writing just said very exacerbatedly, "But I don't know if I can work with that librarian. She and I don't even talk the same language. We don't have the same conceptual framework of what we're trying to accomplish." It is very important to try to establish a base so that when we talk together and when we talk to the communities at large we are talking on the same plane and we know what we're talking about, and I believe that this document can go a long way to doing that.

So in conclusion, I urge you to accept this three-pronged challenge to address the school reform issue at its roots where it can have its greatest impact, to provide the technical assistance and the support that this document enables you to provide, and to encourage a clarity of dialogue so that everyone who talks about quality care in education shares the same image of what this quality really means. I hope you find this document and its accompanying challenge to be very compelling. I respectfully urge your support. Thank you.

MS. GARDNER: Thank you, Mary. Commissioner, do you want me to answer that earlier question about --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: No, I think I just wanted to make sure that I got it on the record. I want to make sure Mary knows I'm not looking to drag my feet. I think this board has established a strong record of establishing standards, and interestingly enough establishing standards at a time when some would say, well, what are you raising standards for, we're having trouble getting people, and that was true in the adult education area, that was even true of the teacher test. There's probably no more important area, I would say, than early childhood education for two reasons. You pointed out that reform has to begin at the very earliest stages, and in fact we have a deficit if we don't get the kids very early. We pay that price forever. So that's one issue.

Secondly, I don't think there's an area of importance in which the problem is so clearly defined. We cannot get quality caregivers, and we're not paying them, that's why we can't get them, and so we run that same risk of people saying, here you are -- we can't even get people, and here you are talking about Associates Degrees and so forth. But the same thing occurred in the teacher test and in adult basic education, and attention gets drawn, and the kind of dialogue you talked about occurs, which in my judgment raises the level of both expectations and quality, and I hope will in this case be the catalyst for seeing proper monies being put into this area.

It's disgraceful what we pay caregivers for our youngest children in both the private sector and the public sector. So I will agree with that, and I'm not dragging my feet by any means. I want to be respectful of the commission that is working and is trying to do just what you suggested which is bring large constituencies together. They happen to be producing a report this fall, so I just don't want to conflict with that, but I think I would urge the board too to vote it, and we'll get it out as of

tomorrow, Elisabeth. Once the board votes it, we'll get it out, and the kind of dialogue that you're talking about will occur.

DR. SCHAEFER: I would like to start off by asking a few questions. First of all, I thought it was an extremely comprehensive document, and obviously a lot of time and effort went into this, and I really do appreciate that. What I'm confused about is the intention. It starts off by saying standards and guidelines, but we also have regulations in here, and we're setting certain requirements, like for the teachers, and I don't understand -- it seems to be a number of different things. And, what is the status of that, putting that all into one document, then is all of this going to end up as regulations, everything that is in here?

MS. SCHAEFER: I think that's exactly one of the challenges of early childhood, there are regulations under the Office of Child Care Services for licensing. What we did is we incorporated these bills into these standards because they do not apply to public schools, but the schools by our legislation have to meet or exceed them. So in this document they will be standards, but we made them the same as the regulations so that programs who are meeting these -- the child-care programs or Head Start don't have to meet two separate sets. When the committee met, we really looked at all the different standards and regulations and tried to come up with something that people could use across sectors so that they would have a common language.

DR. SCHAEFER: Okay. But in terms of the requirements for teachers, somebody has to have an Associate's Degree, that's not in the other regulations.

MS. GARDNER: That's new.

DR. SCHAEFER: This is new here, and you don't know whether the Office of Child Care Services will accept those standards?

MS. SCHAEFER: They would be keeping, for the time being at least, their own regulations for licensing. What these standards would then entail is if the program is getting funded by community partnership, the teachers would need to meet these standards. It wouldn't be a licensing regulation. It would be conditional state funding for an educational program under education reform.

DR. SCHAEFER: Okay. But obviously there's a whole process that you have to go through at this point, meeting with them and getting all this work done?

MS. SCHAEFER: They were involved in this. We do look at this across agencies.

DR. SCHAEFER: Okay. The main thing that troubles me about this whole area is that we have over the last number of years spent a great deal of money, and I for one have been asking for at least three or four years for an evaluation of what works and what doesn't work. We're funding a lot of different kinds of programs, and the legislature has consistently refused to give us sufficient money for research and evaluation, and so in that respect I must feel as though this is the cart before the horse. If you have the evaluations, if you feel that you have done the research, that you know really what is working for three and four years, that you've been able to track it and so on, I would appreciate seeing it, because I'm really frustrated by this, that we've been asking for that and we have not gotten it.

MS. SCHAEFER: There are some excellent national evaluations that have recently come out. We can get you copies of those. In terms of the state, what we've done this last year, and we're going to continue the next three years, is just look at the actual program in the Commonwealth. This past year we looked at a hundred center-based preschool child-care programs and are going to come out with a report on that to say what is the quality of those programs, because we have some of your same concerns. We don't have the funding to do the longitudinal studies to say what's happening with the children, but we can relate to what the national studies show. So we're looking at child-care centers this year, next year it will be public school preschool programs that are funded, and the following year we're going to look at infant/toddler programs.

DR. SCHAEFER: And are these, what you've written, tied to those new studies?

MS. SCHAEFER: Yes. The teacher qualification comes up very strongly in the national research as being very much the number one indicator of program outcome, as well as curriculum is important.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let me agree with Chairman Schaefer. I agree with you that it's somewhat the cart before the horse in a sense, except we've been directed to do it, and I think it's a good thing to do. I don't why in education, but if we wait for good research -- and then sometimes there's good research, people don't read it, and then people don't implement it, which is also interesting, but it's an odd field in that regard. So I agree with you, except that we're responsible to go forward, we were asked to, and I think it's very important that we put these things in place.

DR. SCHAEFER: Could we somehow explain this lack of logic to the legislature?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We can try.

DR. GILL: Barbara, as you know, the Board of Higher Education has teacher education as one of its primary initiatives. We have been doing a great deal of work with state colleges as well as with matriculation programs within the community colleges. I know that you have talked with Peggy Wood about the ways in which we might be able to help. I would like to state that we would be very interested in working more collaboratively with you on this program. It appears to be exactly the kind of thing that has us moving in the same direction in terms of the work that we are doing with the community colleges, and then talking about the community college programs articulating with the four-year institutions, so I hope we can work on this program together.

MS. GARDNER: We very much appreciate that offer. While we've been able through a program called Advancing the Field to begin to move some of the teachers in that direction towards Associates and Bachelors, this would obviously enhance that quite a bit, and we would need your advice and your help, so I thank you for the offer.

MR. THOMAS: A couple of points. First of all, I really can't embellish upon the importance that the Commissioner articulated about the need to get children prepared academically at as early an age as possible. I have maybe about three questions, not long ones. And secondly, let me just say that I do like the integrated approach that you took because it is a holistic kind of approach that we're talking about, and in the context of that particular comment, I didn't really see this, and I didn't review with a fine tooth comb, but I'm curious as to the document acknowledging or does it

acknowledge parents as first teachers with their children and ways to really accentuate that particular philosophical, not philosophical, but that particular theoretical base?

MS. SCHAEFER: There is a section on parent involvement. It does encourage having activities with parents, involving them in curriculum planning, involving them also in conferencing, in regular portfolio assistance, in talking with parents about the children's' progress, as well as parent education and family literacy.

MR. THOMAS: Parent education and family literacy kind of reaches that particular point -- and also education and awareness as to the fact that they are a powerful tool in the educational process with their children.

MS. SCHAEFER: I don't know if that's articulated as clearly as it could be. We can certainly look at that.

MR. THOMAS: You might want to take a look at that. The other point that concerns me, and I'm not sure where I fall out on it yet, but the potential impact on the early childhood industry by requiring academic accomplishments by way of degrees, even though you give a seemingly fair amount of time for folks to get there. Have you studied what the potential impact on the early childhood industry would be?

MS. GARDNER: I just want to remind you that it does only apply to three- and four-year olds in center-based programs, but does not apply, for instance, to family child-care. It does not apply to infant and toddler care, these academic requirements, but we feel that we have tried to make the number of years in which the requirement is necessary long enough so that we can seat the necessary supports for the industry to move in that direction.

MR. THOMAS: Well, notwithstanding the narrowing of the scope, even that particular segment I would imagine there would be a serious impact, economic impact, and also resource pool available for early childhood education.

MS. GARDNER: There's a provision, a statement on the page that talks about the staff qualifications that we would not be able to move forward unless those necessary supports were in place.

MS. SCHAEFER: And we have been really thinking very carefully about how this will impact the field and the people that are out there. One of the wonderful things about early childhood programs is that they offer for the communities they're in, and there's a lot of data showing that if you professionalize you lose people who are in those positions. That's one reason we created the Advancing in the Field program. It's in its third year. It's encouraging teachers in child-care to get Associate's and Head Start Bachelor's Degrees. We've had very good success with that.

MR. THOMAS: Well, as I understand it, there is a labor force challenge right now within the industry, and it would seem like this particular requirement for -- and I'm not coming down pro/con right now, but I'm concerned about the potential.

MS. SCHAEFER: One nice thing about this is as we've talked about the field, teachers have started to take courses in the support of the community partnership program, and that's actually keeping some people in the field because they see it as a place to grow and develop their fields.

MR. THOMAS: Last question. Let's assume that this flies, the academic requirement, the degree requirements fly and guidelines are in place. Can the industry afford paying the upscale salaries that they would have to pay, and buy the new qualifications, and I know one of the issues that's almost paradoxical to that point is that they're probably not being paid enough now, in the status that they currently come to the enterprise, current within the field, but what happens when those requirements are in place, people get their degrees, is there going to be enough money available to pay their salaries?

MS. GARDNER: I think you're raising some very important issues around work force development in the area of early care and education, and we don't have all the answers for you this morning, but what we do know is that we need to professionalize the industry. We need to move in that direction. We need to seek those specific funds perhaps incrementally over time to achieve that goal. We feel that the present system that we have, much of it is largely supported by parents, and it's expensive as it is, so we're going to have to look to state and federal resources to be able to do this as comprehensively as we'd like, but we think that at least the advanced degree is the place to start and to start moving them toward that.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. It will be very interesting to see how this shapes up.

MR. CROWLEY: It's my understanding that determining the compliance with the standards is a self-evaluation process, and then if there are shortcomings there's an action plan that needs to be developed. What's the follow-up on that in terms of monitoring those types of overhead?

MS. SCHAEFER: There are two levels of monitoring, one local council that actually the funding flows through will be looking at those requirements and doing the monitoring as needed. The Department of Education also has staff that goes out and monitors the program. So those would be the two levels.

MS. GARDNER: I would just add that in addition there are state licensers that look at the health and safety regulations and that there's an accreditation procedure for those centers that choose to move for accreditation.

DR. SCHAEFER: I would just like to make another comment about the frameworks. That obviously you need to change them, given our propensity to change frameworks. And I guess finally I would like to make sure that people in the field do understand what's actually required, what are suggestions and what are the guidelines, and I think that those things really need to be kept separate so that there's no confusion as to who and what has to comply with -- what's the regulatory part versus the guidelines/suggestion kind of thing.

MS. GARDNER: We can certainly try to clarify that more clearly. I also wanted to just respond to the Commissioner's earlier comment about the Commission on School Readiness. I'm serving as his designee, and I feel that the standards by putting them out there for public comment is the perfect time because I think that the comments that come back in will serve to instruct the work of the

Commission. The Commission deadline is in November, I believe the middle of November, and so I think it will, if anything, enhance the work of the Commission.

DR. SCHAEFER: And maybe finally in the document itself there could be some discussion about the kind of programs that you know where there has been success in terms of the student outcome.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you. So we just need a vote to send it out for public comment.

MR. THOMAS: So moved.

MS. KELMAN: Seconded.

DR. SCHAEFER: All those in favor of sending these out for public comment? Opposed? So voted.

MS. KELMAN: Out of curiosity, is there a reason, it just said initial discussion in the Board packet?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We do want to send them out now, right?

MS. GARDNER: Out for public comment, yes.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It did not say a vote, right.

MS. SCHNEIDER: Commissioner, we did not put it down for a vote because we wanted to keep that possibility open. Second, they're not regulations. We are sending them out for public comment in our usual course of business to get as much input as possible. These will not be regulations. As Barbara Gardner said earlier, they will be standards. If you want the grant money, you have to meet these standards.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The best thing is if people don't like them, I can blame the board.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS AND OTHER MATTERS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We have three grant programs. You might remember the board approved new physical restraint regulations and we committed to training in that regard. The T-CAP program, this is our attempt to try and develop some career advancement programs for teachers. And then finally, the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, that allows schools to receive monies if they adopt a certain program. So they're pretty straight forward.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the grants as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Next, Madam Chairman, is a request that we take care of really a routine matter. Annually we approve the request for the small towns that do not operate their own

schools and seek to tuition their students to public schools in other towns. I've listed the communities here for you. So we need a vote just to allow them not to maintain public schools.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **That the following public school district, in accordance with provisions of Chapter 71, sections 1, 4 and 6, be permitted not to maintain certain public schools for the school year 2001-2002 and to tuition their students to other school districts for said year.**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	GRADES
Acusshnet	**9-12**
Berkley	**9-12**
Clarksburg	**9-12**
Devens	**K-12**
Erving	**7-12**
Farmington River Regional (Otis/Sandisfield)	**7-12**
Florida	**9-12**
Gosnold	**K-12**
Granville	**9-12**
Hancock	**K-12**
Lanesboro	**9-12**
Monroe	**K-12**
Mount Washington	**K-12**
Nahant	**7-12**
New Ashford	**K-12**
Richmond	**9-12**
Rowe	**7-12**
Savoy	**6-12**
Shirley	**9-12**
Truro	**7-12**
Tyringham	**K-12**

The motion was made by Ms. Kelman and seconded by Dr. Gill. The vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Finally we have a request for the School Building Assistance program. First of all, under the emergency grants, Greater Lowell had a fire, and we're asking to improve or support the cost associated with that fire that wasn't covered by insurance, and then we have five requests for cost waivers, and I want to update this and remove the town of East Brookfield, Spencer/East Brookfield, so that will not be voted on. I'm asking you not to vote that. I'm removing it from the list. So the list will simply be the Town of Pelham, not to exceed $169,120; the City of Chicopee, not to exceed $4,401,000; the Town of Medway, not to exceed $1,525,359; and the Town of Weston, not to exceed $714,000. Is there anything we want to add on those?

MR. THOMAS: Why are we removing East Brookfield?

MS. LYNCH: It's at their request. They have some difficulties with their site issues. They're exploring some other alternatives. They may very well come back at a future board meeting date.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'd like to ask about this Chicopee one. This is a huge number. How did we get so far off there?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It was asbestos primarily, wasn't it?

MS. LYNCH: Yes. Chicopee has a plan for a new high school, and what they're doing is replacing -- using the same site that their current high school is on. So they're demolishing the existing high school, replacing another high school on the same site. So there are some asbestos issues related to the site.

DR. SCHAEFER: And they didn't know the asbestos was there?

MS. LYNCH: Oh, I'm sure they did, yes.

DR. SCHAEFER: So how can we be so far off from the original estimate?

MS. LYNCH: There is a certain cost factor that we have for high school projects, and because of the unusual levels of asbestos in the school, as well as some site issues, it's exceeded our normal funding.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: In other words, we recognize that people are going to face extraordinary conditions. It's built into the law. A school hits tremendous ledge or whatever. So it's not unusual to have that issue. It's just that we have these guidelines. And in this case because it's asbestos and other things, but particular asbestos, the cost to develop the site is just that much higher than the usual.

DR. SCHAEFER: I see. Okay. Any other questions?

MS. KELMAN: What's the number missing in the Weston? It's $1,000,000?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes, $1,000,000.

MS. LYNCH: It's 1,143,809.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Good for you, Jody.

MS. KELMAN: You know, it's my last action on the board.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with 603 CMR 38.09 and on the recommendation of the Commissioner, hereby approve an emergency grant for the following project:**

Greater Lowell: Emergency grant for repair/construction due to classroom fire, not to exceed $7,577;

that the Board of Education, in accordance with 603 CMR 38.13 and on recommendation of the Commissioner, hereby waives the cost standards of 603 CMR 38.06 for the following projects:

Town of Pelham - Pelham Elementary, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $169,120

City of Chicopee - Chicopee High, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $4,401,000

Town of Medway - Medway High, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $1,525,359

Town of Weston - Country Elementary, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $714,000

The motion was made by Ms. Kelman and seconded by Mr. Crowley. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 a.m.