COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

*****REGULAR MEETING*****
CONCORD-CARLISLE HIGH SCHOOL

500 WALDEN STREET
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Tuesday, May 22, 2001
9:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT: Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-Chairperson, Worcester
Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
Mr. J. Richard Crowley, Andover
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Ms. Jody Kelman, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Concord
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Mr. Henry M. Thomas, III, Springfield
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Secretary to the Board

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning, everyone. I'm glad to be here at Concord-Carlisle High School. Commissioner, why don't I turn it over to you so you can introduce our hosts.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me now turn it over to our hosts. We are delighted to be here obviously to honor Jody, but it's great to be at Concord-Carlisle High School. I can't help but comment, as I mentioned to Eileen and Ed, in my previous life I was involved a little in basketball and was in Concord-Carlisle High School a number of times scouting. One of the great educators in the history of this Commonwealth was Jimmy Hayes, who was a social studies teacher and phenomenal basketball coach, and in fact, the gym is named after him. Unfortunately he died at a very young age. He was a remarkable man and educator. So it brings back that memory to me. Let me turn it over now to our superintendent of schools in Concord-Carlisle, Ed Mavridges, and the principal here at Concord-Carlisle High School, Elaine DeCicco.

MR. MAVRIDGES: Thank you, Dave. It's a privilege for me on behalf of the Concord and Carlisle communities to welcome the Board of Education to your regular monthly meeting. We have a lot to be proud of in Concord-Carlisle, and one of the things is sitting to Jim Peyser's left, and that's Jody Kelman who you are honoring today in a way as she finishes her term on this Board. We got to know Jody quite well, as I'm sure you have, as quite a community activist, highly intelligent, and articulate young woman, whom we will be hearing an awful lot about in the years to come. She served also as our student representative to the school

committee last year and really presented herself in a highly mature, articulate way, and we are extremely proud of her.

Any good school district needs a few elements to be successful. It needs resources. It needs the commitment of its community at large, an active parent group, and an excellent staff, and an interested and interesting student body, and we've been blessed with having all of those elements here. That doesn't mean we are not without issues or difficulty, but we have the elements that other districts wish they had and so do I.

One of the things that makes us really special is leadership. And as you are honoring Jody today, we are also honoring Elaine DiCicco, who is retiring this year after 24 years as principal of this high school. She has got to be one of the longest tenures of a high school principal in the Commonwealth, especially in the current days -- 34 years in the school. The differences that we have here can be attributed to her leadership.

I think I would be remiss if I didn't comment on a couple of things as part of this brief introduction. It's very easy for those people in audience to sit on the other side of the table from where you sit and have suggestions or criticisms and never take the opportunity to try to sit where you are and understand the roles that you play and how the things that approach you and how you balance life and the different competing pressures. School committees at the local region are no different or principals or superintendents. It's easy to be criticized, and sometimes we deserve it and sometimes we perhaps do not. But you are looking as you go around and have your meetings for input on how we can do things better and how we can address the needs of the youth, and I applaud your commitment to being on a Board of Education and trying to find a way to balance those competing interests of urban areas, suburban areas, rural areas.

The bottom line is, we all have one thing in common, and those are the students that enter our doors every single day and at the end of those 13 years, what shall they look like? What kind of people will they become? I think one of things I would ask you to remember in all your deliberations and decisions is that a number doesn't necessarily reflect the value of an individual when they leave us after 13 years. We have spent the better part of this year arguing our budget needs and our shortfalls and overrides that are coming up next month, and I have been frustrated personally by the fact that most people are just interested in dealing with the number, what is the number, and very little time is being dedicated to what's the person or program next to the number, and we can't forget that. We want the highest expectations for our youth; we want them to be the best trained there are; we also want them to be the most care caring, patient, and decent human beings that we can give them the opportunity to be, and I know that you will join me in that endeavor and we will do anything we can to work with you to make sure that happens. So with that, if I would, I would just like Elaine to give her own personal greetings, and we are looking forward to participating in your meeting.

MS. DICICCO: Good morning and welcome to our high school. I join our superintendent in welcoming you. We are honored as a high school to have the Board of Education here with us this morning, particularly since we have one of our students as well to be honored. We work hard here at the high school, as you know, with our students and with our parents to make education as fine as it can be for our young people, and I appreciate and extend our thanks to each of you for the work you are doing at your level to provide the best possible for all the students possible in the Commonwealth. Welcome. I wish you a good meeting this morning, and we look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'm going to depart a little bit from past practice and ask three people to come forward to represent either their daughter or granddaughter as the case may be. Could I ask Jody's mother,

Shelly; Jody's grandmother Shirley; and her grandfather, Howard, who just happens to be a former United States senator from the state of Ohio, Howard Metzenbaum, to come forward. The Chairman has a citation for Jody on behalf of the Board and the Department.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Before reading the citation, Jody, and hopefully it won't be too embarrassing, I do want to say Jody has been a very significant and active member of this Board for the past year, and while it may be fair to say for those of you who have watched that Jody and I haven't always agreed on everything, and we may even see today that we don't agree on everything, you may see some actual evidence of it, Jody has always been a forthright, courageous and thoughtful contributor to the work of this Board. Boards aren't supposed to agree on everything, and having some lively discussions and disagreement is what public service and public boards are all about, and I am convinced that it makes our deliberations and decisions better. So I am grateful for Jody's participation and even for our disagreements because a think it contributes to the public policy process and makes the outcomes better.

Now, let me read this Certificate of Appreciation, starting at the top to make it official. *"From the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education. On behalf of the Commonwealth, this Certificate of Appreciation is presented to Jody Kelman, class of 2001, Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. Elected by your fellow students, you served as the 2000/2001 chairperson of the State Student Advisory Council, representing all students across the Commonwealth as a full voting member of the Massachusetts Board of Education. During your tenure, the Board of Education has addressed many issues important to students, including student testing, teacher quality, and school and district accountability. As the student Board member, you have thoughtfully articulated the ideas and concerns of the students of the Commonwealth and have effectively facilitated discussion about educational policy with your peers. In addition to your work on the Board, you provided strong leadership to the State Student Advisory Council. You served as both the regional and state advisory council member during the past two years. In these roles you worked diligently to inform your fellow students about the policy decisions to be addressed by the Board. You spent many hours after school and on weekends working with students on projects and initiatives for the Student Advisory Council. Most importantly, you engaged hundreds of students in discussion and debate about these policies and represented their views at every Board meeting.*

Jody, on behalf of the Board of Education, we thank you for your leadership and integrity, your commitment to the improvement of the quality of education, your energy and enthusiasm, and your dedication to the students of Massachusetts. We wish you much luck and great success. With thanks and best wishes, James A. Peyser, Chairman, Board of Education and David Driscoll, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Education."

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you very much. Jody, on behalf of the Department and Board, I also have a small gift for you, and I want to echo what Jim Peyser said. First of all, you have represented the students in the Commonwealth very well. You have been very active making sure that you sought their advice and input and then you very diligently often called me before board meetings to find out why I made certain recommendations, and then you promptly voted against me. So for your independence, we are grateful and for your service, we are grateful. On behalf of the Board and Department I do have a gift certificate for you for Barnes and Noble. We expect this to be spent for books, and we are very pleased to present this to you.

Ms. KELMAN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You have a moment if the family would like to add thoughts.

MS. KELMAN: I guess I would just like to say thank you to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for having a system that makes real student engagement and doesn't make it just a titular thing, and to the school system that supported Jody throughout this because it took a lot of teachers and a lot of administrators to understand that being part of the political process of the state didn't always allow her to do her education in the normal time. She missed a lot of school days. So I just want to thank this system for giving the support to our daughter and we love you and congratulate you, Jody.

MR. METZENBAUM: This is a very new experience for Shirley and me and a very exciting experience. We come from Ohio. We don't have any system where a student is permitted to participate in the regulatory body or directorial body that has to do with education in the state, and to make it possible for a student to participate and for a student to be elected in a democratic manner is very exhilarating and provides a special sense of really what school ought to be about; not just totally one sided but some input from the students as well. We feel very privileged that our granddaughter was elected by the student body to participate in an organization such as this. We think it speaks particularly well for the state of Massachusetts for which we have great respect and regard, and we are just very proud to have the privilege to be here with you today, and thanks for the many courtesies that you extended to our granddaughter when she dissented as I understand on many occasions, taking a chip off the old block.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Jody, do you have any closing words on this segment of the agenda?

MS. KELMAN: Thank you.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you all very much, and again, congratulations Jody and congratulations to everyone here in the school and district who have supported her over the past year. With that, let's move on to the regular portion of the agenda which begins with some further comments from me. I wanted to first to note that in today's Boston Globe on the front page of the City Region Section is an article on "New Leadership Academy," which Henry Thomas helped to found, and overall I think it's a pretty good article. It's an excellent school and it's one for which Henry should be duly proud. I would recommend the article to anyone who wants to learn more about it.

I also just want to provide a quick update. There is a new organization which I mentioned at our last meeting called the Educational Management Audit Counsel, which I chair, which will be responsible in the coming year for taking on some of the responsibilities for evaluation of schools and districts and some of the accountability work that is currently being done by the Department of Education and by the Department of Revenue. We had our first meeting. At that meeting we did two basic things. One is we authorized the posting for a job vacancy, which is the executive director's job. So if there is anyone on the Board or anyone in the audience or anyone viewing this who either would like to compete for that job or knows someone who might be a good candidate, by all means encourage them to submit a resume. In addition, we put out two RFRs for essentially consultant work to help us do some integration among the various evaluation protocols that exist as well as to help us sort through some of the organizational questions. So again, if there

are any organizations, any consulting groups or individuals who might be a good fit for either of those contracts, I would encourage them to come forward and submit a proposal.

There has been a series of articles in the New York Times around testing and standardized testing, and the focus has been on errors in scoring of those tests. I wanted to make a couple of comments with respect to our system MCAS in particular around that issue.
The first thing is obviously errors do occur. In any human endeavor there are going to be human mistakes that are going to be made, and our system is not immune to those. I think we have been lucky so far in not having any significant errors. However, again, this is a common and unavoidable part of any endeavor such as this. But there are a few things we do here in Massachusetts which are, if not unique, at least taken together a little different and unusual and superior to what's going on in other parts of the country, and I would like to mention a few of those things.

One is, as you know, we publish the questions to the test each year, and we provide as a result of publishing the questions we are able to provide to each school a detailed item analysis of how every student did on every question, not only whether they got the answer right or wrong but also if they got the wrong answer, which answer they gave. which means our process is an open book. If there are errors, they can be discovered quickly and rectified which is different from a lot of other states where the questions are not published and the answers individual students give are not made public. So that's one difference.

Another one is of course we administer the test in 10th grade for high-stakes purposes which means there is opportunity for retest and also a couple years not only to identify errors that may have occurred in earlier scoring, but also to correct them and take remedial action. In that regard we are also instituting a review or appeals process that students who believe that there were errors in their scoring on any part of the test may appeal that score to a regional panel of educators and have them take another look at the score to make sure it is in fact accurate.

Another element of scoring is the long composition which as you might suspect is one of those areas the where is the highest premium on judgment on the part of the scorer. Each long composition is scored twice. If there are discrepancies between the two scores, there is a third reader who will come in and review the work to make sure that there is some agreement and certainly some accuracy in terms of the application of the rubrics to the individual essay. In addition for 10th grade this year, all of the open response questions will be double scored in this manner so there is a check and balance to make sure an individual scorer is not doing something that is not consistent with the rubrics and not fair to the student.

In short, getting back to the original point, mistakes do happen. But our system is designed to ensure that those mistakes are identified early on and are corrected. I think this is an issue that we ought to discuss further as time go on, but I just wanted to make sure there was at least some comment for those who may have read the New York Times' articles over the last few days.

MS. SCHAEFER: I would just like to add one thing on the long composition that we have engaged teachers in the process of learning how to score them. There are workshops every summer -- Commissioner, am I correct on that?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes.

MS. SCHAEFER: So the compositions are actually scored by teachers in the system, not just people who are working for a testing company, and I think that's a very important piece of engaging faculty in the entire process.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to be brief because I know we have a long agenda. I do want to bring just a few things to the Board's attention. First of all, we had our first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee that was established to look at an appeals process as it relates to the testing program. The Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee is made up of 13 people representing various groups. We had our first meeting with 100 percent attendance. It was a great first meeting. We have another meeting in June and we hope to have recommendations back to this Board in September.

Secondly, we have been doing a pretty aggressive outreach to teachers and department heads and principals across the state on history/social studies framework, and we expect the results of that survey to be ready for the Board at next month's meeting when that topic will be on the agenda. As you may know, we have a multi-year contract with NES for our teacher test, but we are able to negotiate on an annual basis some of the aspects, and I want to compliment Alan Safran who has lead the effort in that regard. They have now agreed to give another test, a fifth test during the year and some other modifications around out-of-state testing.

As you know, I have an advisory board that has been established with some national experts to look at the entire issue of the teacher test as we go forward. We are pleased to talk about an exchange program which we formerly implemented with both Spain and Portugal in getting teachers to come here to Massachusetts. We recently reviewed the new desegregation plans for both Holyoke and Lawrence. In Holyoke's case is was part of a consent degree from the US District Court; and in the case of Lawrence, I'm happy to report, it's because they are opening new schools and we are needing to reassign students. Last week, as we are required by statute by the legislature every other year, we produced our Future Trends report on early childhood education which has a lot of valuable information in it about what's going on at that level, but also sends the alarm that across the system, whether it be private providers, whether it be public providers, whether it be Head Start or our community partnership groups, in all cases attracting staff and keeping staff for our youngest children is a big problem, and the pay for early childhood staff members is just abominably low and something we are going to have to address. As you know, it requires a bachelor's degree and beyond, and their pay is a third of what public school teachers are paid. So it's an issue we are going to have to address if we are serious about quality early childhood education programs.

There is a lot of made of some of the issues around MCAS testing, particularly the emotional issues and some of the actions of a few. I think we need to remember that hundreds of thousands of young people throughout this Commonwealth and thousands and thousands of teachers and administrators and parents, despite their own personal views or whatever were remarkably responsible in supporting children and the students themselves who are extremely responsible, and I think it's a great tribute to the parents, the educators, and the students of this Commonwealth in the way in which people have conducted themselves in the past two weeks, and I want to make sure I state that publicly, Mr. Chairman.

MS. KELMAN: I would like to echo that congratulations. And also, can I make a quick comment on one of the items, Item C, "NES Contract for Educator Certification Test." I think we are taking a step in the right direction by waiving the late and emergency registration fees for applicants, but I would like to us all to remember that we are still in

essence charging people to become teachers. We are charging them to take these tests; we are charging them to be recertified. And in a time when there is such a teacher crisis, I think we should be doing everything possible to have -- I know there are a lot of incentives in place, but we shouldn't be adding a cost to people who are making this commitment to our kids. So if there would be any way to waive some of those fees in total, I think it might be a good idea.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Jody. I should mention, Mr. Chairman, if I may, we just released the latest results, and I think we ought to celebrate some modest good news. We still have a way to go, but certainly with the first year we made international news with a 59 percent failing rate and only a 41 passing rate for all three parts of the test; a little bit of a misnomer. Now we are seeing well over 60 percent are passing all three parts, and passing reading and writing individually it's close to 80 percent, so there's been a tremendous turnaround since 1998, which we are pleased about. That issue that you raised, Jody, about certification fees, recertification fees, and teacher test fees is certainly something that has been brought to our attention.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christopher Martes, Earl Flansburgh, John Miller

MR. MARTES: Thank you, Commissioner, Chairman Peyser and members of the Board of Education. Let me say one thing before I start on school building assistance. I think I can speak for all the superintendents in Massachusetts, Jody, when I say congratulations
and best wishes. We are very proud of you. We know there are a number of people like you that are terrific success stories in public education in Massachusetts, and you certainly
are, so congratulations.

My name is Chris Martes and I am the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Our association represents all public school superintendents in Massachusetts and a large portion of assistant superintendents. Let me introduced other members of our group that worked on this project. To my left is Earl Flansburgh, and Commissioner Driscoll talked about Earl Flansberg as the dean of architects not only in Massachusetts but certainly in New England. John Miller from FH Architects will be also speaking. We also have three other members of the group that worked on this, Omen Benower from DRA, Phil Panelli from SNM, and one of our superintendents, Eileen Williams who is the superintendent of schools in Duxbury, and will be the president of our association in July. Thank you for all of your help.

As we speak to the Board of Education today, we will be referring to a document that was in your packet, and this document is something that both the Boston Society of Architects and MASS collaborated on. I believe it is an outstanding document and the first that speaks to the issue of real cost for building schools in Massachusetts. Let me take a couple minutes to bring to the attention of the Board the highlights of the executive summary. First, the goals of this project were 1) to establish realistic project cost factors for school construction; and 2) to use the data to establish clear and realistic guidelines so the communities would know what they might expect for reimbursement purposes. Through our experience, we have found that communities who expect a set percentage of the total cost have come to see that that total dollar figure is the maximum when establishing budgets. It is for that reason that we feel strongly that the SBA square foot

reimbursable cost limit should accurately reflect the real costs of building. If that does not happen, we have seen these examples of design changes which compromise the life expectancies of schools.

For example, building exteriors using concrete masonry instead of brick; interior partitions changed from masonry to dry wall with metal studs; flat roofs instead of pitched roofs; furniture and equipment budgets compromised for bricks and mortar. As a former school superintendent who spoke about school buildings on the floor of town meetings, the public expects us to be talking about buildings that last 50 years. At this time I would like to introduce John Miller to speak about his experiences and some issue we will need to face in the future.

MR. MILLER: Thank you for inviting us to speak. Earl Flansburgh and I are co-chairs of the Educational Facilitates Committee with the school building Boston Society of Architects, and we have had a long term relationship with school building assistance. We have met with them on a monthly basis discussing issues of common interest, and we would like to continue to do so. I have been designing schools for 40 years, and Earl can tell us how long he has been designing them, and both Earl and I have done schools across the country. And I would like to tell you that the School Building Assistance Program is the best program that I have ever come across. It's very supportive of good schools. It's changed over the years; it's improved. And the Educational Facilities Committee would like to offer its help in a dialogue to help the continuing process of improvement. There have been a lot of changes over the last year which are going to take some time to work out, but I'm sure they will be worked out.

We started working with the MASS on this issue of school cost because we for some time have been concerned about the gap and as Chris has mentioned, the effect of the gap. What we did is we got together and compiled cost data for the last six years. It's not a comprehensive analysis of cost, but I think it's pretty good indication of where costs are, where they have been, and where they are now. We looked at 176 projects and listed them in our report. They came from 13 firms. Probably most of those firms represented the gray test percentage of architects working on school projects. The estimate for current costs, which are projects that will be submitted on June 1 or in the design process were $192 for elementary schools; $198 for middle schools; and $204 for high schools. The study shows the magnitude of the gap, which you all will be addressing later on in your meeting.

I would just like to indicate from the experience of the member on the Educational Facilities Committee, good schools are expensive. The expectations among communities are high. Cities and towns want their schools to be significant buildings. They want excellent environments for learning where the environment will actually enhance learning. They want good building systems and finishes that will last and minimize long-term maintenance. There are a number of current issues that are all going to end up effecting the cost of buildings in the future. Technology is with us and is a significant cost. The new energy code will add significantly to the cost of buildings. It is a great need and desire to have good air quality, and energy conservation on green buildings -- there was a meeting yesterday on green buildings -- ADA issues, acoustical environment is going to be a major issue in the next few years. School security, construction, the construction climate with the Big Dig and lack of adequate contractors to bid on contracts is driving costs up. I would just like to finish by saying there is need for database. We have begun to discuss that, will continue our discussions, but with a good database kept up-to-date the issue of trying to determine how much schools are costing and will cost will be made much easier. Thank you.

MR. MARTES: Let me just take a minute to conclude by saying we very much approve the recommendation that's being put forth today to the Board of Education for your consideration. We think you paid attention to the process and listened closely and are really making some steps to look at real costs of building in Massachusetts. We also hope that the Engineering News Record, the ENR, that I think misleads building costs in Massachusetts is something that won't a primary source of data anymore, but one that is used in factoring in this along with the real cost. Most importantly, I think you have heard that we stand ready to work, to assist, to help, to advise the Board and the Department of Education. We have had already a terrific meeting with Jeff Wulfson, Jay Sullivan, and Christine Lynch and look forward to continuing to do that in the future. Thank you.

Tolle Graham

MS. GRAHAM: Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. The Massachusetts Healthy Schools Network is a statewide coalition of parent, education, labor, environmental, and public health advocates who are working hard to improve environmental health and safety conditions in our public schools. The Healthy Schools Network reviewed the FY 2002 cost factors proposed by the SBA Program and previously submitted written testimony in early April, and I just want to summarize a few of those points. I also want to take a minute to say along the lines of the previous speakers that Healthy Schools Network is very encouraged by the school building assistance and Jeff Wulfson's efforts in the green building symposiums and school building advisory task force, and we think that's a step in the right direction.

The proposed increase of 1.7 percent in the square foot cost per capita construction is entirely inadequate, however. It ignores a number of other factors that have increased the cost of school construction, and I'd just like to address them briefly on four points. One of them was already addressed. Material and labor costs have increased more than 1.7 percent. In a recent Boston Globe article an architect whose firm designs many schools indicated that average construction costs have gone up $16 per square foot in the last year. That was an article in the Globe in March that said "Sticker Shock for Waltham High School."

Two, siting schools is increasingly expensive and requires more resources. The recently revised SBA enabling act requires the Board of Education to take the difficulty of siting schools, especially in urban areas into account in establishing cost factors. Many of the sites that are available have environmental problems and require analysis and remediation before they can be used. The city of Quincy has already spent over a million dollars on evaluating two potentially hazardous cites for their new high school. These increased siting costs have not been factored in to the proposed increases and potentially violate SBA legal requirements.

The new energy code provisions for the Mass. Building Code will be added to the cost of schools, which has already been mentioned. These affect everything from the construction of building envelope to its heating ventilation and cooling system. It also requires extensive commissioning of new buildings which includes balancing systems and making sure the building works according to its design. To put it simply, you do not want the experience as the newly built Whitman Hanson High School where one floor was so hot in the new school a few weeks ago that one teacher passed out.

And my fourth point -- square footage allowance does not take into account the need for improvement in the quality of school construction. The standard for school construction in Massachusetts is low; the reality is, the square footage cost dictates to

cities and towns what their schools should cost despite recent advisories from the SBA to the contrary. Many of the schools built in the last ten years suffer from poor workmanship and poor materials. By setting the increase so low, the SBA is discouraging communities from investing in building practices that may be more expensive the outset but are less expensive over the long run. In addition, the SBA now requires cities and towns to implement SMACNA, indoor air quality guidelines for occupied buildings under construction. By failing to provide adequate increases, the SBA is undermining its own efforts to improve health and safety for schools under construction.

Finally, the Healthy Schools Network recommends an increase of square footage costs in order to meet the SBA's own regulations and to provide for the resources necessary to build durable, healthy schools. Thank you very much.

Joseph O' Sullivan

MR. O' SULLIVAN: Thank you. While they are passing out my written comments, I would be remiss if I didn't take an opportunity to commend Jody for her service. I would like to congratulate Jody, her parents, the teachers in this school system, and members of the Student Advisory Council who demonstrated the incredible good sense to elect her as their representative. Jody, your courage, your passion have made you a role model for adults, and you are the poster child for success in American public schools and I thank you for your service.

With that said, this is mind boggling. I'm supporting something you are doing today. I support the elimination of the Failure scoring category, and of course I support the elimination of MCAS itself. You see, the Board of Education lost my support regarding MCAS on the day I sat Malden when I watched this Board change the scoring levels that were recommended by your own Department of Education and by Advanced Systems. Originally the recommendations were At Risk, Basic Knowledge, Proficient, and Advanced. That was changed to Failed, Deficient, Proficient, and Advanced, obviously to demonstrate failure for political reasons. A month later also for political reasons, Deficient became Need Improvement.

Today because of this, you have two situations which undermine your credibility. First, a passing score of 220, which says a student is competent but of course needs improvement. And second, the fact that Massachusetts' students who score better than 75 percent of the students in the nation on other standardized tests are labeled as needs improvement here. It would make much more sense if you are going to give them a diploma to say they have basic knowledge.

Additionally, 35 percent of Brockton students who failed the 8th grade MCAS last spring in math have tested at or above their grade level on their Iowa's, some as high as the 12h grade, and of course we had two 10th grade students last year with 800s on their SATs in math that got five wrong each on MCAS. I suspect they knew more than the person with the rubrics grading it. It might also help your credibility if you told the students and parents who failed 1998 grade 4 language/arts that many of the reading prompts were 6th or 8th grade reading levels or above that.

On a different topic, we have just come through alternate assessments in Brockton. I suggest that your Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee for appeals address the alternate MCAS assessment for special needs kids. Your regulations required 23 teachers in Brockton to complete alternate assessments for 86 students. The process amounts to another unfunded irrational mandate as our teachers have spend up to 60 additional

hours of work producing narratives and photo documentation demonstrating that children with IQs as low as 30 legitimately can't take a standardized MCAS. Days of teacher directed education were lost as teachers worked literally day and night to complete the tests so their scores for their fragile students would not be recorded and impact their schools as if they were failing. Beyond the tragedy of putting the students and teachers through this, the end product, these portfolios they were producing, really evaluates the teacher and not the student. It's how well the teacher can document that an elementary student participated in the framework; whether it be watching an ice cube melt for physical changes, strands, or demonstrating what between means. That takes several pages of a narrative and photographs of teachers interacting with the student in order to demonstrate that these kids can't take a regular MCAS.

So my suggestion is stop MCAS now. It can't be saved by changing labels four years too late. Two, stop the alternative assessments as they exist, and please believe the teaching professionals regarding which students are competent and not competent to take the test. And three, while you are changing labels, would you please consider, if you are going to continue the test, changing needs improvement to back to basic, which is what it was intended in the first place, and that way you wouldn't have the conflict of giving kids the diploma and then telling them they need improvement too. Thank you very much. I wish you the greatest of wisdom in the decisions you make today.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the April 24, 2001 Regular meeting as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

PRESENTATION ON *State Action for Education Leadership Project*

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Some of my staff wondered why I would put an item on the agenda when we were competing for a grant, and it was highly competitive. Almost all states put in applications. So the question is, why would you put it on the agenda when you don't know if you are going to be successful in your submission? The answer to that question, and the reason I have asked for some time on this agenda, is because this is one of those major issues that we need to address. We have been talking about it, in fact, it's one of the major parts of your Board of Education goals, and we have a terrific opportunity because five national organizations for the first time ever have come together. My organization, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National School Board Association, the Legislative Association, the National Governor's Association, and the Education Commission for the States -- for the first time, those five organizations got their act together at a national level about leadership in our schools, and the paucity of superintendents and principals and candidates that are available for those positions. And so they made this grant available to address it.

While it's a grant starting out with planning grants and then eventually a full grant, I am pleased to say today we were one of 15 states that was granted the award. We certainly had a terrific application, and I am very pleased about it. But it's a major problem and it's not going to be solved just as we continue to face the issue of what do we do about the shortage of teachers, and more importantly, the nobility and dignity of teaching

and raise the level of respect for teachers in this Commonwealth the same way all of the research shows that effective schools need effective leadership, and we've got a real problem here as we do throughout the country.

I want to introduce Ann Duffy, and Lyle Kirtman from Future Management Systems helped us, but we are very pleased to have representatives of the principal associations and the school committee association and the teachers unions, and the superintendents' association. This is the way we are going to get this done. The Board of Education is working with all the associations across the state and has a clear vision of what we are doing, and that's why I am so pleased with our application and with our direction. We need to make this a priority.

The legislature did add ten million to the endowment that was for teachers, the 12 to 62 plan so called, ten million dollars, the interest of which is to be used for support for principals and superintendents, so we have that support. So let me turn it over to our point person, Ann Duffy.

MS. DUFFY: Thank you very much. I really think we want to take this time to give you a quick overview. I will introduce all the folks who have been participating in this project so far, but really I think we need to turn it back to you to make sure that what we are doing is in line with the goals the Board has set around leadership, and also for you to
ask questions about the specific association heads if you are interested. The bottom line as Commissioner Driscoll mentioned is that while we did get this grant, which is a wonderful honor, it is just a piece of the larger puzzle as we move forward.

As we created a 12 to 62 plan around quality teachers, we need to extend that thinking around the life of professional school leaders. Where are future leaders going to come from, what does the job of a future leader look like, and how can we as a Commonwealth support those leaders to be effective in their position? As we look at our particular goals, our real goal is to insure that each school and school district have effective leadership for teaching and learning. We are looking not solely as school leaders as building managers, but really looking at the instructional leadership component of school leaders.

With that, let me introduce the folks who are here with me today, and I should say that it's only due to a shortage of chairs at the table that we are not all up here together. To my immediate left is Lyle Kirtman who you know from Future Management Associates, and he has been supported by Stephanie Cook from his staff. You all know Chris Martes, who has already spoken today from the Massachusetts Superintendents' Association; Glenn Koocher, from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees; and Nadya Higgins from the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association; Ginny Anderson is here from the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators ; and from the Department staff, Margaret Reagan who has been ably assisting us; and we have two representatives, Barry Cahill, the principal of Ipswich High School, and Dawn Ravello, the principal of Somerset High School.

I think the greatest strength of this project to date is that all of these associations have been working together for this first phase of designing this leadership project. The next phase now that we have got the grant is to actually expand the partnerships and we will be working, of course, with the teachers' associations as well as with the leaders from business and industry to really insure that we capture all the appropriate components for this project. With that, would any of the folks like to speak? If not, I will turn it back to you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As you can see from our summary, the first thing we are focused on is the actual role of school leaders. Secondly is establishing a professional development system, perhaps leadership institutes; and thirdly, looking at legislation, regulations or otherwise to prime the pump: How are we going to find people? How are we going to attract them? How are we going to retain them?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just a couple comments. I want to congratulate you on the work you have done to this point and for getting the grant and thinking through what needs to be done in order to launch a meaningful initiative around leadership development. A couple things I think are embedded in the proposal and I just want to highlight is that I think one challenge that we are faced with is identifying and recognizing exceptional school leaders. We don't do a very good job of recognizing those people in our schools who are performing, in some cases, the heroic work that is necessary in order to not only for school reform but also to transform the lives of children on a daily basis, and school leaders in collaboration with teachers are obviously on the front lines. But nothing happens, I'm convinced, in school reform and nothing happens in school improvement without strong leadership at the school level.

So I think starting with the identification and recognition of those people is a critical component. The other thing is that in training of school leaders, I'm convinced that while there is value in the classroom kinds of instruction and training that goes on for leaders, that the real learning happens in schools. It happens with the collaboration of mentors and others both as part of an induction program, as part of an ongoing system of professional development, and collaboration with peers; in particular, peers who have demonstrated exceptional skill in leadership. And so to the extent there is a focus on that aspect of leadership development, I think we are moving in a very positive direction.

The only other thing that I would mention is that the Commissioner stated at the outset that there is a pretty significant overlap between the goals and strategies the Board has established for leadership and what is in this grant or in this new initiative. And one of the things I am very pleased to see is some fairly concrete metrics for how to determine whether or not we are making progress, and I would encourage you in working with Melanie Winklosky and others to look at sort of how to integrate the metrics we are trying to put in place with respect to our goals and strategies with the metrics that you've got here, specifically on the grant, and I think there is some very direct overlap and some goals and specific numerical objectives we could use.

MS. DUFFY: I was just going to highlight some of the specific metrics that are in the executive summary from the grant are proposed metrics for us to develop in this first phase of our design. This September we will have a full implementation plan, but, for example, we are looking to ensure that we have 300 new administrators coming through the pipeline, that every new administrator is participating in an induction program, and a lot of the metrics that we'll be shooting for supported by a number of other Board initiatives like the certification regulations and teacher quality enhancement work.

MS. THERNSTROM: Well, I'm obviously very supportive of this program and have a great deal of confidence in this group. Two things strike me. One, that the, as Jim mentioned, the problem of the criteria of identifying school leaders, people of real quality; but the second, and it's really a question to you and I don't know to the degree to which you want to answer it or can answer it, it seems to me that in part we have got a

problem of recruitment and of training, but in part we have got a job description problem that the burdens of these jobs are just enormous and have been increasing. And I don't know how one addresses that.

MS. DUFFY: Well, due in large part to the constant drum beating from Nadya Higgins, the first task of this group is essentially to look at the job description of school leaders to get a handle on both what are school leaders doing and what should they be doing in light of the demands especially around teaching and learning. We floated a number of ideas that need to be either piloted or at least flushed out including, and I will say it Nadya, the assignment of the assistant principal for more schools to support both building management and instructional leadership, the enhanced capacity of schools to bring new types of leaders who don't necessarily have a background in education into the fold as well as the support from the district level to relieve some of the administrative burdens that fall to individual school leaders.

MR. KIRTMAN: I want to comment on this a little bit because I think this is a critical area. In other sectors we constantly re-engineer positions in leadership, and I think unfortunately we do not do that enough in education. I think that is such a core of this project is that we are going to look at not only where the job needs to be and how do you change it, but how do you keep that process going on an on-going basis so we don't get to another static position and find ourselves in this position again in the future.

MS. SCHAEFER: I guess I would like to raise two red flags here. One of them is the whole notion of induction and mentoring and so on, and in the past few years we have consistently asked the legislature for money for mentoring for teachers, and that has been turned down. To the extent that we are going to be dependent on the legislature for this kind of funding, I am very seriously concerned, and if we are going to be dependent on them how do we convince them that this is a critical part of producing educational leaders and teachers. That's my first point.

The second one is, I'm all in favor of bringing in outside people who are not in education to train them in leadership in these positions. Again, another red flag, the recent experience in contract negotiations in Worcester was that the teachers strongly objected to bringing in people from outside and paying them at a different rate than what they were getting, and I'm wondering whether the current leadership, the school leaders in the Commonwealth are going to object similarly to bringing in outsiders and I don't know whether there's been any discussion around salary differential there and how are we going to address.

MR. KIRTMAN: I actually think we are in a good place now with education reform and looking at principals and superintendents. Those are all individual contracts and it allows superintendents to negotiate with school committees; it allows principals to negotiate with superintendents and in a sense it will be market driven.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to give one little commercial for one of my pet projects, TCAP, which did make it through the Governor's budget and I hope it will show up in the senate budget. I firmly believe that it won't be long before we do not have enough teachers in our schools; just pure and simple. No one wants to talk about that, but I think it's going to happen. And very similar to the medical profession, we are going to have to look at different ways of deploying adults in schools, and in particular, I would love to see master teachers and teachers on various career tracks and also would like to see more support for building administrators. I think there's a wonderful opportunity in our urban areas and we have seen it. The MFT has supported paraprofessionals; very often single mothers in the neighborhood who come in and are trained and

become teacher aides and meet buses and do cafeteria work and so forth. So I think we have a tremendous opportunity, and I think we know all the hurdles and they are tremendous, and Roberta mentioned one in the teaching area, and it is a question.

But I think this is a tremendous opportunity and frankly we got a crisis on our hands if you haven't noticed. We can't get bilingual teachers; we won't be able to get math teachers; we can't get principals; we won't be able to get superintendents. So we can wring our hands or roll up our sleeves and try to do something comprehensive, and I think it means fundamentally having all different kinds of initiatives. It's a full court press if we are going to address this.

MS. DUFFY: One last thing that you should know from the position of political support that while both Chairman Peyser and Commissioner Driscoll were co-sponsors of the grant proposal, also Governor Jane Swift and Senator Antonini were behind this work as well. And so while we all sit here having done the work and thinking and on-going risk analysis of what we are in store for, there is wide interest in supporting the work once we come up with a few solutions.
COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I do want to mention that the Governor issued a press release congratulating all of us on the Leadership Grant. Somehow it didn't make the news for the last couple days, but she did do so.

DRAFT OF RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY - Discussion

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You all know Sandra Stotsky and you may not know Connie Louie, but I can assure you every technology coordinator knows Connie Louie, and I must tell you that Connie Louie -- and you can try this if you want -- you name any community, she can tell you who the tech director is. She is a remarkable state employee who has done a great job. I must tell you I am very pleased to present these, and they come from a lot of discussion in the field, I myself in looking at them and recognizing that I can't address any of those standards even in the middle column, recognize that these are pretty ideal standards in many ways, but Connie tells me many people in the field think they are not high enough. I think it's very important if we want to have instructional technology enhance teaching and learning that we establish these standards, and I think like everything we have done as a Board, it's very important to have the standards out there as a goal, and obviously the school systems are at entirely different places with respect to the resources they have or personnel or equipment and the kind of support kids get at home varies greatly, they call the digital divide.

I am very pleased to present these standards to you. They are recommended standards. There's nothing mandatory about them. The law does suggest the Board of Education should set standards, but obviously there isn't anything beyond that. So we have done this. We bring them to you for your recommendation, and I turn it over to Connie and Sandy.

MS. LOUIE: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner, and members of the Board, we are pleased to present to you the Draft of the Recommended PreK through 12 Technology Standards. In response to the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, we have developed these standards for your review. This draft was developed with the help of classroom teachers, instructional technology specialists, library teachers, and business teachers. One of the goals of the US DOE 5-year Technology Plan was technology literacy for all students. When they graduate from high school, students need to acquire essential technology skills to enter the work force or college. The US Department of Education supported the development of the national technology standards for students, and in the recent

Education Week, the technology current issue, we learned that 37 states have developed technology standards for students, and we are glad that Massachusetts is joining them
finally.

The standards in this draft are based on the national standards and also the standards from school districts in Massachusetts, particularly Boston Public Schools. In this document, instructional technology standards fall under three broad categories. First,
students need to demonstrate proficiency in the use of computers and applications, and also an understanding of concepts underlying hardware, software, and connectivity.
Number two, students need to demonstrate responsible use of technology and understand the application and safety issues in using electronic media. Lastly, students need to demonstrate ability to use technology for research, problem solving, and communication.

In this draft we have groups of specific technology skills under three great spans: PreK to 4, grades 5 through 8, and 9 through 12. However, for the PreK to 4 level, instead of listing performance indicators, we listed exploratory concepts and skills to allow teachers the flexibility to introduce the skills to young students based on the student's developmental stage. After your review and comments on this draft, we plan to post the document on the web and ask the public to give out comments and input. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you very much. I just want to make a couple comments. First of all, I think that the draft was a very good document. It will make an important contribution to schools around the Commonwealth in their effort to introduce more technology and use it in a way that is productive. A couple other things I want to note
though, one is to make sure people read the introduction or the overview of the grade spans which specifically talks about technology as not being a substitute for what's called
low-tech learning but rather a supplement and a compliment. It's critical technology not
become sort of a crutch for students and for teachers for that matter in not providing students with the kind of foundational skills they need in order to get the most out of their learning throughout the their life and school career. So I think that section is very well written and the cautionary note very well taken.

The second thing is that the real challenge here is leveraging technology to enhance learning versus simply providing students with knowledge and skill around using technology and developing a facility with technology and computers in particular. So the examples that are in the document are extremely important, and this is one of those areas, Commissioner, making the standards come alive is particularly important and hopefully one that we can develop over time, not so much in the printed form but in the context of the web and in the context of the work we are trying to do to bring teachers into collaboration with one another and sharing best practicing, particularly around how to use technology to enhance student learning.

MR. CROWLEY: I share your opinion that the depth of some of these standards are great and I am really impressed with these as goals for the children to try to achieve. We all know there have been great advances in the last three years in technology, and I really have two questions: What is being done to insure the teachers understand and are capable of teaching the kids in this depth? And two, what's going to be different in the classrooms now as compared to, say, three years ago in the teaching of those kids?

MS. LOUIE: We are fortunate to have several resources. Three years ago the state

provided 15 million dollars and we focussed funding for professional development for teachers. As a result, every school district received money to help teachers learn the basics. Then, with the federal funding, we have funded the Light House Grants, Light House meaning best practices, and showcased it to schools. We also provide adoption grants for schools who saw the best practices and adopted. So as a result, if you go to a classroom now versus three years ago, you will see teachers going to a lab teaching the basic skills and students getting very bored with those skills. But now a lot of the teaching is co-teaching. The instructional technology specialist started the basic functions of some applications and content area teachers continue and work with them together in the classroom. And I have an example. A project needs a 10 million grant program that we are very fortunate to receive in Massachusetts and we advocate for this joint partnership of teachers working together to make it happen in the classroom.

MS. KELMAN: I want to say the integrated learning scenarios look wonderful, they look exciting, and look like you are doing exactly what you said you wanted to be doing,
which is using the content areas as a supplement to technology -- or technology as a supplement to the content areas rather than a stand alone subject.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If there are no further questions, Commissioner, let me ask you what the schedule is for this particular document.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We would like to post it on the web. Again, these are not mandatory so we really want them to be a work in progress, and as you suggested, the more examples we can give and generate over the web, et cetera, but we are going to post it and allow people to make comments and so forth. Really, it'll be left there to bring it back to the Board if there are any major changes, but otherwise it will be posted on the web.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are we going to vote on this at some point in the future?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You may if you want. There's not any requirement that you do, but if you would like to, that's fine. We could establish a public comment period and bring them back and have them formally voted.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think it might be useful. Obviously we aren't under the same constraints or procedural requirements as with some other things we might do, but I think it might be useful after a period of comment to bring it back for formal endorsement.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Fine. We would actually welcome that, we just didn't necessarily want to impose. But I think it does make a good statement, and to me I would recommend that you vote them as recommended standards when we bring them back. I think that would be very good.

MCAS PERFORMANCE LEVELS – Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you all very much. The next item is the discussion and we hope vote on MCAS performance levels and this is -- the issue is twofold. One is changing the name for the non-10th grade performance levels, the lowest test performance level, from failing to warning, and also

adopting new labels for performance levels in the grade 3 reading tests, which has only three performance level rather than four and therefore requires us to do something a little bit different.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief and Jeff Nellhaus is here to answer questions. One of the reasons we would like to have this done today is there is a bit of a time constraint because if the Board agrees to make these changes, we can in fact get it done when the results come back, so that's why we would like it to be done today. Secondly, as you mentioned when we introduced the new third grade reading test, we are not equipped to be able to grade it in four levels, and so therefore we really legitimately want to look at three, and we recommended that those names be in concert with the other labels. Finally, on the issue of changing the name of failing, which I must say received a lot more attention than I anticipated, but nevertheless there are a couple comments I want to make.

First of all, this came as a result of the Lieutenant Governor's report which I again recommend everyone read. A lot of people write reports and people don't take the time to read them. The Lieutenant Governor's report is based on going across this state visiting literally hundreds of schools, talking to parents and teachers and administrators, and even students, and I think this is reflective of what she heard across the board. So the comment I would like to make is there are people who say this is now about political correctness, and this is, you know, about telling the truth, you ought to tell kids the truth. And I would say as an educator and as a parent we need to remember that there is, even though in this age of focusing support on subject matter and content, I think it's long overdue, but I still think we need the balance that we are dealing with human beings and we are dealing with children, and I would like to suggest to you that it's not just about political correctness. It's a statement that says there comes a time in a child's life, and we think it's 10th grade, when you do have to call it; you do have to call the order, and that is failing if you don't pass 220, and I can argue with my good friend Joe about what 220 means and what Iowas mean.

Leaving that aside, do we really want little league and soccer to have cutting programs and cutting kids? We recognize as children grow that there are times when they are old enough to handle the fact that there is a reality. But I think young children need to be encouraged, and that's why I hope we have programs for young people that include everybody, we have no-cut policies in soccer programs, and in a lot of programs they don't keep score. I think it's logical as young people go up the line soon enough, as we know as parents, they will be cut from the team; they won't make the lead in the play. There are all of those realities of life that are coming. So I just think it makes common sense. People who say, we are not calling them failing. We are labeling their work as failing, we are not calling them failing, that's a heck of a distinction for a nine year old or ten year old to make -- it's not you, it's just your performance. It just doesn't work for me. I think it's more than political correctness. I think it is the right thing to do. I think it is important to send a signal for 10th graders. It is, after all, the reality. But for younger children, it makes sense to have another kind of label and certainly warning is something I would fully recommend and do, and I put before you the official vote.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to pick up or your remarks, Commissioner, to echo them, one thing we need to make clear here is the standards are not changing. We are changing a label, not the standard. There has been no attempt here to somehow dilute the standards as we are perhaps softening the language of the bottom category.

Also, as the Commissioner indicated, failing -- the label -- was never intended to label the child but simply to label the performance on that given day in taking the test. But for younger children certainly -- but generally it was quite clear the perception among those taking the test, the family and teachers, and the schools taken

together was a little different. I think we owe it to those young people and especially the younger children to do everything we can not to label them prematurely and to focus on performance on the test and performance in school generally rather than focus the attention on the label itself.

Finally, the fundamental purpose of MCAS is to provide diagnostic information that will allow us to apply resources and provide young people with opportunities who need them, and to provide that kind of opportunity in a way that is going to be most productive in terms of their achievement and growth educationally. Warning, I think, sends a clearer message as to exactly what that purpose is. The purpose is not simply to categorize student's performance as it is to raise a flag for those students in particular who are not performing well or do not perform well on a test, that they need to get extra help. That the parents, and students, and school generally need to focus attention on those students in getting them what they need, and I think warning is a more clear and direct message and more clear and direct than the word failing. So I endorse the recommendation that comes forward from the Department and also acknowledge the work of the Governor in initiating this effort. One quick thing, Jeff, if you might comment on the reading test in 3rd grade and why there are three rather than four performance categories.

JEFF NELLHAUS: The test was designed to actually address the goal that's stated in the Massachusetts English Language Arts curriculum framework, which is that students should be effective readers by the end of the 3rd grade, effective or proficient readers, so we designed the test to measure whether or not students have reached the proficient level. Also, the test is limited in the number of questions. We have 40 multiple choice questions upon which the student's score is based. There are some open response questions in the test, but those will be scored, not count toward the student's overall score, but returned to the school for diagnostic purposes. So we have a limited number of questions. We have this goal of measuring whether or not the student has become an effective reader, and for that reason we can report at three levels more accurately than at four and that's pretty much why.

MS KELMAN: First of all, I very much agree with the intent of what we are doing, so congratulations. My biggest question is more grammatical than anything else. It seems to me that advanced, proficient, and needs improvement are all descriptors of the student's performance levels on the test, but I don't understand how warning can describe their performance. I don't understand the adjective kind of agreement. It doesn't make semantic sense to me.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You have a point. Would you like to respond Jeff?

JEFF NELLHAUS: I think there is a slight inconsistency there. Can we live with it? It was not an attempt here to make everything be an adjective or noun or whatever.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There is obviously, and this is not to defend the grammar here or anything, there is something different about the performance in the lowest category which we are trying to highlight and maybe the change in syntax is jarring enough to make people pay attention, but I don't know.

MS KELMAN: I think it's confusing to me. That was my initial reaction, not that I have a real problem with the word, just that it confused me that it changed in that final category. I don't know if anyone else feels the same way or not.

MS. THERNSTROM: Jody, you have a real point here, it's just that all -- this is the best of our alternatives. You do have a real point.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was :

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, §§ 1B and 1I, hereby adopt the following changes to MCAS performance levels, as recommended by the Commissioner:**

(1) change the name of the MCAS performance level *Failing* to *Warning* for all MCAS tests administered in grades 4 through 8; and

(2) adopt three performance levels, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement* and *Warning* to be used in reporting student performance on the grade 3 MCAS Reading test.

The vote was unanimous.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW MATTERS

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is the Performance Review , and we have three pieces to this. One has to do with the school improvement plan at the Roosevelt School in New Bedford, which we discussed at the last meeting and is back in revised form. Second is a report on the review of candidates for designation of underperforming schools. The third is a look at the candidates for Exemplary Schools. Juliane Dow has joined us.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The only comment I would like to make is I like the process the way it's going. I think we have to recognize one of the dangers of having a review process is that you tend to lose sight of the fact that this is very, very difficult work. So you start to review a school as if it's there's a formula that make everything better, and it just doesn't work that way. So I am personally pleased with the process of deferring decisions for six months.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to clarify here, I introduced these things in the wrong order. What we are talking about is the panel review finding for the schools that were candidates for the designation of underperforming.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's right. What we've decided to do – there were clearly schools that were not underperforming and we so designated. In others, some of them perhaps could have been but clearly some things are happening. So I personally like this idea of deferring it. I think the process and the review has prompted a number of things, and you see it today in the Roosevelt School that will be next on the next part here, so I am very comfortable with deferring the decision on several of these schools and coming back to you at a later date. I think we are getting better at it. I think the schools are getting better at it; the Roosevelt School report is an example. I just wanted to add that comment. So, Julianne, is there anything you wanted to add?

MS. DOW: Only that this is an iterative process for us, and as we are looking at it is

really, although it's been very challenging to develop good quality review processes, it is challenging at an even greater level in thinking about how to provide the right kind of assistance and support for schools to be successful once we have determined that there is a need for some kind of intervention and some combined level of engagement from the district level and from the state. And so that's really the stage we are in now, and I think in part we have made the decision, and there were a very interesting mix of occurrences going on at a number of the schools that we've reviewed this spring consideration being made for combining schools, creating two schools out of a school that existed, changes in principalships that are underway, so we had a number of different changes in process, actually, as we were going through the review that made it more complex to determine what would be the best outcome.

I think one of things in making the decision to defer the decision on aid of the schools, it's important for the Board to be aware that we are involved in an active relationship now with an urban school network that has been created through the Department working with the urban superintendents, and we are meeting on a regular basis with the urban superintendents and it's giving us a forum for discussion about how best to collaborate and engage together in efforts to help schools where we have performance problems, and I think it's out of some confidence that's been built that that collaboration could result in there not being a need for long-term state intervention. Some of these communities, if we collaborated over the next six months to insure that there was an additional clarity provided about the kinds of planning that we expect to go on, the kind of data review that needs to happen as a basis for that planning, and then providing some time and opportunity and guidance for that to happen over the summer. So that's our intention with regard to those schools.

And just putting that in the context that we are obviously in the first instance always hoping that the districts can be successful in supporting their schools. They have that responsibility in the first instance and we step in at the state level to become directly involved with the school only when we made the determination that that would be essential, that the district needs us in a more active partnership or a more active engagement in order to move things forward for that school. So we are hopeful that some of these schools that are now in the deferred status will actually at the end of that six-month period to be found not to be underperforming and won't require an on-going engagement with all of you and all of us at the Department at the same level at which we are now involved and will remain involved with the schools that are declared to be underperforming.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I have a couple comments or questions. One has to do with the criteria for deciding whether to actually declare a school to be underperforming, not performing, or this middle ground which is new, which is deferring for six months. What essentially are you looking for?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to be explicit about this. This decision to defer was made by me. They were prepared, if they had to, to make the hard decision. It was me and me alone that decided that at this point after looking at everything we would take this decision, so I just wanted to make that clear.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The question has to do what the criteria are for this middle ground.

MS. DOW: It's good probably for everyone, especially with having some new Board Members, to step back and say we really are looking at the issue that was before you as the first thing on your agenda today, which was leadership. When we go in to begin this engagement, we start by determining that there is low student performance and student

performance has not improved over, in this case the period between 1998 and the combined results for 1999 and 2000 and then we go in to say given that that is the reality for students in that school, is there a plan, a sound plan in place for improving student results and are the conditions in place for the successful improvement for that plan?
Those are the two questions with which the panel that goes in to conduct the review is charged, and they provide a response in a written report to those two questions which then come to us and the Commissioner, and so in an instance where they find yes, yes. Yes there is a sound plan; and yes the conditions appear to be in place, then we would declare a school not to be underperforming, meaning that although the students results are low, we find the school itself is on the project and doesn't appear at this point to need state involvement in order to have them formulate a sound plan or to put in place the conditions that would be required to implement such a plan.

When we find that the result is no, they don't have a sound plan; and no they don't have the conditions in place, then that's a school that we could declare to be underperforming, and we did that in four cases last year. In cases where there are mixed findings, which is often the case, that they have some elements of a plan, that their plan reflects the review of some data but is not perhaps coherent, perhaps misses certain important elements of what should be considered and/or where they have some of the condition appear to be in place. If they have a sound plan they might well be in a position to move it forward, then we are in the situation of deciding do we really want to move them to the fact-finding stage? Because when we declare a school to be underperforming, we invest the resources to send in a team to really do a diagnostic review to help provide the basis for planning, and it's an expensive and time consuming and resource intensive level of engagement. So in this instance where we have mixed findings, then it can be a basis for deferring.

Just a reminder, last year when we first began this process we did defer decisions on four of the eight schools that were reviewed, and at the end of the deferral process, which was a slightly shorter process because our reviews happened a little later in the spring, but simply what we did is give them the summer months basically to engage an additional plan, and with the feedback make it possible to really go back to the drawing board to think about their plans to determine what additional things needed to be done by this school. At the end of the deferral period last year 50 percent, two out of the four, were found not to be underperforming; and the other two were found to be underperforming. They had not been able to make sufficient gains over that period to warrant our not going forward to the next level.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I do think we need to be judicious and cautious in putting schools in this limbo position in part because I want to make sure that we send a clear signal that a declaration of underperforming, as painful as that may be at the local level is really not something we are doing to schools and districts but rather something for them, for the children and parents of the school. So I just want to make sure that we aren't oversensitive to the PR aspects of a label of underperformance so that we don't pay close enough attention or that we don't do the things that are most helpful to the students in the building and indeed for the quality of the school generally. So, for instance, the fact-finding team is real, if done right, as I believe ours are being done right, is a real asset to the planning process. And to withhold it doesn't necessarily help them. So, I understand the purpose of deferral and I think it is warranted in many cases. I want to make sure we don't get in the habit of not making the decision when we know it's the right thing to do just because we want to give the school a little extra time.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: In my judgment, as different from last year, we had the four and the whole idea was that we were deferring and then making a decision, which will be the case again here. That four is

different from this eight in the following way: Whether it's just because of what's happened and people getting to know it, I think schools are better at understanding what we are looking for, and we are getting better at what we are looking at. So the whole idea is improvement. You really go into a fact-finding because, in my judgment, ultimately school itself doesn't have a plan and doesn't have the support system, and so they really are at a point where you've got to go in and help them figure it out. In this particular case it seems as if the process is getting better enough, I still have a couple concerns about the schools, to where they are recognizing what's wrong and their plan needs fixing and more support. So I think that's the distinction I am drawing. Ultimately we want to improve. That's the whole key, and it just seems to me in these cases the schools have a shot at putting things in place. We will see.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The one other specific question I had concerned the Rebecca Johnson School where both of the entries here in the materials, both in terms of the plan and in terms of the conditions in place surrounding the plan, leadership and other things being among them, they both seem to be negative.

MS. DOW: That school I should let you know is a school where the district made a decision to actually change the configuration of that school, to remove the middle grades from the Rebecca Johnson School, to move those students completely into a new building under new leadership.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is that going to be happening this fall?

MS. DOW: Yes. So as I said, there were a number of things that were occurring, and we spoke with each of the superintendents and we had prepared a set of recommendations, and I think I also want to say represents our taking a look at the way we framed the questions for the panels. My own feeling was that we had gotten back too much feedback, and I invite you all to read the reports, which are all posted on the web on the planning documents and too little on the soundness of the plan. And so we are in the process of evaluating our protocol and the articulation of the key questions to make sure we do get at the substance of what is going on and not perhaps as much attention in the written document just to the planning document itself, because in some of the schools they had their plans captured in three or four different documents, and it would be nice if they had one coherent paper that expressed it all. But more important to us is are they doing the right things and do they have a coherent plan as expressed in that combination. So we do feel like there is some work still that we need to do to make sure that the teams, when we had conversations with them afterwards with the panels, they felt they were -- that was a very big part of the charge is to look at the planning documents, and we felt perhaps it was an overemphasis on that.

MR. THOMAS: With regard to the Rebecca Johnson School, you mentioned that the decision was to close down the 7th and 8th grade and move it out of that school.

MS. DOW: I believe it's 6th, 7th, and 8th.

MR. THOMAS: Was that a district decision independently? Or was it a joint decision between us and them?

MS. DOW: No, we are not involved in making those decisions. The district having received the report back is in every instance responsible to look at the conditions of that school, look at the adequacy of the delivery of programs and services in that school and consider whether the current leadership and design of that school is the best way to serve

the kids. So in this instance, that is my understanding of what occurred by the district, but we did not mandate with any of these schools, and you will see there are at least three of the schools that we reviewed are either changing to become a new and different school or breaking up into two schools in one instance or coming together in one, two different schools in another case. None of those are anything we recommended or weighed in on one way or the other.

MR. THOMAS: If leadership was the issue and the change is moving students and the leadership stays intact and you still have the same organizational dynamics, how does that justify a positive course of action or corrective action?

MS. DOW: In the particular case that you are asking about in Springfield is a K through 8th school, which is not the configuration. We were reviewing only the middle grade results. Our intervention at the school was as a result of the scores from middle grade students, and sometimes -- we know that this has been the case with some of our other discussions from leadership they may find that the school given the of size of the school and the complexity of the challenges being faced by the school, having a single principal responsible for all of the issues related from PreK or K through 8th grade may be more than one leader, even a very competent leader handle.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are they hiring a new middle school principal?

MS. DOW: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is this someone from essentially inside the existing Rebecca Johnson School or is it someone from outside?

MS. DOW: I have limited information on this, but my understanding is they have a new middle school building that's recently being built. They have hired a new principal for that. I don't know if that someone is outside the system, but that this set of students will be part of -- there will be other students from other schools also joined together with them there, but we will be reviewing in the fall the program and services at this school which will include these students and some others.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to be clear that while all these thing occurred that you asked the right question. Would deferring them for decision, and I don't want to go the other way, that's not necessarily taking them all off the hook. In fact, I expect eventually a couple of these schools may even be declared underperforming. It seems to me at this time there are some attempts and things in place, so we will have to see, Henry. So just moving the principal or just moving the kids just having a new configuration even in these other two cases isn't impressing me. It's at least some action. If it follows up with the fact that they reorganize the plan, reorganize the school because they don't have older kids and that school is fine, then we have to follow the other kids to and where they go and so forth. So they are not getting away with it. They are not dodging the bullet by moving kids in my view. I think the Rebecca Johnson and the Springfield Public Schools have taken it seriously and are trying to take steps, and I'm willing to see if they can make a difference. If they can't, then I am willing to declare them underperforming.

MS. DOW: The decision to defer by the way was made in advance of this decision. It was not a contingent upon them making some decision about reconfiguring.

MR. THOMAS: You said that the decision to move the 7th and 8th grade was a decision that had been made prior to the review.

MS. DOW: No. I'm saying the decision to defer was made before a decision was made by the Springfield Public Schools about how they are going to proceed with that school for the next year.

MR. THOMAS: Just two quick points. To answer the question for the principal of the new middle school, is someone different than a former Rebecca Johnson employee, so that is a new principal going into that school; and I guess the Commissioner hit on my next point or question, would we be reviewing the Rebecca Johnson School which no longer has a 7th to 8th grade? Or would we follow those 7th and 8th grades to make sure they receive the structure?

MS. DOW: We would be following the 7th and 8th grade.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: This does raise a certain complexity which is not limited to this school, that mergers are going on and essentially the school, at least in the context those students and the grades they represent no longer exists. So in your deliberation you are going to have to think about how to handle that. If we could move on to the next part of the section which has to deal specifically with the Roosevelt Middle School.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Representatives are here from New Bedford if there are any specific questions. I would say this improvement plan has, from my perspective, improved. I particularly am glad that the specifics in mathematics around geometry and number sense and problem solving have been delineated, et cetera. I am happy to recommend this plan to you, and there is a motion, if the Board approves.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would like to make a couple comments. One, as the Commissioner indicated, is there are some additions and changes to the document which reflect the discussion we had last month. I think some of the changes are very important and address directly the issues we talked about, and certainly in looking at the issues around discipline and out of school suspension that there has been a significant amount of new information provided there. I do appreciate that. There is also some additional information that I noted with respect to providing a little more specificity around instructional leadership in the school and coaching and supervision and review of lesson plans and classroom visitations, and I have one very small specific question. It talks about teacher classroom visits by the math department chair and other department chairs at a rate of one per month, and I was curious to what the ratio is between teachers and department chairs or supervisory staff. Because one a month seemed to be probably not sufficient. Now, maybe that's an average so maybe some teachers are getting visitation much more frequently than that, but it seems to me to not be a lot. Would you introduce yourself again?

MR. UPDOWEL: Brian Updowel, principal of the Roosevelt Middle School. I worked with Mr. Derosie and addressed some of the concerns the Board had. Our department chairs are 7 through 12, and in the new Roosevelt School they will be 6 through 12. They come down from the high school. They represent the high school and the middle schools. That's a minimum visit on the part of the department chair. Academic coaches have been directed in the short time I have been there to be in the classroom every day. Academic coaches will be there every day, the new assistant principal and the assistant principals for discipline will be in

the classrooms every day as I will. So there will be on-going supervision from the point of view of assistants to the teachers. So their role will be essentially what it has been. So that's a minimum number for them.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm very encouraged here. That's exactly the answer I wanted to hear. The only other comment I make generally, and again, this is more related to our process is I think the charge should always be focus, focus, focus. What are the vital key things and while I know that there are many other things that go on in a school that are absolutely necessary for success, for purposes of this process and purposes of focusing
leadership attention and for identifying those things for which leadership needs to be held accountable, I think fewer is almost always better than more or less is always more.

MS KELMAN: Having heard you say that or Charlie say that a number of times, maybe we should look into making a rubric that could at least be a suggested rubric for schools to use when they are creating these.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER I agree with you and I think we don't want to standardize too much because every school is different, but I think we need to be able to provide more guidance to schools up front so that they are not trying to figure out by looking at the tea leaves what it is we need from them. I think it's a good point.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, section 1J and 603 CMR 2.03 (6), and upon recommendation of the Commissioner, hereby accept the improvement plan submitted by the Roosevelt Middle School in New Bedford; provided, further, that said acceptance is subject to the following conditions:**

1. **The Department shall provide oversight and technical assistance as needed to ensure that the Roosevelt Middle School and school district leaders develop detailed work plans and timelines to guide and track the progress of implementation of agreed-upon improvement initiatives; and**

2. **By June 1, 2002, the Roosevelt Middle School shall submit to the Board a written progress and School Improvement Plan update, reflecting refinements and changes planned for the 2002-2003 school year.**

The vote was unanimous.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The last piece concerns exemplary schools.

MS. DOW: This is an exciting new area of work and it's important to say this year as
We approach the school review process we determined that we should be spending at least as much time and energy and money looking for what's working. As for looking for those places where there are problems and where it's not working because we need to be able to determine what are successful strategies and then to try to identify school leaders and school strategies that are working and make that information widely available to those who need more help. So this year we did conduct a total of -- I should say first we used again the school performance rating process to determine schools that would be eligible for our new exemplary schools program, which is part of what we planned for when the Board passed the larger accountability system

proposal in 1998, and we had 240 schools that are eligible for participation in the program as a result of having exceeded their improvement expectations during the first
review cycle or having met their improvement expectations while outperforming demographically similar schools. We contacted those 240 schools and asked them, invited them to participate in the program by submitting a leadership survey telling us, and the first section of it really just describing the kind of changes that had occurred in the school over the last several years and then giving them more open-ended questions about the significance of those changes and to what they attributed the success that they had achieved. And we also asked them whether they felt there were in a position to serve as an exemplar of successful practices and willing to play that role over the next year, and we had response from 120 of the 240 schools. From those and from the quality of the written responses that were submitted and the patterns and trends that showed up in terms of the kinds of changes going on in schools, it seems to be associated with success in Massachusetts schools, we selected 16 schools to be reviewed. We sent out teams on site to those schools using a protocol very similar to the protocol
we used for looking at the schools for potential declaration of underperformance. We
had teams meet and review data and documents for a four-hour period the day before and then have a day-long on site visit at the school with school folks and district folks looking at classroom practice and talking with teachers, students, and school administrators. And of the -- in your book are listed the 14 schools that we have selected to serve as exemplar sites for the next year based on those reviews. There were two schools that were visited that the teams determined were not ready, and that was based on mutual agreement after discussion that it requires a certain amount of being able to articulate really an understanding of what you have tried and what
is working in order to participate in that dissemination process. And we had 14 schools
That we felt can really be helpful to other schools and will participate over the next year
in workshops for sharing successful strategies and hosting site visits at their schools and then being part of helping us develop materials, both audio/visual and written materials about successful practices. We will be publishing within the next two months a compilation of information that came not just from the 14 schools, although it
will profile the 14 schools, but we will also have at results of the survey and we will have data again about what we've learned through this process this year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to applaud you for the work you've done here. I think this is extremely important work, as important if not more important than just about any of the other things we are doing, and I just want to make three comments.
One is to note that not all of the schools here, in fact several are not high performing schools in a nominal sense. Many of these are urban schools. Many of them are
schools with challenging populations. They are not all high performing students, but they are improving. They are improving academic achievement and the quality of student performance over time, and that's what this process is focused on. Second thing is, I would hope and perhaps it cannot be done by the end of this school year but perhaps very early next year, we really go out of way to make a big deal about these schools and honor them for what they have achieved and what they have done because again, as getting back to what we were discussing earlier on leadership, we don't do
nearly enough to recognize those individuals in the system and those schools that are achieving high levels, and this is obviously a great opportunity for us to do that.
And then the last thing, and it relates in part to what you will be publishing and
perhaps conferences and other sorts of meetings, it is very important for us to

extract out of this some lessons that can be learned, not just with respect to an individual school but across schools and around so we can make more progress around this eternal issue about what makes excellence in education or what makes a good school. And these are some great case studies, and there's some real potential here for mining the information that you've already gathered to produce some more kind of coherent or dramatic conclusions. So anyway, I think with those two things if we could do some work on those over the summer so that in the fall we might be able to
leverage the work that's been done up to this point, I think it would be great.

MS. DOW: If I may just say on thing. On June 1st there is a conference that is being
hosted by Mass Insight. They have been also working to identify schools that are exemplars of success and at that conference, which is being called the Building Blocks Conference, we have invited all of our compass schools to also be in attendance at that conference. We will be recognizing them at that time too, and we have also invited all the schools that have participated in the panel review process and are struggling to find successful strategies to be our guests at that conference, and many are sending teams to be a part of that. So we are starting to use these processes together in that way.

STATE PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: One of our new employees at Department of Education, Lisa Havety and of course to my left is Sandra Stotsky and to my right is Meg Mayo-Brown. And I do have another memo, a more elaborate memo, I just shared it with Judy Gill because we are asking the Board of Higher Education to review. So maybe you want to talk briefly. Is Meg going to start? Meg? What's different about this is the memo is a little more elaborate and then at the end
of the memo is the plan laid out in terms of goals, priorities and strategies.

MS. MAYO-BROWN: In plan is a really built around the expectation that more informed professional development, more informed professional judgment will increase student achievement. We are asking districts and providers to really assist teachers with their understanding of the strengths and limitations of a range of appropriate instructional programs as well as instructional practices, which is a shift from the most recent statewide professional development plan where we focused
primarily around increasing teachers use and understanding of the curriculum framework as well as standard based instruction, curriculum and assessment.

MS. STOTSKY: Just to say a few words, if you would like to me to on the question of making sure that standards based curriculum means Massachusetts standards, and that's why we've been looking at the language change just to make sure that now we have curriculum frameworks in every area, that these are the ones we are going to focus on in all the areas we touch upon standards. And then the second shift was to do more to make teachers aware of the fact that almost any practice has strengths and limitations, that there are no magic bullets in education unfortunately as in probably other areas, so we would like providers to make it clearer than they probably have to teachers that there are good things about a lot of instructional methods and programs, but there are also places where they may not be as appropriate and what we want to do is inform teachers because the teaching is an art and that is what we have to possibly stress more than we have. I will let Meg take it back.

MS. MAYO-BROWN: We would like to hear from the Board and after the discussion our plan is to specifically work with the statewide association to gain additional feedback and make sure we are supporting

districts efforts in terms of professional development and then present the Board with a plan for a vote in June.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just a couple questions. One is, we go through this process annually and it's always a little mysterious exactly what its impact is in the field and maybe what you just described in terms of the process going from here on out may answer this at least in part. How do we know, or what gives us comfort, if that's the right word, that the Statewide Professional Development Plan is having an impact on what goes on in schools?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: We only know from the district professional development plans that come in to the Department through a voluntary basis with districts. By looking at those plans we get a sense as to what their overall goals and objectives are, but we have no formal review process for those plans.

MS. THERNSTROM: How many send them in voluntarily?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: It varies from year to year. This past school year we probably received about 25 districtwide professional development plans.

MS. THERNSTROM: So on a percentage basis that is --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Less than ten.

MS. THERNSTROM: Less than ten. And are we talking about the larger districts or are we talking about piddly little districts?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's a question. Another related question is, it says on page 3 of the memo how the state budget requires districts to spend $150 per pupil on professional development, and how do we monitor that or do we?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: We monitor it through the end of the year report, districts report on the expenditure amount on professional development.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Do we have any sense for what the actual number is?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: We do, and I don't have it with me.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is it fair to say it's less than $150?

MS. MAYO-BROWN:: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And finally, this is sort of in the same vein but a little different. We fairly recently adopted a requirement for professional development provider to do end-of-course assessments, and it's in the memo as well, and I'm wondering what data we have collected or what evidence we do collect to insure that those assessments are being done?

MS. STOTSKY: I don't know what evidence we are collecting, but we are certainly looking at the proposals they make. We have been carefully trying to apply the criteria from the recertification guidelines.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For approving providers?

MS. STOTSKY: For approving what they send to us. And I am not aware of how many have come in. That has probably been in your unit, and this is something that will be more systemized once Lisa is in place and on top of that kind of work. So I don't know whether you have a number to offer that have been available for us to look at. What they do afterwards was part of, I think, the original problem was we didn't know how we get reports from all of the professional providers, and perhaps you can say more to that as far as any information you get back from them.

MS. MAYO-BROWN: We don't get specific information back from providers. What we are doing is working with them to provide technical assistance around what an end-of-course assessment looks like and what is appropriate
for providers to use with educators.

MS. STOTSKY: Let me just say professional development is still a pretty large area in which we don't have a firm grasp on what is happening out in the field.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only comment I make and the reason for my asking these
questions is that as I think anyone will tell you in schools, that professional development is almost inevitably the core in any school reform strategy, and at some level the same is true for statewide reform efforts, that our ability to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom is dependent upon our ability to improve the quality of teaching and to provide teachers the kind of support and the kind of training and enrichment they need to be better teachers. But the system itself is pretty lose and we have attempted through the regulations and through some of the policies
changes to put a little attention back into it. But that's really just the basic framework, and what's inside the box is much more important. And while I'm not anywhere near the camp of saying the state somehow has to end up being professional development police, which I don't think is practical or desirable, there is a lot more that we can do not only in terms of monitoring what's going and providing information around what is going on, but providing some insight as to what works and doesn't work, what's good practice and bad practice around professional development. And this is an area and we have talked about it in other areas, but we have a real resource constraint in our ability to actually go out and do this kind of work. But I'm not sure that there is anything much more important that we could be doing. So I think this is an area where we need to put together some fairly concrete plans as well as understanding what the resources are that are necessary to carry them out to make sure we are actually making some headway around professional development and not issuing plans that look good, as this one does, that don't have the kind of effect that it should.

MR. THOMAS: Have we ever considered, or maybe we have in the past, held conferences that reached the audience of providers and school leaders that would, in fact, help distribute some of the information and to alsoget feedback with respect to additional considerations that we might have on it that we take into account on our end?

MS. MAYO-BROWN:: Uh-huh.

MR. THOMAS: You have?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: A number of years ago we offered professional development providers conferences throughout the state, actually,that just followed the first round of recertification regulations. We are gearing up to do something similar with that as well as incorporate some of the policies around recertification and certification so we can inform districts of the major educator quality policies impact districts at the district level.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me just follow up on that. We had a math conference earlier thismonth. Was there sort of a professional development component to that? Or is there any follow on to that in terms of providing guidance to districts about what kind of professional development would be most appropriate in terms of preparing teachers to prepare students for learning what is in or content standards or curriculum framework of math? Is there a connection between the math conference and issues around professional development in math.

MS. STOTSKY: There is not asystematically thought through plan becausethis was our first conference, but we had several good sessions that dealt with differentaspects of professional development, mathprogram, lesson planning as professional development, and we know that we got some verygood feedback on the evaluations for theseparticular sessions. We don't have the manpower at this point to really do something extensive on how we follow through. Part of what I would like to work with Lisa and others in Ann Duffy's unit is how we could focus muchmore on what we could do systematically with professional development. This would include math and science as well as the other areas. But for the conference itself, there are some little things we are trying to do, I don't want to make them sound bigger than they are, to follow through on two of the sessions that seem to have been well received, that if we could possibly follow through with content courses in mathematics for teachers. This is now something we are looking for what funding we can use from within the Department because we have teachers asking for free courses in mathematics. This is wonderful. They want to voluntarily take courses in math. And this is part of professional development, very nicely. And then we have a lot of interest in a particular program that was called Singapore Math, and we are trying to see what we can do to encourage more teachers who are interested, particularly in the one school system that wasexperimenting with it, to try out something like that. So there are these pieces, but it's not vastly organized at this point.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My only thought here is that maybe through some of these conferences that are built around subject areas that there maybe a way for integrating some of these issues around professional development programs to support instruction on those content areas rather than having them serve the more generic professional development conference.

MS. THERNSTROM: Well, this does lookgood on paper, but am I impressed as Sandy Stotsky is and as the Chairman is, I'm sure we all are, with the fact we have an awful long way to go in terms of really implementing thisin a way that meets our standards and meets the needs of the teachers and the children are --just one comment. This seems to me intricately linked with what Ann Duffy was talking about before, and that is in part what I was getting at in referring to the job description problemis that principals spend too much time with paperwork and too little time within the classroom actually helping teachers teach better. Too few class visits; too little

mentoring. It's not their fault; it's not a criticism of principals. It's just the way thejob is structured. They are just drowning. And it seems to me that one can't separate the
two, that is the whole structure of the way schools are run by and large from the question of really getting the professional development up and running with principals as real leaders and in the districts with superintendents as obviously real instructional leaders.

MS. STOTSKY: That's one piece of thewhole puzzle too and part of trying to get a
handle on all the professional development is the fact that what the schools do for
professional development is not directly under our perusal. We are looking at what independent providers are submitting for proposals. But those kinds of professional
development activities that are sponsored by universities, by accredited organizations and by the local schools were exempt in a sense from the application of our criteria. They were allowed to continue and do what they felt they wanted to do. So there's that whole level of what goes on that at this point as far as I can see do not have any real handle on.

MS KELMAN: You may have answered my question, which was I wondered how you were working with institutions of higher education on professional development both in the development of the state plan and in other ways in terms of the ways in which higher education and the state board can work cooperatively in the professional development of teachers. I know that the Governor is interested in a waiver for teachers who take professional development courses, but I am not aware of
other programs or ways in which the Department has worked with the institutions.

MS. STOTSKY: This is something we would be delighted to do some more with you on when we get together to talk about collaborative activities. This would be in addition to, of course, the masters' degree, the masters' programs, that would be part of getting a professional license. Then we are talking about what takes place after that.
MS. THERNSTROM: I'm not necessarily thinking of the degree itself. One of my
concerns is if the Board of Higher Education needs to be reviewing this, these are the kinds of questions the Board Members will be asking, and at this point I don't have good answers for them.

MS. MAYO-BROWN:: For a number of years the Department has sponsored a substantial amount of summer content institutes, which provide teachers professional development in the area of increasing their subject matter knowledge. Many of those summer content institutes partner with institutions of higher education to offer graduate course credit for teachers participating in those type of activities. So that's another way that the Department is working with higher education around the issue of professional development.

MS. THERNSTROM: I guess one of my questions is you partner with or someone is partnering with the institution, but that just seems to me that that isn't a formalized
effort; is that true?

MS. MAYO-BROWN: Absolutely.

MS KELMAN: I want to say quickly that the State Student Advisory Counsel has filed a bill kind of relating to what Judy was talking about a waiver of tuition at state colleges and universities for teachers trying to fulfill their professional development points.

LISA: Seeing as I am going to be in charge of this the next time I see you all, which is I guess in June. I have only been here for a week and day now. I am trying really hard to get a handle on what we do have some monitoring or regulating power over. It
seems to me we don't have very much, and I have a lot of ideas for ways we could monitor better, and I would love to have your input. And before I come back in June, I am going to try to understand absolutely everything we are allowed to kind of police so that we can make sure the quality of professional development points is the way we encourage it to be or recommend that it be. Right now I don't have a really good understanding of what we are really allowed to do.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: If I could interject quickly, Mr. Chairman, because I know time is getting away way from us. As you know, this is another integration because we are required under the law to provide a state plan. Clearly when the Education Reform Act was passed, there was a lot of thought given to this relationship between local control and state control, and so you see in the law various places where local control was protected. Slowly but surely the people are getting -- various ways there have been impositions of more state control. In the area of professional development there has never been a requirement that people submit, nor do we have the patrol or capacity to review district plans, but the idea was that school improvement plans established by the school counsels would be in concert with the school, the district plan, and obviously in compliance with the state plan. We recently had the legislature pass an outside section directing us to do a report on
how school districts are spending the money which is supposed to go to professional
development, and that's pretty simplistic except we know that the extra money per pupil was really a way to get more money to the suburban districts that weren't taking
advantage or weren't advantaged by the foundation budget. The districts weren't
spending 125 or 150 or 175 on professional development. They will tell you they are
spending it on special ed tuitions and fuel oil. So the whole issue about our control our
leadership was balanced back in 1993. We are seeing a number of efforts including this
Board's imposition of, I think rightfully, recertification regulations, on certification
regulations, on requirements of pre- and post testing, for even in the content institutes.
So it's been a real adhoc system and it was supposed to be. And that's one of the questions this Board is going to have to grapple with, and I am going to be making recommendations. We are going to have to decide whether this Commonwealth wants capacity either at theDepartment or perhaps by third-party providers to provide oversight in professional development planning, et cetera. And that's a question yet to be -- we are really just trying to patchwork it right now. I think we are doing pretty well, but we are going to have to come to the larger issue.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think we need to move on. Thank you all very much. This will be back in June. The next items are a set of proposed technical amendments to the Regulations Governing Education Licensure and Preparation Program Approval. I think this is fairly straight forward.

ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS ON EDUCATIOR CERTFIFICATION/LICENSURE (603 CMR 7.00) - Discussion and Vote

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This is based on input that we received from higher education institutions, individual teachers, and others. So its various clarifications. Anything you want to highly particularly?

MS. STOTSKY: No, I think it's pretty self explanatory that we did respond and explained all of the comments we received. We did not receive many comments, two organizations. But we did our own internal review and we actually had a lot of good questions raised in Ann's unit by the people Cert. Regs. office who are looking at the implementation questions and finding little gaps or holes or glitches in different groups of teachers or administrators in terms of the implementation of the regulations, so we are able to clean up a number of places, and these are basically clarifications of what's in the regs.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69 Section 1B and c. 71, Section 38G, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, Section 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval,* 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

SCHOOL BUILDING ASSISTANCE

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item is School Building Assistance Standards, and particularly the cost standards.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As Jeff comes forward, I would just mention that there has been said, and I think people know, we had originally put out for a recommendation of increasing by 1.7 percent, and I think the Mayor's Association, you heard from the Superintendent's Association, the architects and so forth came forward with a great deal of input. Based on that, perhaps we are in the right place because we didn't go as far as people wanted this to go, but we did move off the 1.7. So I think we have come to an acceptable recommendation that does better reflect what is going on out there and is more closely tracks what's really happening. If you want to add anything, Jeff?

JEFF: I guess the only comment I would make is what makes this a difficult process, and then you can see it from the data that the BSA provided, is there is such a widespread between the low and high end, and what I think we are really trying to shoot for here is a cost factor that is high enough that is it is possible to build a project for that amount but not necessarily so high that every project, no matter how lavish, will come under the cost factor, and that's the narrow line we are trying to walk.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think this is one of those cases where there is sort of this built-in problem which is that a third party, in this case, the State, is paying a large percentage, in some cases 90 to 95 percent of the cost, and another organization, another level of government is managing the project itself. So it's the mismatch between the responsibility for spending the money and the source of the funds that creates this tension. And we use cost standards as a means on trying to manage or put at least some basic limitations on it to make sure there is some reasonable accountability at the state level for the dollars that it's providing. So weneed to have cost standards to maintain that kind of tension in this sort of bifurcated system, and I think it's entirely appropriate for us to do so. The other thing that we need to keep in mind is that it would be on the one hand very easy for us to raise the cost standards to whatever number made the people comfortable, but we

have to assume we are working in the context of a fixed dollar amount appropriated by the legislature for the purpose of funding school building construction. The higher the cost goes for each individual project, the fewer projects we can fund. So there really is a trade off between fully funding, if that's the right word, individual projects and funding as many projects across the state as we can. And that trade off is very real, and I think, again, we are striking the appropriate middle ground. The other thing I would say is I think a lot of this gets back to an issue we haven't fully addressed yet but I think we need to, which is looking at the design requirements for the construction of school buildings and trying to introduce as much flexibility as possible so that local districts have a wider array of options they can choose from when trying to figure out how to manage to a budget. Right now there are very strict design requirements that make it hard for a community to do the kinds of things that in the private sector might seem to be rational and might make the kind of design and construction trade offs that seem rational without sacrificing quality, so I think we need to look at that in order to create as much flexibility as possible for local level. One quick question. The cost standards go up essentially by $10 in each category but they are starting from different bases so the percentage increase is different and actually sort of declines from elementary through to vocational school. Is there a logic?

JEFF: The bulk of the reason for recommending the higher amount is in anticipation of the new state energy code or building code dealing with energy efficiency that takes effect July 1st, and we have been told by a number of sources that that's going
to cost projects, public and private, anywhere from $5 to $7 a square foot and it really
doesn't matter what base you are starting from. That's the amount you are going to have to add into projects, so we are sort of adding in a lump sum on top of the 1.7 percent increase to account for that as a one time adjustment.

On a motion duly made and seconded, It was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, under the authority of G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1B and G.L. c. 70B, Section 3, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with said Chapter 70B and General Laws Chapter 30A, the Administrative Procedure Act, hereby adopt the amemendments to the Regulations on School Construction, 603 CMR 38.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous
MR. THOMAS: What is the implication for the amount of projects that can be accomplished with the increase of the percentage of dollars? I mean obviously there has to be a reaction to the action, and the impact is probably going to be less capacity to accommodate the need out there. How does that impact this?

JEFF: This will probably mean, and again it'll really come back to this Board, a
year from now, which is the first time we expect to be in a position of having more
applications than we can reasonably expect to fund over the next five-year period, and
certainly the increment of $10 a square foot means that there is probably going to be a half dozen projects that we won't be able to say yes to because of rising costs and basically level funding that this program has seen over the last several years.

MR. THOMAS: So I guess the natural follow-up question is are we willing to live
with that? Can we afford to live with that in light of the need that's out there with respect to the construction? I understand the interest of those who are prospective providers with regard to construction and what their

issues are and obviously there is an impact on localities with respect to their having to come up with more dollars if in fact they don't fall within the range, but in terms of the greater public good, in looking at the macrame of this whole issue, are we willing to live with six less projects than we need? We don't have the capacity for as many as we do need.

JEFF: The flip side is do you want to provide incentives for districts even more so than we do now to cut corners and the projects we build are perhaps not as high quality. That's the trade off that this Board really has to make.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You're raising exactly the right question because too often we make the decisions and pay no attention to what the trade off is, which is that suddenly we are -- as much money to fund in total the projects that we might like to fund and so some of those projects are going to have to wait at least a year or more. But the balancing act that we've got here is that we have an obligation to use cost stantards that reasonably approximate the real world that districts are confronting and not to sort of arbitrarilily keep that number below market simply to contain our own costs; but by the same token I think we need to be leaning against the wind rather than blowing in the direction of the wind. My view is this strikes that balance. And obviously as we heard earlier and as we can see in the report, there are some who would like us to go much beyond what we've done.

MR. THOMAS: Just responding to that healthy tension that you were speaking of earlier

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Henry, you are absolutely right. That's absolutely right. And the other tension is in the fact that we are getting to the point where it's going to be five years or more than five years for schools to be able to start construction or get approved rather. So these bond anticipated notes for five years -- we are goin to exceed that five years for the first time. There is definitely tensions on both sides and I do think we have struck the right balance as well.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with 603 CMR 38.09 and on recomendation of the Commissioner, hereby approve emergency grants for the projects listed on the Attached List A.**

NORTH ATTLEBORO: Emergency grant for ceiling replacement at the Community Elementary School, Final approved cost of $15,196

SOUTHERN WORCESTER: Emergency grant for asbestos abatement at the Technical High School, estimated cost not to exceed $363,371.

The vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We have the waiver of the cost standards for a number of -- I think its about eight or ten -- districts, and we have outlined them all in the memo.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with 603 CMR 38.13 and on recommendation of the Commissioner, hereby waive the cost standards of 603 CMR 38.06 for the following projects currently on the Priority List:**

Town of Schrewsbury - High School Project, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $3,936,771

Town of Stoneham - Central Elementary, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $882,954

Town of Stoneham - South Elementary, proviede that said waiver shall not exceed $321,403

Town of Salem - Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary School, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $496,130

Town of Arlington - Pierce Elementary, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $717,800 or 10% of the allowable square footage costs minus the equipment allotment at time of construction,

City of New Bedford - Keith Middle School, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $3,887,906 or 10% of the allowable square footage costs minus the equipment allotment at time of construction,

City of Peabody - New Elementary School, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $635,000

City of Revere - NewMiddle School, provided that said waiver Shall not exceed $1,896,120 or 10% of the allowable square footage costs minus the equipment allotment at time of construction,

provided further that said waivers shall be subject to such additional terms and conditions as may be imposed by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you. I do want to mention, I may mention MASBO, the Mass. Association of School Business Officials, every year gives a President's Award, it's almost always--it's always been a MASBO member school business official. This year it went to a Department of Eduation employee, Jay Sullivan for all the work he does in schools. Congratulations.

APPROVAL OF CHARTER SCHOOLS MATTERS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We have Susan Barker with us and Rebecca Holmes, wo Joins us for the first time-- I think the last time I went to introducre tyou they voted before you got to the table. Theare going to vote quickly again, I hope.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, there are two items. One is the contract, which, and by the way people understand, there is a requirement for the Board to approve these managment contracts both when they are initially created upon the issuance of a charter as well as when they get renewed. And then there is a waiver request related to the New Bedford Global Learning Charter School. So maybe we should take the Renaissance Contract first.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. And I just quickly mention because there's been some publicity, and I'm sorry about the negative publicity. I think -- from my perspective, the process of the review by the Inspector General going back to the Sabis Contract in Springfield, was, I think, a very positive process. I mean, you've got a national company that has their sort of boiler plate and we have these local issues here in Massachusetts, and I think this Board did the right thing based on our recommendation, wihich was to make changes in the contract where they had to be made, where Massachusetts calls for changes.

And we want the Board of Trustees to have proper oversight to represent the school, et cetera, to take the fiduciary responsibility and otherwise. On the other hand, there are issues that are really not a matter of law or contract; it's reall what we wnat for -- what we think is the best interes of the students. And in that regard, we are allowed and we promote the ability of these companies to exercise there expertise and effectiveness. So, that's the balance and I think we've done it here again, and I'm very happy to recomment this with you, the management contract between the Boston Renaissance and the Edison School. I think we have struck that balance between what we expect the Board of Trustees to do on behalf of the local students and parents and so forth and what the management contract needs to be.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And the one thing I draw people's attention to in this particular contract, which is on page 37, is that the contract can be canceled at any time based on the school's or the students', in this case, inability to make reasonable progress toward achieving student and school performance goals. And that's a critical feature of this management contract and actually mot managment contract. The other thing is the termination of the agreement at the end of this particular agreement, which I guess is four years. The Board of Directors can terminate without cause for any reason at all. So there is, I believe, in this case and again I think in most cases where there are management contracts ample opportunity for the board of Trustees of the charter school to exercise their fiduciary and educational responsibility if in fact the provider is not delivering what was promised.

MS. BARKER: I would echo both of your comments and say that actually this contract process combined with the one in Springfield has made many Boards of Trustees looking forward to the process of renegotiating their contracts and being able to firm up the language, so it's been a benefit.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.03(2), hereby grant a waiver of the requirements in 603 CMR Section 1.04 (4) (b) to New Bedford Global Learning Charter School. This waiver allows New Bedford Global Learning Charter School to open in the Fall of 2002 instead of Fall of**

2001. Such waiver also operates to amend the charter granted to New Bedford Global Learning Charter School.

The motion passed 7-1 with one abstention.

MS. BARKER: The folks in New Bedford have a Horace Mann Charter and have worked Very hard to create a very detailed memorandum of understanding. As some – as at least one member of the Board can attest to, the Charter School statues regarding Horace Mann leave many of the local decisions about the charter up to the local school committee and the founders of the school. And so the folks in New Bedford are to be applauded for their hard work at getting a good memorandum of understanding together. In that process, one of the things that they realized is that they need an extension on their opening date in order to make sure they had all of the correct systems in place to have the school be successful from the day it opens its doors. So with that, what they are asking for a waiver to the regulation requiring a charter school to open its doors in 19 months.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And we are reasonably confident that a year from now they will in fact—

MS. BARKER: --be ready to open? Yes.

MS. SCHAEFER: Something came across my desk yesterday, and I wanted to distribute it to the Members of the Board. These are summer programs that are being offered in the Worcester Public Schools, and I thought it was a good example of how some of our Education Reform money is being used.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If there is nothing else, we are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.