COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 28, 2002

Randolph High School
Randolph, Massachusetts
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT

JAMES A. PEYSER, Chairman, Dorchester
HENRY M. THOMAS, III, Vice-Chairman, Springfield
CHARLES BAKER, Swampscott
J. RICHARD CROWLEY, Andover
JUDITH I. GILL, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education
WILLIAM K. IRWIN, JR., Wilmington
JAMES MADDEN, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Randolph
ROBERTA SCHAEFER, Worcester
ABIGAIL M. THERNSTROM, Lexington

DAVID P. DRISCOLL, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

Chairman Peyser called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Randolph. Thank you all for coming. There are few Board members who are finding their way here, presumably, through traffic, but they will be here soon. Given the agenda, as well as the public comment period we have scheduled for today, we will try to get started. Mr. Commissioner, do you want to introduce our host?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'd be very happy to introduce an old friend. I do want to comment that the principal of the high school, George Linehan, is, as we speak, undergoing minor surgery, so he is not with us today. Bob Johnson, the assistant principal, is busy doing several other things, senior week, at least, so it's my pleasure to introduce the superintendent of schools here in Randolph who does a terrific job, Arthur Melia. Art?

MR. MELIA: Thank you, Commissioner Driscoll. I'd like to welcome Commissioner Driscoll, Chairman Peyser, and all the Board members here to the Randolph Public Schools. It's certainly an honor to have you come here and have your meeting in the Randolph High School.

Randolph is a very unique community, as many of you probably are aware. We have five elementary schools. We have one school that's exclusively devoted to kindergarten and early childhood programs over there with kindergarten classes in the morning and afternoon. We have a middle school that houses approximately 800 students that just came on line in 1999. There had been a junior high school that had been, essentially, abandoned for a while, and through the help of the Department of Education, we renovated and added on to that building, and we had a 66

percent reimbursement rate through SBAB, and I'm glad to announce that the money has already started to come in. It came in very quickly, so we certainly appreciate your efforts in funding that program at that time.

The community itself is made up of approximately 33,000 people. We have 51 different primary languages spoken at home in Randolph, and we have a couple of bilingual programs that we run as well. I think you'll notice, as you go around Randolph and as you go around the school, you'll see a commitment to learning here in Randolph. Two years ago, in the year 2000, Randolph was the third highest improved community in the state on the MCAS examination. We were proud that that had happened. And the high school this past year was recognized as one of the finalists for the Compass Schools, so we've been steadily improving. When the list comes out in the paper each year, we're not at the top of the list. You know, we're on the right hand side somewhere down near the bottom of the middle of the bottom, but we're working our way up, and I think what you'll see is over time, you'll see an improvement by the students.

I can give you one quick statistic. Back in 1999, we had 108 students out of 225 who scored tantamount to zero on the test. They were between 200 and 203. This past year, we had one student that was in that category. Our passing rate went from 40 percent, back in 1999, to 78 percent now that have passed the MCAS. So I think that that indicates, certainly, the motivation on the part of the students as we get closer and closer to the point where it counts, and it also indicates a real serious nature of both students and teachers and the whole aspect of teaching and learning in the Randolph Public Schools.

I would welcome all of you, if you have an opportunity at the end of your meeting, and I know you have very lengthy agenda, to take a tour around the high school, look at the facilities. Our maintenance and custodial people do a terrific job. Most everything that's been done in here, we do it out of our own budget, with our own people, and you'll notice the environment and the atmosphere in the hallways, in the classroom. You'll see students and teachers that are really dedicated to this whole process. We have speaking later today one of the members of our School Committee who's been on the School Committee for almost 24 years and was a past president of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and that's Bob Gass, and he's done a terrific job for us and he's representing us here today as well. There are a lot of people in the audience here, and some of them, I know, will come up to speak with you later, but we welcome you, we hope you have a good meeting and you're always welcome to come back and see us again. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you very much. Now, as those of you, certainly, on the Board, and most of you in the audience know as well, the reason we're here at Randolph is not entirely random. Every year, the Board of Education holds a meeting in the spring at the high school of the student who serves on the Board of Education. This year, as you're all aware, James Madden has been the student member of the Board. Actually, I think we have, at least two student member alumnae in the audience today, and so this is almost turning into a reunion. We have been very lucky this year and in the past, but especially this year, in having a student member who is intelligent, articulate and informed, not always right, but he's always informed and challenging and has not been afraid to speak his mind at Board meetings and to make not only his views known, but, also, the views of the Student Advisory Council, which is one of the roles that he serves, as being spokesman for that council for students generally in the Commonwealth. He has acquitted himself very well in that responsibility for the last year, and even though he has, I guess, two more meetings -- July you're done. There's one more meeting after this.

This is the time when we, on the Board and in the Department, honor the student member, and there are a couple of aspects to this. One is a Certificate of Appreciation and another is a small token of appreciation, but let me read this Certificate of Appreciation to James Madden:

"Elected by your fellow students, you've served as the 2001-2002 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, the MCAS appeals process, revision of the History and Social Science curriculum framework, charter school renewals and school and district accountability. As a student Board member, you've thoughtfully articulated the ideas and concerns of the students in the Commonwealth and have effectively facilitated discussion about that educational policy with your peers.

In addition to your work on the Board, you've provided strong leadership to the State Student Advisory Council. You served as both a Regional and State Student 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've spent many hours after school and on weekends attending meetings and events on behalf of students and the Board and were an extremely effective spokesman at the Board table. You have spent countless hours working on projects for the Student Advisory Council. Just as important, you engaged hundreds of students in discussion and debate about educational policies, encouraged students to submit public comment on policy initiatives and proposed regulations and thoughtfully articulated their views at every Board meeting.

James, 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 for all students in the Commonwealth and your dedication to the students that you represented so admirably. We wish you luck and great success in the future. With thanks and best wishes, James A. Peyser, Chairman of the Board of Education, and David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education."

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just wanted to tell you, James, most of the other students just quietly went back to their seats.

MR. MADDEN: Well, you know, you had me stuck over in the corner there.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm sure we would have gotten you a Palm Pilot, but we would have had to violate ethics rules in order to do that.

MR. MADDEN: Thank you very, very much, and I'd just have to thank you all, especially Chairman Peyser and Commissioner Driscoll, for your support throughout this year. You've been amazingly supporting to the council and myself, with all of our work, and no matter how much we may disagree on the issues, you've been great in supporting us the whole way, so thank you very much.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, again, James. Next, I think we will open up with some comments from myself, then from the Commissioner and then go on to the public comment period. There are just a couple of things I wanted to mention before we get started today. One is that the Commissioner and I have had a number of discussions over the past several months about trying to put together a process and an advisory panel similar to the blue ribbon panel that was put together last year to deal with the appeals process. In this case, though, the panel would

address and develop a specific proposal around state endorsed local certificates for those students who complete their local graduation requirements without having earned their competency determination, in particular, obviously, without having passed the English and mathematics portions of their high school MCAS test. This is, in part, an ongoing discussion we've been having, both at the Board level and off line, but also in response to a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Educational Policy which came out a few months ago. In any event, the Commissioner and I have discussed this and agreed that he will put together such a panel and, over the summer, work to develop a specific proposal that can come back to this Board early next fall for our consideration around developing the state endorsed local certificate and the guidelines and standards that would apply to it, so that's one thing that I wanted to announce, and we'll be hearing more about that as we go forward.

The other has to do with the Lynn Community Charter School process. As Board members certainly know, there has been a hearing that has now concluded. I think briefs have either been submitted or are being submitted as we speak from the two parties, and then the Hearing Officer will be reviewing not only all the testimony, but also the briefs and making an initial decision over the next couple of weeks. There's a period, in terms of the adjudicatory process, whereby the parties have an opportunity to respond in initial decision and then respond to the response, all of which, obviously, can take time. I think both sides have agreed to expedite that process, which may result in our having a special meeting in mid-June to consider this particular case. It may not work out that way, if the timelines don't proceed as we hope, which means this may be back by a June meeting, but in consideration of the fact that students at the Lynn Community Charter School should the school not be open next fall will need to find somewhere else to go to school, will need to engage the local district in a placement process, and that really needs to happen. It really should be happening now, but to some extent certainly isn't because of the uncertainty of the situation, but we need to, to the extent possible, provide some period of time prior to the closing of the school year whereby these students can try to make other arrangements for the fall. In any event, all of that means that sometime, hopefully in the next couple of weeks, we'll have a clearer view as to whether, in fact, this process will come to conclusion in time to have a meeting prior to our end of June meeting, in which case we'll inform you as soon as possible and try to pull that together as quickly as possible. Obviously, it would not be an extended meeting. We, just so Board members recall, are aware voting cannot occur by phone, so as much as you'd like to sort of pull together a conference call and do it that way, in order to actually have a vote, have a quorum to have a vote, we do need to have people in the same room. We will try to make that as convenient and practical as possible for everyone involved. Anyway, we will let you know as soon as possible about the date. With that, we'll return to the Commissioner.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief, knowing it's a long agenda. I do want to comment on the new federal legislation, the new ESEA law, No Child Left Behind. We've had tremendous activity here in Massachusetts making sure that we get ready for all of the paperwork that we need to file in order to apply for various aspects of grants. We've also held statewide workshops for superintendents, principals and others. We've met with various groups to go over the law. We met last week with the Massachusetts Teachers Association representatives, we met with the legislature and their staff, all in an effort to make sure people understand this law, which is going to be far reaching. In fact, it will reach into every classroom in Massachusetts and throughout the country.

There are major policy decisions that will have to be made by this Board relating to accountability, relating to assessment and other aspects, so it's something that's going to

dominate our agenda, and I, at least, wanted to mention that we're well ahead of the curve. In fact, several of us were involved in a conference call with representatives of the U.S. Department of Education as they tried hard to get our guidance on these very complicated issues, and I think we were very helpful here in Massachusetts in presenting some ideas to them as to how to comply with the law and yet allow some flexibility at the state level, which I think the law envisions. This is a law which sets federal standards, much like our state Education Reform Act. The federal government is setting the standards and the outcomes that are required, but then they're allowing states to get there in the way that makes most sense for each state, so in that sense, we've been pleased to be working with the U.S. Department of Education.

A couple of other kudos. First of all, I want to particularly publicly thank Senator Moore of the state legislature, who has taken a leadership role with us around the framework, not an easy thing to wander into, but he has led a committee talking about history and social studies at the high school level, particularly, around civics and government. I wanted to thank him.

I noted in my memo that Jeff Nellhaus received an award from the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Principals Association, and I think that's particularly worthy of note. As many of you may know, Jeff needs to go out and carry the message of MCAS, which is not usually a message that the audience wants to hear. So for him to get an award, given the controversial nature of the assessment program, I think is a great tribute to Jeff and his skills of communication, of straight forward information, of always being willing to listen and to make adjustments. We're a state that makes an awful lot of adjustments and we test the program at some risk of being criticized for not allowing longitudinal studies, et cetera, as we shift grades or shift different testing programs, but it's the right thing for kids, and that's what Jeff stands with, so my compliments to Jeff.

Finally, I particularly want to thank, for their work related to No Child Left Behind, Jeff Nellhaus and Juliane Dow, who've done just a terrific job of assessment and accountability. We are really becoming almost a national model of the way we're working in that regard. I also want to thank Carole Thomson, who does a tremendous job, and, finally, Mark McQuillan, my deputy, who has taken the lead in putting together our effort to comply with No Child Left Behind.

Finally, as my notes suggest, we are losing a very valuable member of our senior team. In fact, Alan Safran has played a number of roles for us. It really didn't matter what his job description was. He's always been there. Alan is a former lawyer and prosecutor out of New York, and, in fact, that helped us one time in a particular case. He used his contacts. He has been a model of a public servant, particularly in promoting public education, working with local districts around the public announcement aspects of education reform, and several other initiatives, most especially recently the MCAS remediation and tutoring--whatever it takes to get kids up over the bar. He has devoted his most recent days focused completely on helping students. He, himself, has negotiated contracts to get all of our students who have yet to pass on the tutorial program through Princeton U, a live tutorial program.

He's just done a tremendous job, and we'll miss him. However, he is going on to bigger and better things, from my perspective, and that is to work at a charter school as the executive director, a charter school in the City of Boston that is serving our minority students, students most in need, and that has become his calling, and I think that's a tremendous goal for him, and we wish him well. We will to miss him. He's done a tremendous job, and I wanted to publicly thank him and wish him well as he goes on to a most difficult challenge, but one that he is up to, and I think will soon show, as is being shown throughout the country, there are ways to get these kids up over bars and meetings standards and being afforded the opportunities that this great country allows, so Alan, best of luck to you as you leave.

DR. THERNSTROM: One question about the future agenda related to what the Commissioner said. I wonder if we could schedule, as part of the regular Board meeting, a discussion of No Child Left Behind and how we intend to respond to the mandates contained within it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Absolutely. Thank you for that. That was one of the down sides to the not having an April meeting, of course, but we will do that, and I think it's, basically, going to be a major part of our agendas going forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Moving on to public comment, the first individual on the list is Steve Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let me point out because he has a commitment out of state in June that surprisingly to me, how time flies, this is officially Steve Gorrie's last meeting before the Board as President of the MTA and the new President, Kathy Boudreau, takes over next year, and I want to publicly thank him for his support and cooperation during his tenure.

Stephen Gorrie, Massachusetts Teachers Association

MR. GORRIE: Thank you, and good morning, and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak today, specifically, about the MCAS test, but, also, on a couple of points of personal privilege. First, let me applaud the fact that Commissioner Driscoll will be withdrawing the proposal to include MCAS scores on the high school transcripts. Secondly, I want to thank James Madden and all the members of the State Student Advisory Council for drafting such a thoughtful memorandum outlining their reasons for opposing the MCAS graduation requirement. You will not be surprised to hear that we share the students' concerns.

After the MCAS retest scores were released last fall, several media outlets reported that MCAS opposition has gone away. I'm here to tell you that that's not true. MTA members continue to have many, many concerns about MCAS. Our periodic random sample polling of teacher members shows us that their concerns have not changed dramatically over the last few years, even though the failure rate has dropped and only one-quarter of the eleventh graders are at risk of failing to graduate next spring. Our most recent poll, which was conducted late November, early December of last year, after the retest results were released, had two or three highlights, which I would like to enumerate. Clearly, three-quarters of our members, 74 percent, said that the state puts too much emphasis on standardized testing in the public schools, and nearly the same percentage, 72 percent, said MCAS does a not so good or a poor job of measuring student performance, and almost four-fifths, 78 percent, said they opposed the policy requiring students to pass the Grade 10 MCAS in order to graduate from high school. This year at our annual meeting, which was held a weekend ago, May 17th and 18th, once again, delegates voted in favor overwhelmingly of a motion to eliminate the current MCAS testing regimen all together and replace it with a system of multiple measures of achievement, as described in MTA Resolution B-30, a copy of which I've attached to my testimony that I gave to Judi. A portion of that reads: "The MTA opposed any use of standardized tests where scores are used inappropriately to compare students, educators, programs, schools and committees or are used as a single criterion for high stakes decision making."

As you know, this is a position held by every major association of educators and assessment experts. We have filed and continue to support legislation which calls for a limited system of standardized tests, coupled with rigorous locally developed classroom-based assessments that are designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all of our classrooms. We believe

many policy makers in this state have lost sight of the fact that the primary use of assessment should be to improve teaching and learning, not to rank or sort students, schools or districts.

Our greatest fear right now is the state's implementation of the new Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act in that it will greatly increase the already burdensome task of testing. As a matter of fact, in some quarters, the No Child Left Behind Act is now being called No School Left Standing. Does it have to be this way? We don't think so. There are several states that are seeking to implement ESEA by relying on more authentic district based accountability. Nebraska is one of those which was featured in the May 22nd issue of Ed Week. I want to quote from one section of that article, though I fear our members here may immediately start packing and head for the mid-west. The Nebraska Commissioner of Education, Doug Christianson, described state tests as score keeping devices rather than tools that can help teachers in the classroom. "You take an athletic contest," begins Christianson, "Just knowing the final score at the end of the game doesn't tell you anything about how the game was played. It just tells you whether you won or lost. "

So coaches aren't able to do much about their coaching based upon the scores. They do it based upon data they collect daily, what happens during the game and during practices. The same is true of instruction. It's day to day work in the classroom that counts, not the scores on a once a year state level test. “Besides," he added, and this was in bold, "I'm opposed to absolutely anything that removes teacher judgment from decision making." The last phrase especially is music to my ears, and if I could have one wish, as I prepare to leave my post, that would be it, that the policy makers in this state and at the national level took a page from Commissioner Christianson's book. I wish they spent less time and energy focused on complex and often irrational test score improvement goals, such as those required under the ridiculous adequate yearly progress provisions of the new Federal ESEA law, and more time thinking about how to work with teachers on developing assessment tools that will help them improve their day-to-day instructional practices for the benefit of nearly one million students in our schools. I'm not sure I'll be granted that wish, but maybe one smaller one, with your indulgence for just one more minute on a personal note.

Since this is near the end of James Madden's term as well, I want to take a moment to commend him for his wisdom and his hard work. It makes me proud to be a teacher when I think that James is a product of our public schools, and, of course, I'm doubly proud when I think that he came to the schools in this community of Randolph, a community in which my wife, Jackie, and I reside, and we call home. As a matter of fact, I probably had the shortest ride, next to James today, and was almost late. At our annual meeting, on May 18th, James was the youngest person ever to be awarded the MTA President's Award, one of several major honors he has received in his short life. James, we wish you the very best of luck, and we expect we'll be hearing a lot more from you in the years to come.

And, finally, and I always put that in anything I say because a very well-known economist, John Kenneth Galbreath, always said you put that in to give people hope, whether you're finished or not. Finally, as Commissioner Driscoll alluded to, this is probably my final meeting at the Board of Education. As you know, we do have term limits at MTA, and my term ends on July 15th, and I'll be leading our delegation in the end of June at the National Convention, in Dallas, but rest assured, however, I'll be watching, albeit from a different vantage point, the deliberations and the actions of this Board. At our last, at our MTA annual meeting last weekend, our current vice president, Cathy Boudreau, was elected president, and many of you know Cathy. She's a long time leader at MTA, a faculty member of Massassoit Community College, and now you'll have two Cathys to contend with, Cathy Boudreau and the abominable Kathy Kelley, from our sister organization. Our new vice president will be Ann Wass, a sixth grade teacher from Hanover,

again, a long time MTA activist, and I know that both our new leaders will do an excellent job representing the interests of our members, and they look forward to working with this Board of Education. It's been a wild ride, but one of those I don't think I would have traded for anything. I do thank you for your indulgence, and best of luck in your deliberations in the future.

Robert Gass, Randolph School Committee

MR. GASS: Commissioner, Board, friends, my experience, speaking from this stage, goes back to 1964, when I graduated Randolph High School, and more recently as Chairman of the Randolph School Committee, making pleas to those assembled, those assembled being the different constituencies, being town meeting. Two years ago, I spoke to Chairman Peyser after a local government advisory council meeting at the Governor's office, and I told him that Randolph had scored extremely poorly, as the superintendent indicated, and we asked the town for more money. The foundation minimum is what the town meeting had consistently supported us with. We received more funds from the town meeting the last three years, after much debate and discussion, as you can imagine, but I remember Chairman Peyser saying to me, after our discussion, and not that he and I would necessarily agree on all things, that the key would be to continue that financial support and continue that community support, and that's what we are struggling to do in this unique community.

I want to comment briefly on that, but I have two things to say first. The first is to thank James Madden. He has done an incredibly good job. As a member of the Board, I remember James umpiring games in South Randolph Little League where he was playing. I think James would agree that he made the right decision in pursuing academics as opposed to athletics. He's also, as far as we can tell, the first graduate of Randolph High School who will be attending Swarthmore College next year on full scholarship, and he also may be, I suspect, following another Swarthmore graduate possibly into politics in the Commonwealth, former Governor Dukakis, who always was very proud of his connection to Swarthmore. I know James is very committed and concerned about public policy in general in government, so we wish him only the best.

I also would like to comment that the Randolph School Committee is one of the few committees in the Commonwealth that has had a student representative actually before the Education Reform Act. Actually, the late eighties, we had a member on our School Committee from the high school student body, and the last three years, the School Committee in Randolph is one of the few in the Commonwealth to consistently support giving the student School Committee member a vote. I know that's something that the Student Advisory Council has consistently advocated for, and we have taken a position on that consistently to grant it. We have found, in the Randolph School Committee, sometimes to our dismay, but always to our earnest hope that the student School Committee member actually is often the one making the most sense at the meetings, and certainly, when it comes to policies related to the high school, so we thank James for that.

We thank James for his consistent outspoken comments, and we also particularly thank him for the way he has done it. He really has gone back to his constituents, to his student body, friends and colleagues, not only in Randolph, but elsewhere in the Commonwealth, and asked their opinions and then try to congeal that into his own remarks and his own feedback to the Board, and we think that's a model that the adults could learn from. Also, certainly, I'll speak locally, something that we struggle with all the time at our local level, so we thank James for that.

I also want to speak as past president of the Mass. Association of School Committee's previous speaker, President Gorrie, talked about the MTA. The Mass. Association of School Committees, as you know, with their past delegate assembly, has voted to sponsor legislation and to ask the

Board to hold on the competency determination requirement for 2003, primarily because of the issues stated in the memo that you received from James and other discussions, certainly, this Board has been struggling with over the last three years, having to do with the achievement gap amongst different racial and ethnic groups in the Commonwealth, having to do with vocational education, having to do with special education and having to do with bilingual education and first language speakers. This community in Randolph is a classic example of that.

We have one of the most racially diverse communities in the Commonwealth. We have more -- I'll give you an example. Every one of our schools almost has the same ratio and ethnic background. There's not section of town that is a particular ethnic group section of town. You go to any one of our elementary schools, and you will find a diverse population of African-American, of Asian, of Caucasian and a variety of other groups.

Additionally, if you ring the doorbell in any house in this community, any house in this community, you do not know who will answer, as far as what language they speak and what color they are. That's a very unique characteristic in this Commonwealth. Randolph is the second community behind Boston with the most homes owned by African-Americans in the Commonwealth, and that's a change that has taken place over the last decade. At the same time, our MCAS scores were at the bottom. Additionally, we have worked hard to improve them, but as someone who has consistently gone out and rang doorbells on behalf of public education, has consistently co-hosted forums on behalf of public education, what I fear by the move to the high school diploma issue in terms of MCAS in 2003, what I fear is that communities like Randolph, who have not had the resources, have not had the resources poured into them, like the cities, across the Commonwealth, we will go backwards. We will go backwards, the reason being primarily, number one, it's a state crisis. We will be hard pressed to keep local aid at the current level. I do not believe we can get additional local support, whether it's an override or whether it's any town meeting resources from any flexible funds, the so-called rainy day funds which are fairly limited in this community.

And thirdly, the majority of the people in the Commonwealth, majority of the people in Randolph, view the MCAS score like they do the ESPN script on the bottom of what the score is for the day. They don't know what the issues are. They don't know about the achievement gap, and let me close on this. For example, in this community, one thing that we have had is, we've disaggregated the data. The longer you are with us in this community, the better you do on MCAS. What does that mean? What that means is as we've disaggregated the data, all of our kids across all ethnic groups, African-American, Asian, Caucasian, variety of linguistic speakers, have scored ten to twelve points higher if they started the school system in kindergarten or first grade. The fact remains that close to 50 percent of our eighth graders, when we tested two years ago, moved into this community in the last two years. That issue of the dynamism of the population is a significant one for this community, and my fear is that the competency determination of 2003 for a community like Randolph will, in fact, exacerbate the view between the rich and the poor. This is a hard working community. We are a low middle class, blue collar community that is very proud of what it is that we do. We feel that the MCAS has helped marginalize our students, and we do not believe they deserved that. We would ask the Board to give careful consideration as it looks to its proper role.

Final comment is on the federal act. Comments were made by Dr. Thernstrom in terms of having a meeting on that. The Commissioner alluded to it in his remarks, as did the previous speaker. I think the phrase that could be used is bibliobesity in terms of the Leaving No Child Behind Act. I believe that where that fits in, in terms of the competency determination, needs to be carefully considered, so I would ask this Board, in their due deliberations, to consider that as they proceed. I know, as a School Committee member, I'm proud of the fact that you work so hard on behalf of

our students. We may disagree, but we do believe that you really do have the interest of our students at heart, and we can ask you to continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Patricia Markunas, President of the Massachusetts State College Association

MS. MARKUNAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There won't be any problem with the beeper. I will be very brief. I appreciate the Board's attention this morning. I want to thank the Commissioner, as did President Gorrie, for withdrawing the proposal to list MCAS performance scores on high school transcripts. Our Board of Directors did take a position in opposition to that proposal in March, and we feel very strongly that MCAS was not designed for college admissions, for employment use, or use by other agencies, both public and private, and that to have listed these scores on transcripts could be very detrimental to students, to the educational process, to their families and, ultimately, to the institutions, nine of which I'm very proud to represent.

I was concerned with the Commissioner's comment in this morning's paper that the proposal might resurrect itself in three to five years. The MCAS was not designed as a test of college admissions, in particular, and so I would be concerned that it would be used in that fashion. College admissions tests, any standardized tests, you design the purpose first; then, you develop the test. That's how it's validated, and then you determine its reliability. It's not appropriate to develop the test first and then decide how you're going to use it, so I doubt that the Board's position would change on this issue. You have written copies of my testimony. I thank you, again, for your attention, and good luck with your meeting today.

Christina Perez, FairTest

MS. PEREZ: Good morning. I work as the university testing reform advocate for FairTest in Cambridge, and I'm here to speak out against any efforts to use MCAS for college admissions decisions. The proposal to include MCAS results on student transcripts that has been withdrawn by the Commissioner was clearly an attempt to use MCAS as part of the admissions process for state public colleges and universities. There are many reasons why this proposal generated massive public outcry. MCAS was not designed to measure the skills of preparation likely to predict success in college, nor has it been validated for use as a college admissions test. Using MCAS for college admissions disadvantages Massachusetts public school students. Parochial, private and out-of-state students who are currently not required to take MCAS will not have MCAS be part of their college applications, resulting in additional hurdles to college admissions for MCAS public school students that others will not need to face. Using MCAS for college admissions will be particularly harmful for students of color, low income students, those with special needs. The low percentage of these students in the proficient and advanced categories will hinder efforts at state public colleges and universities to enroll a diverse student body.

Including MCAS in the college admissions process will also put added pressure on parents to spend money on tutors and coaching classes. Much like the SAT, students from more affluent families who can afford one of the expensive MCAS coaching classes will have a leg up in the college admissions process. Additional taxpayer dollars will be spent on administering, scoring and reporting the retests. This money could be better spent on teacher training, reducing class size and other needed improvements. Last year, the Board of Higher Education debated the very issue of using MCAS as a state college admissions test. The idea was quickly shot down due to opposition from state public college and university administrators.

More than 150 groups and individuals, including college faculty and administrators, education organizations, civil rights groups, elected officials, school committees, teachers and parents have

spoken out against this latest proposal. This idea keeps resurfacing because Massachusetts Department of Education has agreed to participate in the American Diploma Project, a Washington, DC, based group advocating for the use of state exit exams in college admissions. Now, the Boston Globe article from this morning indicated that using MCAS for college admissions may, again, be under consideration in three to five years. This is an idea that finally needs to be put to rest by the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education. FairTest and the 150 other groups and individuals opposed to the use of MCAS for college admissions do not support such measures now, nor will we in the future. It is time to listen to what the people of Massachusetts want, rather than what is being pushed upon the Commonwealth by an outside organization. Thank you for your time.

Janet Buerklin, K-8 Social Studies Coordinator, Newton Public Schools

MS. BUERKLIN: Good morning. My name is Janet Buerklin, and I'm the K-8 coordinator for History and Social Sciences in Newton. I know that a new draft of the History and Social Sciences framework will be presented this morning. My comments will reference what I call a renegade copy of the latest document, an unofficial copy I received by e-mail. The latest draft still leaves in the concerns.

First, I believe that the scope of topics and developmental levels of suggested learning standards in the K-8 sequence are unrealistic expectations at many grades, for example, World History from 500 to 1800. In Newton, that very sequence of standards leaves our ninth graders bleary eyed and without a real sense of the important issues. Do we really expect eighth grade students to be better able to handle that huge expansive history as suggested in my renegade version? The scope is too far-reaching and unfocused for real understanding and appreciation of history. Appropriate developmental expectations have been addressed in some places in this new framework, but not others. The practical voice of elementary and middle school teachers in the field is still missing. For example, I believe ten year old fifth graders are not ready to grapple with the abstract ideas of government and the U.S. Constitution and have little life experience to bring to that topic. Expecting fifth grade students to have any knowledge of or interest in state and federal government is not realistic because they're not developmentally ready to handle it.

We continue to have the framework draft that minimizes the contributions and histories of those who live in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Yes, my renegade copy expects the study of Mexico in fourth grade, but it's mostly a geographic study. Why not focus on the lives of real people who live there? There are literature achievements, the phenomenal Mayan, Aztec histories. In the world history sequences, the learning standards related to Latin America, Asia and Africa are few, non-specific and frequently stated in relation to the western world. The inference, I believe, continues to be that these stories and histories are of little importance so they can be tucked in and possibly forgotten.

If it were my job to craft this document, what would I do? Well, particularly, at the elementary and middle school levels, I would release the obligation to study history as straight chronology and instead focus on the major themes of History and Social Sciences. These themes are the big ideas of history which I believe are lost in all the copies of the frameworks I have reviewed. If we continue to view history as a list of facts, people and dates, that is all our students will learn and forget. Using big ideas, ideas like movement, power, change in continuity and so on, and learning about these ideas as they play out across time and cultures will give dignity to all the eras of history and all cultures of people. These are the big ideas that will permeate the lives of this nation's children in the future. Please, let's not stuff kids' heads with miscellaneous facts, but organize the vast expanse of history, and, finally, given the scope of the changes since the December draft, it is reprehensible to pass out this document and pass it finally without a

legitimate period of public comment. I urge you to slow the process of passage down. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I do want to suggest that I'll correct a number of other things later, but I do want to point out that the history framework is not being voted today and won't be voted until, at least, the fall so that is not our intent.

Elizabeth Louis, Director of Curriculum Instruction, Canton Public Schools

MS. LOUIS: Good morning, Chairman Peyser, members of the Board, Commissioner Driscoll. Thank you for permitting me to speak this morning. My name is Elizabeth Louis, and I'm Director of Curriculum and Instruction in Canton. You're surely aware of the four Ps of decision making, product, process, people and politics. I would like to talk briefly this morning about how the process that led to and will lead from the social studies draft that you considered this morning will affect the only important people, the children.

To you, the process of producing the new social studies frameworks must make you feel like latter-day Don Quixotes. So many contradictory, strong and valid agendas have needed to be considered. You probably have wondered whether there will ever even be an end game to this. In fact, it's probably impossible to integrate all of those agenda fully. I know that the staff of the DOE has tried to do so, but it is surely a measure of how closely tied the social studies frameworks are to our visions of American democracy and of a United States' place in the world that there has been so much ensuing debate. But please understand, from the point of view of those of us who work assiduously to align our curriculum to the state frameworks, as well as to produce genuine, rich, standards based curriculum for the students, the draft you will discuss today labeled in the May 17th memo as final is a wholly different social studies framework from that which the public comment draft proposed from January to March. Frankly, it would be difficult to speak purposefully of the advisability and intellectual coherence of the changes because the details of this draft have yet to be released to us in open session.

The memo speaks to a three to five U.S. History sequence, but, in fact, it is a Grade 2 to 5 sequence. I can't personally speak about whether or not there is a worthy world history set of standards or whether it parallels the course I took 46 years ago in Holyoke, Massachusetts, which I less than fondly recall as the fauna and flora of Brazil. In this matter, I tend to agree with Janet Buerklin. So, in that context, I urge you not to be precipitous in your final vote. I am so glad to have just heard a few minutes ago, Commissioner Driscoll say that it will happen in the fall. I urge you not to make that September. Please, give the public, please, give the professionals who work with the children adequate change to review and comment on this document. Our children deserve no less, and it is an important subject that should not be hurried into final form. Thank you very much.

Joseph O'Sullivan, Brockton Education Association

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Good morning. I'm here to pay my respects to Mr. Madden and to the Board, and I have brief story, a written comment. I was in this room a year and a half ago. Mr. Madden may recall the posters that used to be hanging up in here about the Drama Club presentations in Randolph. The Art Department Director, Barbara Hughes, passed away, and there was a recognition ceremony here. She had done those. They're now being reframed, so I'm sorry you don't get to see them. An incredible thing happened at that meeting. A young graduate of Randolph High, he's now in his late thirties, named Scott Bedneck (phonetic), was the first speaker, and he got up to a microphone in front of about 70 other friends, colleagues and former students, and he said, I can name the day, the year, the hour, and the minute when

Barbara Hughes changed my life. He said, you see, I met her when I was a sophomore at Randolph, I loved art, but I was playing the college admission game. I was taking the courses that would increase my class rank in order to get scholarship bidding. I loved art, and I knew that I could take it any way and not affect my rank, but when the first report card came out, I got a C+ in art. I immediately went to see Barbara Hughes and complained, and said, there must be something wrong. I know what I've done in art. She looked at him, handed his report card back and said, oh, I see, you think I'm comparing you with everyone else. That changed his life. He flew in from California where he runs a graphic arts studio in Hollywood. He's an incredibly wealthy person and a success, and it talks to me about what's wrong with MCAS.

Teachers need not to compare students with everyone else. They need to reach out and get their maximum that they can from each of them, so I share that with you from a former student, former -- hopefully, the posters will be back up because I miss them today. Okay. Beyond that, a very brief written comment today, I mean, very brief. I brought with me a piece that I thought would be appropriate, and it's entitled Times Change, Responsibilities Don't, and it was written by George William Curtis, and it's called The Duty of the American Scholar, and I bought it because it exemplifies what James has done. By the way, he was editor of The Atlantic during the Civil War.

"Do you ask me our duty of scholars? Gentlemen, thought, which a scholar represents, is life and liberty. There is no intellectual or moral life without liberty. Therefore, as a man must breathe and see before he can study, the scholar must have liberty first of all and, as the American scholar is a man and has a voice in his own government, so his interest in political affairs must precede all others. He must build his house before he can live in it. He must be a perpetual inspiration of freedom and politics. He must recognize an intelligent exercise of political rights which is a privilege in a monarchy, is a duty in a republic. If it clashed with his ease, his retirement, his taste, his study, let it clash, but let him do his duty. The course of events is incessant, and when the good deed is slighted, the bad deed is done."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That ends the public comment period so we're on to the business portion of the agenda. The first item is the minutes. Does anybody wish to make a motion—

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm sorry. I have a correction. It's on Page 13, and I can give it to you afterwards.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2002 as amended.**

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

MCAS UPDATE

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is a discussion on MCAS, and there are three components to this. One is, first of all, an update on the MCAS results. Since we didn't have an April meeting, we weren't able to have a presentation on the results from the December retest. Now, obviously, we're here, and there is a report in your books, and Jeff will go over it briefly. He'll be followed by Bill Guenther, who similarly has a report that came out that would have been part of our last meeting, but, again, since we didn't have it, relating to survey MCAS or

students who had, I guess they were juniors who had not passed MCAS in their sophomore year. Then we will have discussion which will be led by James Madden. So with that, Jeff, why don't you begin?

MR. NELLHAUS: Thank you, Jim. Let me begin by summarizing the extent to which students in the class of 2003 have earned the competency determination by going back to last spring's tests. As you know, last spring was the first year in which the Grade 10 tests counted as a criterion for graduating from high school. The results of the spring 2000 tests were notable in that a much higher percentage of sophomores earned at least a score of needs improvement on both the English and math tests from previous years. In total, 68 percent of the 68,000 students reported in the tenth grade last spring passed both tests, up from around 50 percent of previous years.

Students in the class of 2003 who still need to earn a competency determination were provided with another testing opportunity in December of 2001. Students participating in the December retests were primarily students who failed one or both of the tests last spring or eleventh grade students who transferred into Massachusetts public schools at the very end of last year or the beginning of this school year and were taking the test for the first time. The results of the December tests reported early in March indicated that 48 percent of the 12,000 students who took the English language arts test passed and 31 percent of the 15,000 students who took the math test passed.

Now, based on the results of last spring's tests and this December's retests, we have updated the percentage of students in the class of 2003 who have earned a competency determination. This was accomplished by combining records from the spring and fall tests and linking those records to enrollment records reported by districts this fall through the Student Information Management System. As you know, the MCAS results, as well as the enrollment data we collect from districts through the SIMS system, have a student identification number, and that link was accomplished with the use of that important variable called the SASID. The results of the link indicated, one, that the size of the class of 2003 decreased since last spring from about 68,000 students to about 64,000 students. That's a decrease that's similar to previous years. We usually see this decrease between the tenth and the eleventh grade, and it's primarily due to transfers in and out of the state, dropouts, grade retention and a number of other factors.

Of the 64,000 students who are currently in the class of 2003 as of this fall, approximately 76 percent have now earned the competency determination. That's a figure up from 68 percent last spring. This means that just under 70 percent of the 64,000 students currently in the class of 2003 have met the state criterion for graduation and that approximately 15,000 students still need to do so by passing one or both of the tests. Let me note that while 76 percent have earned the competency determination statewide, the figure varies by school district where as many as 100 percent of students have earned the competency determination in some school systems and less than half have earned the competency determination in others. The proportion of students who have earned the competency determination is 91 percent or higher in about a quarter of the districts and 75 percent or lower in another quarter of the districts so in about half of the districts, the proportion of students who have earned the competency determination ranges from 76 to 90 percent.

The report in your Board package provides data by district on the percentage of students who have earned the competency determination and some other information which I'll summarize very briefly now. Of the 15,000 students who still need to earn a competency determination, slightly under 9,000 still need to pass both tests. About 5,000 need only to pass the math test, and around 1,500 or 1,600 need to pass the English test only. Of those students who took the retest in

December and failed, nearly two-thirds of them scored 216 or a 218. While a disproportionate number of students in the class of 2003 who still need to earn a competency determination are students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, minority students and students enrolled in vocational technical schools, the majority of white students were enrolled in regular education programs. Specifically, 50 percent of students who need to earn a competency determination are white; 59 percent are enrolled in regular education programs. Black and Hispanic students each comprise about 17 percent of the pool of students who still need to earn a competency determination. Students with disabilities comprise about 28 percent of the poll, and limited English proficient students comprise about 13 percent of the poll.

The percentage of students who have earned the competency determination will likely rise again as a result of the retesting opportunity provided to students this month. Participation in this spring's retesting program is expected to be high as schools requested materials to retest approximately 15,000 students in English language arts and 19,000 students in mathematics. The quantity of test materials requested includes tests for students who are attempting to improve their MCAS scores to qualify for a Certification of Mastery as well as those attempting to earn a competency determination.

Let me conclude by saying that we intend to provide districts with information about how students fared on the multiple choice questions included in this spring's Grade 10 English and math tests by the end of June. Complete item analysis reports, that is, scores for both the multiple choice and the open response questions, will be mailed to districts by the end of August. Schools and districts will have complete results by the middle of September this year, one month earlier than last year and nearly three months earlier than the first time MCAS results were reported in November of 1998.

Finally, to facilitate a more in depth analysis and wider dissemination of MCAS data within districts and schools, we will be providing all schools and districts with access to an easy to use software application called Test Wiz. Test Wiz will allow superintendents and principals to make better use of the data disk we provide them each year with individual student MCAS results. We anticipate the software will be made available in June at the same time that we provide districts with the student results for the Grade 3 reading test. Training will be conducted this summer and fall in the use of Test Wiz as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, Jeff. I've got a couple of quick questions. One is based on historical patterns. Do you have any sense for what the expected reduction in the class of 2003 enrollment will likely be as we go into next year or during next year?

MR. NELLHAUS: Do you mean between Grade 11 and 12? I haven't looked at it, specifically, but I believe it will be another, somewhere between 2 and 4 percent, I would say.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. In general, do you have any sense for what percentage or even an actual number of students who enter twelfth grade from out of state who would be counted in our statewide system as new students? I mean, any sense of what that's likely to be?

MR. NELLHAUS: I don't have any data on that right now, but it's probably not more than 1,000. It's probably less than 1,000 students.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. The other question which relates to that is, there are a couple of districts, and maybe it's more than a couple, but just an eyeballing, there a few districts that have seen their percentage of students earning competency determination actually go down from the spring of 2001 to the fall of 2001. It seems to be mostly because enrollment has gone up fairly

substantially. New Bedford, for example, saw an increase of 100 students on a base of 700, and Salem saw an increase of 30 on a base of 260 so those are, percentage wise, fairly significant. I guess my question is, are those numbers partially the result of actual enrollment changes, or do you think there's some data scrubbing that might be done further?

MR. NELLHAUS: It's probably a combination. The percentages calculated last year were based on the enrollment data collected from MCAS. The percentage of 76 percent is based on the October SIMS data, so there's some differences in the base that's being used, and that could also account for some of the differences we're seeing.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Will those mismatches, I suppose, of data be corrected for, essentially, during this retesting period?

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes, and, you know, the Commissioner has directed my office to actually identify -- in matching MCAS results to the fall enrollment data, we actually weren't able to match up some students. There were, of the 64,000, roughly, 2,000 students that we couldn't make a match for, and we have sent the names of those students back to the superintendents of those districts for assistance in actually trying to determine the status of those particular individuals.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions members may have for Jeff?

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I have a couple. The converse of what Chairman Peyser indicated with regard to the enrollment numbers changing is true as well, in that there are a number of cities and towns that had actually lower student populations which has enhanced their result with respect to the percentage of students that pass.

MR. NELLHAUS: Right, and I think as we go down the road, understanding the percentage of students in any particular graduating class that have earned a competency determination is important, but we need to also report out other statistics of students who may have started the ninth, eighth, seventh, tenth grade in a particular district and then learned what track that student to see what their status is over the course of their high school experience.
Some students will transfer out of states; some students will drop out; some students will be retained in grade. And getting all of that data together for a graduating class is going to give us the best picture of what's happening.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: You indicated that 17 percent of the non-passing category are represented by Hispanic and African-American student populations?

MR. NELLHAUS: Now that's African-American and Hispanic students each represent about 17 percent of the pool of the students who haven't passed.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: But relating to, measuring or counting them in the context of themselves or compared to the group, itself, what are we looking at?

MR. NELLHAUS: We're looking at for black students, roughly, I don't know if I have the most up-to-date data here. Let's see.

DR. THERNSTROM: Jeff, they are right here on the first page, on the first table.

MR. NELLHAUS: I think it's around, is it 37 percent?

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I think I remember 37 for Hispanic, and I think it was 40--

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes. It depends on which, it would be 48 percent of African-American students have earned the competency determination, and 41 percent of Hispanic students have earned the competency determination.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Okay. Just one other question on that same line or though there. Could you just aggregate the minority scores even further and let us know how many, what's the gender breakout of those two numbers?

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Do you already know that off the top?

MR. NELLHAUS: I know statewide, there are more boys who are failing than girls. The percentage is about, in terms of earning a competency determination, 50 percent, 50, in terms of still needing to earn a competency determination, 54 percent of males still need to do so and 46 percent of females still need to do so, so--

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Those are in the African-American--

MR. NELLHAUS: That's statewide, all students who have, if we look at the 15,000 students who still need to earn a competency determination--

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I see what you're saying. Okay--

MR. NELLHAUS: --it breaks out 46/54--male/female--But we can go into each of the, yes, we can disaggregate and do that.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes. I'm following up on what Henry's talking about. Frankly, talking about the 17 percent of blacks and Hispanics seems to be a very deceptive way to package this. As you, in response to the questions, said, we have fewer than half of blacks in the state at the moment passing, getting over the bar, and even fewer Hispanics. The Hispanic is an interesting figure because it's out of whack with the national data, and I'm interested in what's going on, especially, in Massachusetts, but what I would like, I'm also very interested in the gender breakdown. I would also like a breakdown of how many within the African-American pool, within the Hispanic pool, what percentage of those kids are very close to the line so that we have some real hope or real expectation, indeed, that, in the retest process, they can make it because these are very bad numbers, obviously, and they're camouflaged by your 17 percent--

MR. NELLHAUS: Well, the only reason I--I started my statement by saying they are disproportionately represented. I didn't mean to camouflage that fact at all. The fact is that most, in comments I hear about MCAS results, most people characterize the failing pool as being special education, LEP and minority students. The fact is that the majority of the pool are white students in regular education programs in terms of sheer numbers and proportion, which isn't to say that the figures that you've just brought are also true.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes.

MR. NELLHAUS: So it's just there are many ways to look at this, and people are surprised when I tell them that the pool is just not minority and Special Ed.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, fair enough. It's like saying that most mothers on welfare were, indeed, white, but the relevant number, of course, was the proportion of each group.

MR. MADDEN: Should the coming retests show similar results, what would you expect the total pass rate for 2003 to be for the class?

MR. NELLHAUS: It'll be over 80 percent.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Next is Bill Guenther to report on the findings of the Mass Insight survey of students of the class of 2003, and he is joined by one of our illustrious alums. Good morning.

MR. GUENTHER: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner, I'm happy to be here this morning. I'm Bill Guenther, President of Mass Insight Education, and I want to introduce Alexis Vagianos, who's here with me, and who's on our staff now and was, as the Chairman said, a student member of the Board of Education a number of years ago and has maintained her deep interest in these issues. I'm going to ask Alexis to make a couple comments at the end of our period. We are here to talk about the Taking Charge Report we did over the course of January and February.

This is the fourth report we've researched and published as part of our Kids Can't Wait Campaign for the Class of 2003. Our goal in the campaign is to focus attention on the class of 2003 and high school students and assure that they get the remediation and extra help support that they need while they're in school. We've worked with the legislature on funding for remediation programs. We've worked directly with school districts and have an urban high school remediation work group to look at effective practices in the remediation programs, and publicly, we want to assure that the attention and focus is exactly where it should be, on these kids.

I would share the concerns of those who argue for delay in the graduation requirement about the kids who are struggling and failing, but I would suggest that now is not the time to abandon those kids and do what we've done in the past and ignore the problem. There is an extraordinary effort underway right now, and that's part of what we uncovered with in this report to help these kids and to give them attention and support, again, in a way that has not happened in the past.

There were four basic findings from the report. We conducted 140 interviews using Opinion Dynamics Corporation to do the interviews with kids who failed in the Class of 2003, who failed the English or math tests the first time in the spring of their sophomore year. We conducted these interviews at four high schools, two in Boston, Lowell and the Burncoat High School, in Worcester. I should say, too, that we, and I'll ask Alexis to talk about it, also conducted focus groups with English and math teachers who were dealing with these kids in each of the schools to basically ask the same set of questions.

We wanted to do three things. One was to try to get a better sense of a profile of who these kids are; secondly, to take a look at their attitudes about academics generally, not just about MCAS and how they were connecting and whether or not that had changed at all in the course of taking the MCAS test and failing the first time; and, three, we wanted to get a sense of what was or wasn't attracting them to extra help programs and what might make a difference.

There were four basic findings from the results. One is that kids, and most importantly, and this was reported in the press earlier this spring, kids recognize the personal effort, attendance and commitment in school. It makes a difference. When these kids, and remember that these are the kids who failed the first time, were asked what it is that causes kids, generally, to fail the MCAS tests and were given a long list of possible reasons, including blaming the test, their teachers, the

schools or personal effort, they listed lots of different factors, but the one that occurred most consistently for the majority of kids was attendance and personal effort. We know, if you look at the cross-tabs of the analysis of these kids in Boston, Worcester and Springfield and other cities around the state, that attendance is a major issue, that these are not kids who are simply some of them failing to attend the extra help sessions. They are missing far too much of the regular school day, and as one teacher said, if you don't show up, you can't learn. So that was the primary finding number one.

The second finding was that these kids recognize that the English and math skills that are tested on the MCAS test, in fact, are very important to them and their success in life. The third key finding is that about, and, again, this was widely reported, you can play the glass half full or glass half empty on this, but about half the kids are showing up at the extra help programs right now, and that's the good news. The bad news is that the other half are not showing up, in fact, were not getting the extra help they needed, not because the programs weren't there, but because they either hadn't been able to schedule it or hadn't taken it seriously enough yet. The interesting fact is that many of them said in the interviews that they were waiting to see how they did on the retest and that that, in fact, might change their behavior. So in summary on that point, we have the kids' attention. We've changed the behavior of some of them. There's a whole other group, about 50 percent of the kids who are more disengaged from school, further down on the performance level who need far more work.

The last finding, which is perfectly obvious to anyone who works with kids, and many of you do, is when you ask them what would make the most difference in getting kids to show up, particularly, getting those kids to show up at extra help programs who aren't currently, it's an encouraging adult. It's a teacher who cares, it's a parent or family member or another member of the community who tells that student that this really makes a difference and supports them in that process. So, I think that certainly encourages all of us on the charge ahead, and, again, argues that this extraordinary effort ought to go forward, that, in fact, there is something extraordinary happening.

The final point I'd make is that students recognize the kind of focus and attention and support the teachers and schools are now providing that was not in place before. That was a very clear theme from all of the interviews that, in fact, the extra help programs for those kids who are participating, have smaller class sizes, many of them, individual tutoring, the kind of focus and attention that we would all like to see on those kids. Let me ask Alexis to talk just for a moment about the adult focus groups that we did.

MS. VAGIANOS: The teacher focus groups were about 30 teachers over the four high schools, and they were teachers who work with these kids every day, and one of the most interesting findings was that, overall, teachers did not think that putting off the graduation requirement was a good idea for these kids because these kids have a sense right now that when things are mandated by the state that they just get put off. That's why a lot of these kids don't think it's going to happen to them. A lot of the teachers said they're not going to realize that this is about them until they're not walking across the stage and their friends are, so what they're saying is that now is not the time to put these off for these kids because this will make, this makes it real for them, and we don't want to perpetuate the idea that the state is just going to keep backing off on proposals and deadlines, and it's important for these kids to have these deadlines and know that they're going to stick, and that will give them the momentum to join extra help programs, if they haven't, and to work harder to get the skills that they need.

Teachers, overall, did think that the students who were in extra help programs were making progress. The funny thing is, too, is that the teachers we spoke to, they said that the students

who failed were, on the whole, the students that they thought would fail. There were no surprises in who failed. It wasn't that they thought that -- there were no surprises, so, I mean, if you put it off for a year, they're going to know who the kids are next year who are going to fail, and the kids the year after that. They see it through attendance, through motivation, they see it through a lot of factors, and these are the people that work with these kids every day, and what we heard was that it's not going to make a terrible difference if you put it off for a couple years because to these kids, it may have a negative impact on these kids in that it may change their motivation to work hard in the future.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One question that I think I read in a summary of your findings, but I'm not sure I find here -- I think you asked students whether they or their peers were considering dropping out or, put it a different way, if they were considering dropping out, what their reasons might be. Could you just summarize what those findings were, in particular, if there seemed to be any nexus between their prior or expected failure on MCAS as being one of the causes?

MR. GUENTHER: We did ask some questions, and I think we were surprised at the great majority of kids, it was 84 percent, or so, said they had actually never thought of dropping out and were not considering dropping out. The general tenor of the interviews was a sense from kids of optimism that they were either working hard at trying to build the skills they needed in English and math and pass the test or that they were waiting to rearrange their lives and would, in fact, work hard, but most of these kids, both the engaged ones and the less engaged ones, were, in fact, very optimistic and not thinking about dropping out.

DR. THERNSTROM: I very, very much like this survey, and I think it's enormously helpful in helping us to think about the MCAS results. This is really a question directed at the Commissioner. We now have a number attached to every student. We can gather a great deal of data about the students. In the future, you should be able, it seems to me, as the DOE, to precisely track the correlation between MCAS failures and lack of attendance at schools. It'd be nice to have data on the group from the schools, themselves, obviously, would have to come on homework completion, tardiness at school, as well as absence. In other words, it seems to me that there's -- just building on what Mass Insight has done here, that there is an opportunity to use our potentially rich database to continue the conversation that Mass Insight has started, and I wonder if you are in agreement with me on that.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I am in agreement. It could go even beyond that. I separate out attendance, even tardiness. Those are things that can be reported by a school, and we can have as a state number. The question is how much do the locals want to add as well so that they could even have a richer comparison or profile, if you will. For example, homework completion is something which we would have trouble tracking because it depends on all of the teachers that the student has and so forth, but that's something that could be done locally. I think it's very significant to note that the Boston Public Schools reports that 49 percent of the kids that have failed, obviously, Boston has the largest number, 49 percent of the kids that have thus far not passed MCAS have 15 absences or more in the school year. So, absolutely, I think it's very, very important data. I think it fits very nicely with what Bill has done on a focus basis, and the statistics are almost the same. Your statistic is 50 percent, and here's Boston looking at their population, and it's 49 percent.

I've talked a lot at the beginning of those whole process, and I'll get into this later about the difference between a standardized test, which I've heard three times this morning, which is not MCAS, and the standards-based test, which Barbara Hughes, obviously, agreed with. So the issue is that the standard is there. We provide the information. We even release the test. Teachers and kids all know what the standard is, and they report that, so the question is, will they get up over

the bar? And I've said from day one that we have to have, putting aside disabilities and language difficulties and other things that are beyond the students' control, we have to have the students meet us half way, and what is coming out clearly in our statistics is that 50 percent of the kids are not. They're not attending remedial courses. We had to start providing MCAS remediation monies and programs during the school day because they won't come after school, they won't come on Saturday, and I understand that they work, etcetera, but this is revealing the issue that we've talked about so I think any of the statistics, either positively or negatively.

I want to go back to Jeff's point -- Jeff wasn't trying to camouflage anything. We could easily camouflage by using statistics that other states do when they take out dropouts. We could talk about the percentage of kids that are only in the schools now, and our number would be that much higher. That's not what we're interested in. We're interested in every single one of those 68,000 kids. We're going to track them down. We're going to find out where they are, and maybe in encouraging them, even if they've dropped out, we'll get them back. That's the whole point of this, is to deal with every single kid we can. And we believe, notwithstanding obviously tremendous disabilities or other issues that individuals face, that most kids can get up over this bar. The great majority of kids that haven't passed yet need to provide more effort, pure and simple, so that's why those statistics are so important.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One quick follow-up. In the test booklet now, there's a survey that asks, I think it does ask about homework, at least, homework assigned, not, obviously, completed, but a number of these questions are being asked of all students taking the test. They are able now to associate those with the IDs in order to try to establish some of these correlations on a much larger sample.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, of course, but that is self-reported data. It's not very reliable. I mean, of course, the state cannot mandate that local schools collect homework completion data and so forth, but, certainly, it seems to me that there is a role for the state in encouraging the collection of as much data as possible in order for us to best help those students, schools and districts that are where the problems lie.

MR. GUENTHER: Just two quick comments on the homework issue while it's on the table. There is a chart in the overheads that I handed out that refers to time outside the classroom, how it's spent by these kids, and it is instructive. If you look at the three areas, homework, sports practice and games, and I apologize for not having other copies of these, but they are in the report, and there's some copies outside -- sports, practice, games and then at a job, you've got 56 percent of the students who were interviewed saying they spend under five hours a week on homework, but 57 percent saying they spend over 15 hours at a job. Homework is, by far, the minority variable in each of the categories. What is interesting, though, is that when you look at the kids, and you separate them into this more engaged, less engaged set of categories that, in fact, the kids who were showing up at the extra help programs are ones who are more likely to have a job and more likely to be engaged in sports and extracurricular activities.

So we've, clearly, got two very different challenges facing us right now. One is a group of kids who are somewhat engaged, who are, most of them, closer to passing who need a little boost, support, extra skill building, and the other is kids who are much further behind, much less engaged in school and need a much more intensive outreach and support. I just reinforce the point from Jeff's numbers though that we're talking about 15,000 kids here, 15,000 kids. When you look at the fact that there are one million kids in the New York City Public School System, as a political consultant of ours had said, this is a precinct operation, you can go door to door on those kids, and, in fact, they're doing that in Worcester and in other cities. So, this is why we have an extraordinary opportunity now that we've never had before to take, particularly, those kids,

the 5,000 or 6,000 of that 15,000, who are the real bottom performers, who need our help the most, to reach out to them.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Ironically, I was going down that road. I'm curious as to what extent are we, if at all, underestimating the significance of work. You have almost 60 percent of your students who are working 15 hours or more during the school year, and then the survey indicated, during the summer, 70 percent of those same students are working. So I'm presuming that the socioeconomic reality out there requires many of these students to work to make contributions to the family and have some kind of quality of life.

MR. GUENTHER: Correct.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: If, in fact, that is a reality, it may not be realistic that we're going to get them out of the job in order to get the support, so are there creative strategies being implemented within districts that contend with the fact that that's something that may not be as easily changeable as just saying, hey, well, you got to give up working and put more time into--

MR. GUENTHER: It's a very good question. I'll give you two quick answers on it. The first is that the primary line of attack needs to be during the regular school days. The Commissioner said the MCAS remediation money now provides for support, both within the school day and afterward. The school day is when you have, at least, a chunk of those kids, a good chunk of them, and it's easier to get their attention and get them into the programs. The second answer is that we need to encourage and support, and I think the state's doing some of it now, the kind of work study programs that Boston's running in the summer through the PIC where kids are, in fact, engaged in jobs, but also getting academic support in combination with it.

DR. SCHAEFER: Yes. I was going to go from that. Worcester is doing that as well with the summer jobs. They're going to the companies and saying, if the kids work here, would you also allow a few hours during that time stretch for MCAS remediation, and, of course, the number of companies that can do that is limited, and they're going to, primarily the larger companies that are in a position to do that, but that's going on.

I was also going to comment on your first point you had of perceived reasons for not passing MCAS, and this ties back to Abby's comment about the data. I mean, districts are, in fact, collecting data, tying attendance to see what the results are on MCAS. Again, I know that Worcester is doing that, and also the transience rate to see what the correlation between kids who have changed districts, changed schools and how they're doing on MCAS, and I think this is particularly relevant in the lower grades where there seems to be much more movement. One school in Worcester has 75 percent who are not the same from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year, and that, clearly, is having an impact on MCAS.

MR. CROWLEY: The data here says that almost just half of the students that fail MCAS are not getting the extra help. Do we know that to also be the case, Jeff, on the 15,000 that have failed in total; is that same statistic true?

MR. NELLHAUS: I don't have any data on that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There is, also, again, I think on the survey form, we do ask, specifically, that question about whether you've participated in extra help programs; is that right?

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes, for the retest, we did ask that question.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right. So we should have some broader data coming. Again, it will be self-reported, as this is, to some extent.

DR. THERNSTROM: What does "participate" mean, showing up once?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, again, that's the question. So, at a statewide level, I think there are some indicators. One is a sampling that's been done by Mass Insight, some is a broader survey, and then the self-reported that we're doing as part of just the administration of the test, but I think, as the Commissioner indicated, this is one of those things where the districts have to kind of get down to the individual level to determine whether or not students are, A, participating or, B, at what level to get some sense for what the correlation is. But, again, in Worcester, certainly, I think, and perhaps similarly in Boston, it seems to be following the same consistent pattern, which is that the students who are availing themselves of the opportunities are doing better than those who aren't.

MR. GUENTHER: Of course, that's going to be interesting to track over time, too, again, because the signals are important, so the question is, are kids, in fact, changing their behavior, after they get the retest results?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let's move on the next part of this item on the agenda, which is a discussion of the Student Advisory Council's recommendation to reconsider MCAS for the graduation requirement.

MR. MADDEN: Okay. A little bit of contrast here. This is coming out of many, many discussions I've had with students across the state, certainly, more than 140 students and, certainly, more than just four schools. This is coming out of huge amounts of data from MCAS and other things, and what I would like to support today is the opportunity to learn question. As stated again and again in policy discussions about MCAS, the opportunity to learn question can be discussed later, just as before it had been, let's wait until the retests come out, let's get more data before we discuss this, but that time is now. These students are finishing up their junior year. They've retested twice. This is a critical time, and I believe the discussion has to take place now.

I'd like to say that I do not hope to have a discussion about the relative benefits or problems with the MCAS exam. Most of my data's actually relying on MCAS as a diagnostic tool, which I believe is a very good one. What I intend to focus on is to show that almost the majority of students in the class of 2003, at least those that are failing, have not been granted an adequate opportunity to learn, that the goals that were set forth after their settlement of the McDuffy lawsuit to grant equity in education and supposedly drove much of education reform have yet to be realized and, certainly, not by the competency determination. So I intend to explore a couple different subgroups of students and data around them, and, hopefully, through each of these subgroups, the whole will make itself individually.

The first thing I'd like to talk about is the achievement gap between black, Hispanic and white students. There are numbers that have been included in the Board packet, but in my own notes, I have these so -- and if you look, and if you break down MCAS scores all the way back from 1998 until the latest retest scores, you do see an increase in all subgroups in the pass rates; however, you also see a continuously increasing achievement gap. In the 1998 and 1999 exams, and the 2000 exam, the ratio of black and Hispanic students failing to white students failing was about two, and that increased by about 10 percent each year. If you go on to look at the difference between the 2000 and 2001 scores, the ratio jumps from about 2:1 to 3:1 black and Hispanic students three times likely to fail, and for Hispanic students in English language arts, it's four to

one. That indicates that there's something very, very serious going on in the state that we are not providing equal education for all of our students, and that, in fact, as a competency determination comes closer, as June 2003 comes closer, and with each subsequent testing session, the gap is growing. This is a very serious concern.

Why such an achievement gap should exist in this state, I believe, also speaks to socioeconomic conditions in the state, and when you break down MCAS data by districts, you can see it is the four urban districts who are failing. If you take the latest results, if you go through, each of the districts has below 70 percent passing. In fact, every urban district in the state's included in that, as well as every vocational, technical and agricultural school and also a couple of poor rural districts, like North Adams. This is a state where only 23.5 percent of the districts could even report MCAS scores for those minority subgroups. That means that they have fewer than ten of those students in these classes. This is a state where 308 out of 330 districts are over 75 percent white. All of this points to the inadequacy of the education given in these urban districts, in these poor districts, and these districts where minority populations are heavily concentrated by various social forces, grave concerns.

I also mentioned vocational technical schools. Each and every one of those has very low pass rates. We haven't had as much discussion as possibly there should have been around vocational education. There's been a lot outside the Board over the appropriateness of MCAS for those students that have great differences and very important education from students enrolled in regular district high schools. They are being trained to work in a vocation and also being trained in academics. They have to split their time between them. Recently, the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators has complained that they're being ignored by the Board, that the Board has yet to go forward with the vocational proficiency that the Chapter 74 regulations have addressed. I believe that vocational students are similarly being ignored by MCAS, by the policies around them. When you look at such high failure rates for those school districts, it shows that there is a problem, and for the students, it becomes something very, very real and very disturbing when, at the end of their junior year, they have yet to have much hope or perhaps do, but they can expect to maybe not get their diplomas.

It's also causing a number of problems within those schools. I have heard from students who've had shop time taken away for MCAS which for them, personally may be a good thing. Given this requirement, it might get them their diploma, but for their own education, for the future of this Commonwealth, that is a very bad thing, diverting the education they should be receiving towards something here, towards test prep and findings, the standards, which are also important, but the greatest degree of concerns are special education students.

For many of the factors behind that we're focusing on the opportunity to learn questions, I'd like to point out that there is a report given, taken in 1999 for some --'98, '99, presented in 2000 by the United States Department of Education, the Office of Special Education Programs, which was very, very critical of Massachusetts' treatment of its special education students; that they hadn't complied with many portions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; that many, many special education students in the state weren't given the same opportunity to learn, or given the same materials to learn, as their fellow students. So, the MCAS failure rate for that group of students comes as no surprise having only 38 percent passing math in 2001 and 47 percent passing English language arts, and, also, only one student out of the group of 990 that took the MCAS Alternate Assessment ultimately successfully passing. So, those are some obvious questions that needs to be explored around that group.

I'd, also, like to mention the limited English proficiency on the subject of students. They had much higher, disproportionate failure rates on MCAS with 62 percent failing English and 57

percent failing math. The math failure rate particularly disturbs me. Where, obviously, the issue here is that these students don't have a very high English proficiency makes one wonder why they would be failing at such a high rate on mathematics. This particular topic hits home for me as well at Randolph High School. As you heard mentioned, we have about 51 different languages spoken in the classrooms. I hear almost daily, my calculus class is mostly Cantonese speaking; my French class students, a lot of Creole, and I hear that with many students in the class of 2003 in this building who have yet to pass mainly because they haven't reached this level of English proficiency required by the exam, who are very disturbed by it and are very frustrated, and it's, perhaps, something that's not under their control.

This, also, seems to tie in with other another matter that has yet hit this Board, but, certainly, is huge right now, in Massachusetts, around bilingual education, definitely clamorings in the performance of the bilingual educational system and the consensus having been reached that Massachusetts isn't doing enough to teach English to speakers of other languages; that there needs to be a reform. Given that consensus, it makes one wonder how you could expect students to step up and be held responsible for inadequate education that they've been through, through no fault of their own. This is what it really comes down to, it's that these students, in the class of 2003, my own class, have not been met halfway with our educations.

Many students feel like the state is waiting, in Copley Square, for them to finish the marathon. Most districts did not have bilingual budgets until, I believe, the year 2000. I put 1998 in this report, but I was looking back through and I believe that's wrong. Students in the class 2003 were in ninth grade by that time. Frameworks weren't in place until about that time as well when these students were in seventh and eighth grade. A couple of years of more money and aligned with the standards is not enough to counteract the decade that these students were already served in an inadequate educational system. It is certainly not enough to combat decades-old inequalities among the districts in the state; so, this is a central issue. These students have, perhaps not been given the same chance as more well-off students to reach high standards.

The question surrounding this for a long time is which is worse; to give students a diploma without the requisite skills, with an inadequate education, or to deny them the diploma altogether? The first one of those problems has already been done. These students have already been denied the access to the skills and the knowledge and standards of education that they deserve. There is, of course, great work being done through remediation with the extra money happening, but it is not enough to meet the standard. The numbers show that. The numbers show 15,579 students may not graduate next year, and, of course the discussion is they are not trying, but I'd say the majority of them haven't been given the opportunity. For a student to not be given the opportunity, to go to school everyday in a dilapidated, non-safe school, have teachers that may not care, to work with outdated materials, to not have books, that induces someone not to care.

I believe the Mass Insight Report looked a bit more at the effects than the cause. I can think of a number of things that make students attend school more and achieve better that do not center around denying them a future through a diploma: better teaching, better materials, a number of things, I'm sure, you've all been at this a long time but you can think, to actually motivate students into attending. They have been proven to do so, and that have been denied.

Perhaps most disturbing at the center of this is the continuing budgetary problem. Most districts only reached foundation from 2000. It's only 2002. As we move into the 2003 fiscal year, with one percent reduction in Chapter 70, many districts are looking at not being able to meet foundation again. The teacher quality programs are being reduced, and that will have a huge impact. Even MCAS remediation, which, in the House budget, is flat lined at $ 50 million. We'll

have to deal with the placement of students. Not only 15,000 students in the class of 2003 who have yet to pass, but at least as many in the class of 2004 that will take the exam in the spring.

So, what we're looking at is a combination of historical inadequacies, inequities, a short period of change, and, now, perhaps, another period of growing and evolving. It is the students, and the students alone, that have been asked to stand up to the plate and to take care of this, fight for their own education. We have some district accountability being developed. It's not in place. That needs to be done before students are held accountable. What the State Student Advisory Council, myself, and many other people would like is for, not only a delay in the graduation requirement, but perhaps a greater equity, a better acceptance to be developed, but, certainly, for the Board to discuss these problems and develop ways to address them before denying the students their diplomas and a right to a future. With that, I'm through.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you for your comments. There are a couple of things that I'd like to say in response. One is something, actually, that came out of the discussion we just had. There is still a lot of work for us to do in terms of understanding exactly who the students are who are not getting over the bar. Not only demographically and socio-economically, but also in terms of their various participation in the opportunities that are being made available to them, the extent to which they are being given access to these opportunities and the extent to which they're taking advantage of them. I think that is, certainly, something that demands our continued attention and demands, in particular, as we get data from this most recent retest, a great deal of analysis and effort in the coming months.

I would also say that, in your basic analysis, that there is, indeed, a problem of equity and opportunity to learn is exactly true. I guess where you and I diverge is that, in my mind, the hard truth is that without MCAS and the accountability system which is a part in which the graduation requirement is a component, that the tremendous strides we've made over the last years and months towards a stronger more equitable system of education just would not have occurred. Students throughout the Commonwealth, especially, in the kinds of low-income, urban and rural districts and low-performing districts generally that you referenced, are getting exposed to a richer more rigorous curriculum than they ever have before. This certainly has manifested in terms of more intensive and consistent reading instruction right up through high school, in terms of assignments and instruction across the curriculum, in terms of higher level mathematics being offered for all students, not just a select group.

In addition, as you indicated, MCAS has led the appropriation of a great deal of additional resources, millions and millions of dollars, which have been targeted directly towards those students in those districts. Those are resources that are going to students who, in the past, have been left behind, but would be put in jeopardy, I think, if we were to delay implementation of the graduation requirement. Moreover, I think it's already apparent, certainly in the statewide statistics, but even in those districts where the failure rates continue to be high, that all this investment is actually paying off. If you do look at the statewide numbers, in addition to having 76 percent of the students in the class of 2003 having already earned their competency determination, something like 90 percent have passed the English language arts, and about 80 percent have passed the math. I think these are impressive numbers, although, when you consider that although the assessment is administered at the tenth grade for the first time, and is pegged at a tenth grade level, or an expectation of tenth grade level performance, indeed, it is a graduation requirement. It is something that students are expected to complete by the end of their twelfth grade, and given where we are in the process, I think it's not unreasonable to expect to see the kinds of failure rates or not yet passing rates that we are seeing.

Moreover, I'm convinced, as the Commissioner has repeatedly said, that for students who are willing to meet us halfway, I think we can get them over the bar, which is not to say that there is not a great deal of effort and investment that lies ahead, but I think it's a doable project. The bottom line today is the same as it was months and years ago, which is, I don't believe we do young people any favor by telling them they're ready for success, when, in fact, they're not. We set a fair standard that reflects minimal academic competencies. The vast majority of the students are capable of meeting that standard on time with their peers. Some students will need more time, not just in terms of more time during the school day or after school, but more time even beyond the end of twelfth grade. A few students may not be able to meet the standard at all, but to waive or lower the standard in order to define failure out of existence would doom the cause of education reform, and would end all hope of achieving real equity in our schools while condemning, again, I feel thousands of more students, more young people to lives of limited possibilities. In sum, I think MCAS, the equity issues and the opportunity of learning issues are absolutely right; however, I think MCAS is part of the solution not part of the problem.

MR. MADDEN: I think I, and most students, and people in the state would like to know why is it that these reforms have to be driven by student's futures? Why is not the district accountability and school accountability which we will have that through federal legislation in five years? Why is it the general consensus of the policy makers that if the competency determination were to be delayed that people's attention and money would disappear? There are other methods surely. Also, I would like to add that along with MCAS, along with this competency determination, equity is not being progressive. The achievement cap is growing, and we're looking at severe budget problems in the future. The money is not continuing to be there. Inequity is becoming even further off goal than it had been.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think, in terms of certainly your description of the equity problems related to opportunity to learn, it is not necessarily a direct causal relationship to academic performance. There are the connections along this chain are difficult to understand and certainly to impact directly. Nonetheless, in terms of establishing a foundation budget to provide adequate resources to all districts in the Commonwealth, that has been done. I'm convinced that that would be sustained through this budget process. In terms of providing targeted assistance at the state level to those students who are struggling to get over the bar, I think the state has more than lived up to its commitment. It certainly has invested more financially than anyone ever anticipated in the beginning of this process. In terms of the kind of information that the state is providing to the schools and districts, not only about who the students are who are struggling, but exactly where their strengths and weaknesses are, I think we have done more than any other state in the country. If we say that the only time that we can have accountability in the system is when all students are performing at equal levels, then I think we will never have accountability in the system.

We are, as I think one of the members even in today's packet suggests, we are moving ahead -- I will agree not as quickly as we should -- in establishing school and district level accountability systems. We have declared schools to be under-performing. We have intervened in those schools. There are more schools, certainly, that have not yet crossed our radar screen, and that is something that we need to address, but I think the way we address it is to invest in the work, to work harder to advance that cause of school and district level accountability, rather than abandon the progress that we already made on the student level accountability. Is there any other comment that other Board members may have?

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Well, I do have a couple of comments. First, I'd like to thank James for that excellent representation of some very difficult and challenging issues that really shape the debate around what is right and what is appropriate, and what is not. I don't fall on the

same side of the solution as you do, necessarily, but the analysis is pretty tight with respect to what the problem is. I clearly believe that there has been a public breach with respect to providing equity to large segments of the student population, and, primarily, those students have been brown and black, and I think that the data speaks loudly on its face. Equity is not just with respect to money. Money is a big piece of the deal, but I think equity, with respect to expectations, is a big piece of the picture as well. I think effort is equity with respect to the effort not just coming from the student's responsibility but, also, from adult's responsibility, and that's not just within the schoolhouse. I believe that there needs to be effective effort from the adults within the educational environment, but, also, effective effort from parents and community to support the learning process, as well, to insure an academic success.

I also think that with regard to preparation, obviously, students have responsibility on that side. Now, I'm not prepared to declare a victory with respect to the accountability system and testing system that we have established, but I'm also not willing to declare defeat. I think that, from my experience, from the small amount of years that I've been on the planet -- I don't need any sub-comments to that particular representation -- but from my experience, I've seen well too many students who have been under-performing, have been under-educated, but yet they have been pushed out of the school districts in which they have matriculated and pushed out with diplomas without levels of proficiency to enhance their ability to succeed and navigate society in a way that they would be living something other than a marginal existence, and I'm simply not satisfied with that particular scenario, and I'm not willing to accept it any longer. Based on that, I think that we need a critical intervention, and that critical intervention requires some things that may not be that comfortable, but it's certainly worthy of critical intervention.

I truly believe that within the African-American community, which I can speak from the strongest knowledge base, but also, I would venture to say within the Latino community as well, not just within the state, within this country, but clearly within the state, we're suffering a cerebral crisis. That cerebral crisis is a reflection of a lack of proficiency in subject areas in which students are being expected to gain in order for them to get past local and national standards so that they can have a flourishing life once they get out there into the real world. So, I want my fourth grader to know how to read on the fourth grade level and to compute on a fourth grade level. I want my son and my daughter graduating from high school. I want to know that they can read at least on a tenth grade level, and that they can pass a math exam that is minimally at a tenth grade level. If they can't do that, and they receive a diploma, that diploma means nothing to me. It just makes us all feel good the day they receive it, but the day after, when the real world has its say as to what happens to you, it is a roll of the dice as to what happens to you.

When you're a minority in this particular country, because we have not solved all of our social issues that impact equity on more than the educational agreement, if you don't have the requisite skills to be successful to compete out there, your chances to be part of an economic under-class, your chances for interfacing with the criminal justice system, your chances for many other woes that we don't have time to list, are much greater. So, in my view, I don't have an expectation that between now and the end of 2003 that a large number of these students who are below the bar will not be able to get to the point where they can pass the exam. I think that if we continue to provide the levels of intervention that we're providing within the accountability system that we have, that we're going to see success.

Forty-seven percent of the African-American students passed. Prior to them passing that exam or prior to that particular success, which is marginal when you look at the entire group, you had 20 percent less that passed because a lot of students didn't take it seriously, a lot of schools did not have effective teaching and learning strategies that were employed in order to help them get over

it. I think there is going to be an additional effort on all parties concerned to increase that success and the hope for that success.

Last point, and I'll shut up. That is, having said all of that, less than 50 percent African-Americans, less than 50 percent Latinos, less than 50 percent females, less than 50 percent of any significant segment not passing the accountability bar in order for them to receive a diploma is not acceptable. Okay? It's not acceptable. I think, as a Board, what we need to, Mr. Chairman, take a look at whatever interventions can we institute on the fast track, even if it means schools that have less than 50 percent of any segment of their student population be it -- now, you can define the segments as gender, you know, ethnic or whatever, maybe it requires some additional state intervention and take it out of the district's hands -- but to have less than 50 percent of any particular segment, if it's Caucasian, if it's female, if it's African-American, Latino, I believe that we can't accept that as being okay, that's the way the chips fell, and we'll just let them fall based on the fact that we don't have an adequate response now, let's let time take it over. There is perhaps something else that we can do right now that will require some even more radical interventions into the districts to make sure that those schools that aren't delivering and maybe taking themselves as a fait accompli that, well, these students aren't going to pass, and so we're just not going to provide whatever other interventions that might be appropriate. So, I don't know what the specific answer might be, but I think that we ought to think hard and fast about that piece.

MR. MADDEN: I don't have any further questions. I'd like to address what you said as far as Massachusetts being the head of the country in providing resources adequately and equitably. As we stand on states' report card, Massachusetts earned a D in resources, in equity. Only nine states, I believe, earned poorer scores. A couple of them were very close to ours. This is what I believe is happening. It's that all these things are great. They need to be done. They need productivity, we need funding, we need standards and expectations. We do to it in a way that does not victimize groups of students that already are victimized, and it is the responsibility of this Board, coming here as a senior, if the state does not adequately fund, if the attention isn't adequately given, that this Board find a way to drive education home in such a way that does not victimize students. That's a huge goal.

That's a lot to be done in one year, and is the state prepared for 15,000 students to leave high school without diplomas? Is Boston prepared to have half its students leave without diplomas? Are we prepared to have 40 percent of vocational-technical students possibly not graduate? Are we prepared to have 40 percent of all the other students in the state not graduate in one half of those communities? I'd just like to say that these issues become more pressing each and everyday, and they must be addressed by the Board. Thank you.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STUDENT RECORDS REGULATIONS (603 CMR 23.00) – Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: As I indicated, I think what I'd like to do is to change some of the order of the agenda. In particular, what I would suggest is that we move the items related to the history and social science framework and the educator licensure to the end. So, Sandy, if I could move your two items to the end? Then we'll deal with all the other ones as they appear. So, the first one will be the amendment to the student records regulations, which is, in fact, the next item on the agenda, and then we'll skip to the Lawrence Public Schools. So, the Commissioner is on about number two, proposed amendments to the student records regulations.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let me say that the section of the regulations that received the most publicity are, obviously, those around the transcript. There are a number of other smaller

items that I need to have the Board vote; so, I've left those on. Just one comment, and I know the meeting is getting late. The issue around transcripts has been completely misrepresented. This was not an issue about acceptance to college and using MCAS as acceptance. This was an issue about whether or not MCAS data could be helpful to institutions of higher education as they place students in various courses. You may know, currently, our higher education institutions use the Accuplacer test for placement in the courses. In some discussions with representatives of higher education, particularly around the American Diploma Project, which is an effort to try and align K to 12 standards with higher education standards, we talked about whether or not MCAS data would be helpful in this issue of placing students in their proper courses. It was then that they pointed out the regulation that the Board currently prohibits that kind of information from going on the transcript; hence, the recommendation that I made to the Board, in a very narrow context, that we consider allowing MCAS data to go on the transcript to be helpful to higher education institutions as they place students, which would be after acceptance.

There are a number of issues, as you know, I won't go through them now, that received a great deal of comment, and I do believe that, at this time, it is not the wise course to include them. There are ways that schools can access them, as they do SAT scores, etcetera, and I do believe that MCAS scores that were not necessarily established for that purpose. Initially, they were to determine whether kids could meet the standards at the high school level. So, it remains to be seen whether they may, in fact, turn out to be valid enough and valuable enough, which I believe they will, to be considered for placement for college students. I believe that will happen because MCAS is based on effort, not aptitude. I think over time MCAS scores will prove to be a good predictor of student success in college, but that remains to be seen. If that happens, I do believe we may be back in three to five years on that issue. So, I'm sorry for the furor that it caused. It wasn't intended to, but the other changes, while we were out there, we received a lot of valuable feedback. You'll see it all here that I've given to the Board. So, I recommend all of the other changes, withdrawing that first part, for the Board's consideration at this time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, Commissioner. One thing I'd add is that the Commissioner is correct in indicating that based on the comment, based on the reaction to the proposal, it is being pulled back, and maybe something that we come to at another time, but not right now. However, there may be other aspects of this proposal that we may want to try to extract in sort of a minimal way in order to insure that transcripts reflect accurately student records and to try to provide certain information that may be valuable in certain aspects of the placement process, but, especially, in the public higher education system. It would, certainly, not come back in its current form. To the extent it does come back, it would be in a much more limited form. I couldn't tell you what that is because I think that's something that's going to require further discussion and consideration over the next few months of the summer. This is something that may come back in a somewhat different and truncated form next fall.

In any event, what we do have before us is a motion that accompanies the recommended changes in the regulations affecting student records, and, in particular, access to records by non-custodial parents and revision of certain time lines related to how quickly schools or districts need to turn around requests for transcripts from parents or students. In any event, those are the items that remain before us. Does anyone want to move the motion?

MR. MADDEN: I'd like to thank the Commissioner for the changes that the public opposed; in particular, taking into account the Student Advisory Council's opinion for the turn around time and changing that for us, as well as MCAS on transcripts, and I'd like to thank everyone else, the hundreds of organizations and individuals that made public comment and expressed their opinion on this issue.

DR. THERNSTROM: I just want to note that it seems to me indisputable that the MCAS scores are going to be valuable to colleges and to employers, but those employers, future employers, colleges that accept students, who do not find that information valuable, can always choose to ignore it, and, so, whether it's on the transcript or not, the use that's made of it is, ultimately, up to those who are looking at it, and I think that's a point that has somehow gotten lost here.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would agree with the basic premise of your comments. The only response, which I think is something that certainly I didn't fully appreciate prior to receipt of the public comment, is that if we were to essentially publish, if you will, on the transcript the student's actual performance on MCAS, that we would be creating a dynamic whereby students would have a very strong incentive to take the test as many times as they possibly can in order to insure they get the highest performance so that on their transcript they come out with the best appearance, certainly, in terms of their MCAS performance, that they possibly can, which implies not only an administrative burden, but also a cost burden we hadn't thought of and would turn MCAS into something more like an SAT or other type of assessment, whereby it's not just pass/fail. It's not just its diagnostic value. It's not just getting over some threshold, but it's maximizing the performance on that particular.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, I understand the administrative and the cost burden, but the fact is that there are students kept working to further learn the material that is being tested on MCAS than there would furthering their education.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I understand, except to the extent that it's pegged at the tenth grade curriculum, not at the twelfth grade, and that may have some impact on the kinds of courses that students take in junior and senior year. I think you're right in the basic substance of it. I do think there are some problematic, practical issues that I think we ought to continue to think about. Beyond that, there is no question, it seems to me, that employers or colleges and universities need to know whether students have passed the test, and that's something we need to keep on the agenda and think about how to report and communicate.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Some time ago, within this year, the DA's across the state were trying to pick a legislator to pass legislation that would enable them to access records of students who may have had some criminal background elements in their record that a school ought to know in order to prepare some kind of game plan to incorporate risk management kinds of considerations. What happened to that legislation? Is it still pending? Are these regulations reflective of whatever?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's still pending.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And therefore, these regulations would not reflect any changes anticipated by that statutory change?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That is correct.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, section 1B and chapter 71, §§ 34D and 34H, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Student Records, 603 CMR 23.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

PROPOSED RENEWAL AGREEMENT WITH LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item is the renewal agreements with the Lawrence Public Schools. This is Number 4, under Tab 4. This was up for discussion at the last Board meeting.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. The only reason we held it was that we were awaiting the School Committee of Lawrence to approve it, which they have now done.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education hereby approve the Memorandum of Agreement to Extend the Department of Education/Lawrence Public Schools Partnership, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

SCHOOL BUILDING ASSISTANCE (Cost Waivers and Audit Adjustments)

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item then is the school building assistance motion which is for waivers in, I think, six districts. These were waivers reflecting costs beyond the standard cost per square foot grant criteria, I guess, of the grants that we have already made. The comment I would make before we vote this is that although this is sort of a small dark corner of the school building assistance program, the larger picture remains one of I think great concern to the members of this Board, increasingly the members of the legislature and government as well, in terms of the fiscal financial liability, is hanging over our heads for the grants that have already been awarded and for those projects that are on a waiting list. All told, this is a program that is on a scale that exceeds the Big Dig. If you think about it in terms of the state's liability, it's somewhere between eleven and twelve billion dollars, all of which is our responsibility, unlike the Central Artery Project where the federal government is picking up two-thirds or more of the tab.

There are discussions that are underway within the administration to try to come up with some solutions or new approaches to this problem. I, certainly, as far as we've gone in the process, it's certainly clear that there is no easy way out, and there is, certainly, no free way out, and we just need to come up with a solution which may make us to make some very difficult fiscal choices, but I think those are choices that we have no choice but to confront. Again, this is not the issue that we're addressing today, but I don't want to let any opportunity pass without commenting on the seriousness of the issue.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Couple of questions. I think one Rick asked in asking the question. He answered, one question had, that was, what percentage is the waiver? Is it five percent?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think it varies from project to project. Some of them are less than five percent. Do you have a—

MR. SULLIVAN: The policy was ten percent. We cut it back to five. I believe there is one waiver here that came in during the ten percent period which might be at the ten percent, but everything else is down to five percent.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are some of them even less than five percent?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes. Some of them are less.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Okay I just see a difference. I didn't know what the formula was. Are there contingency dollars within our budget to accommodate anticipation or anticipated requests for waivers?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, normally, the way it works we pay that over 20 years. So, it's one-twentieth of the payments. These amounts represent the full amount of the waiver, but it would be paid out over 20 years. So, we work with the legislature depending on what the Board enacted, what the amount is.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: So, it's a back door approach. Okay.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And the first payments on these waivers would probably not occur until FY 03; is that--

MR. SULLIVAN: Correct. At the earliest.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Or later; yes.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Some of them are years before the first payment.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: When a waiver is requested, it looks like the districts have a responsibility to put money into the pot themselves; right?

MR. SULLIVAN: Most projects have a contingency if you will, but these projects that go under the waiver are normally those that have excess site issues or, maybe hazardous waste. What we're dealing with is, most of these are tight sites, very tight urban sites, tight sites where they're trying to build.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Right. So, extraordinary site conditions is the driving force usually?

MR. SULLIVAN: That's usually the issue.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: What guarantees do we have that even with the waiver that is granted that the district will be able to come up with whatever additional dollars they need in order to close the delta between what they had planned and what they need?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, they have to develop the project to make sure they have sufficient resources to build it before we'll even start to reimburse them.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Yes, but this is after the vote, and then they go into the process of due diligence, and then they find that they have some site conditions, and they come back for a million dollar waiver or, in one case, I guess it's, $3.8 million.

MR. SULLIVAN: The issue is, if they approve a $20 million project, and, now, they find it's going to take $24 million to build that building, they need to have $24 million of authorization from their city or town in order to build the building. So, they still need the local vote to approve that amount of dollars regardless of whatever waivers may be given.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And that would be for, some of the terminology you alluded, but a debt exclusion, for example that would be for the full amount of the project; this included. May be reimbursed by the state, compensated for some of their debt service payments, but in terms of the full amount of the project, they have to be able to fund the whole piece of it.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: So, the full amount is actually established up front, and then this is just included?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Correct, and they would have, they may have their authority, hopefully, to go beyond the cost of the project as it's been defined here in which case, this may just fit within that. If it doesn't, they're going to have to, they would have to go and increase their debt offering in order to cover these costs, which, again, would be reimbursed, but after the fact of the issue.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Okay. Thank you.

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 on the Priority List:**

City of Fall River – North End Elementary School Project, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $845,600,

City of New Bedford – Normandin Middle School Project, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $1,837, 786,

City of Salem - New Charlton Elementary, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $235,925,

City of Worcester – New Vocational School, provided that said waiver shall not exceed $3,837,667

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

The motion passed unanimously.

CHARTER SCHOOLS (Proposed Management Contract and Waiver Request)

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item is a couple of amendments to the charter school contracts. One, I guess what we have here, actually, is an amendment to the Lowell Community Charter School contract, and then an amendment to the Holyoke Community Charter School to give them an extra year to deal with facility issues. So, these are two separate motions.

MR. MADDEN: Due to concerns over the performance of Beacon's other schools in the state that are for profit models in general and the Student Advisory Council's opposition for profit public education of -- in office.

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 1.00, hereby approve the management contract between Lowell Community Charter School and Beacon Education Management, Inc., as amended and adopted by the Board of Trustees of Lowell Community Charter School. Such approval also operates to amend the charter granted to Lowell Community Charter School to include this management.**

The motion passed 7-1

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The second item is for the Holyoke Community Charter School, and, again, this is an amendment to their charter to give them an extra year in which to open.

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 §1.04(4)(b) to Holyoke Community Charter School to open in the Fall of 2003 instead of the Fall of 2002. Such waiver also operates to amend the charter granted to Holyoke Community Charter School.**

The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The last piece we'll take before going to the history and social science frameworks and the licensure amendments is the approval of grants. I believe you've got, in Tab 8, a summary of all the grants that are before us.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education ratify approval of the grants as presented by the Commissioner.**

The motion passed unanimously.

REVISED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So, now, do you want to do the frameworks first or--

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Frameworks first. Let me say, Mr. Chairman, I, again, want to correct a mis-impression. We never intended to anything more but present the framework today to the Board. It's not being voted. It will come back, hopefully, next month, and we can have a discussion, and then we'll be meeting with various groups. This is a high profile document. People are interested in it. So, we won't be bringing it back for final vote of the Board until the fall. So, I think it's, frankly, unfair to suggest that we're trying to do something with the process.

This is something that we paid particular attention to, and we, certainly, want to make sure that people have an opportunity to review it. We had tremendous feedback, as you might know, and it takes quite a bit for the staff just to wade through it all, let alone try to figure out what to do and feedback, when feedback A is in direct contradiction to the feedback B. I think we've

characterized, I'll let Sandra talk about the major changes, but I simply want to say that, I wasn't sure I was going to say this, but I'm very pleased to present this framework to this Board.

This has been a long time issue here in Massachusetts, with conflicting frameworks, a lot of confusion in the field. The Board gave us a direction last year in which we were asked to develop a framework that would allow options at the local level. There is a great deal of controversy about world history versus United States history, the sequence, the scope, the breadth, depth, and then all of the special interests that people want to make sure gets into the framework. I think this group has done just a tremendous job. I want to particularly credit Sandra Stotsky, who spent an enormous number of hours. I also want to thank Anders Lewis and Susan Wheltle, who waded through all of those materials, and, finally, Mark McQuillan, our Deputy, who took the lead in meeting with various groups to see whether some other changes could be made.

We are, obviously, open and willing to feedback on this, but we wanted to, at least, it get it to the Board today and make quick comments, and then it will be back on the agenda next month, and we can have a full discussion. If we need to, we'll have other forums where people can make their views known. I think you'll hear about the way in which I think we've articulated a very coordinated approach, it's the right thing for kids, the right balance of all the issues that people want. Eventually, we would love to see a more and more active role by local districts in both the administration and scoring of the history and social studies testing program. Anyway, Sandra, let me turn it over to you to give a quick overview of the changes.

DR. STOTSKY: Thank you, very much, Commissioner and members of the Board. Let me first begin with an invitation, to those of you who might be interested, to come to the Department to see all of the bulk of the comment that we received. We did receive, as I pointed out in a summary two months ago to the Board, over 700 comments or e-mails to the public comment draft. We also had received almost 1,000 responses to the survey questionnaire last spring from high school US history and world history teachers indicating their priorities or the topics they wish to study. So, we have had an enormous amount of feedback from the field from teachers at all levels, particularly, the high school level, and we very much used their feedback at the high school level, as well as in the earlier grades, to make some changes that they, by large majorities, wanted us to make to the public comment draft or to use for the reshaping or re-editing of the US history and the world history standards.

The first set of changes are in the early grades, and the major one was moving what had been the Grade 4 focus of ancient civilizations to a higher grade level. We moved it to Grade 7. This was because an overwhelming number of teachers who teach in the elementary grades argued that ancient history was too remote for elementary students. They also did not believe they could find adequate materials. Many of them were still teaching US history and US geography in that grade as they had been many years ago, and they argued that for the sake of continuity, they felt Grades 3, 4, and 5 should center on US history. So, we tried to honor what the majority of the elementary teachers were saying with the changes that we made. We also lightened Grade 3, which had a lot of geography standards for US geography there, and we moved those to Grade 4 and made that the substantial focus of Grade 4.

This was, as I say, all in response to what the field wanted to have that would make sense for what they do and the needs of their students. This, then, of course, led to the changes that we made in the middle grades. This was like a domino effect because what is not covered in one grade then has to be moved up to another grade. We did have the geography course that we had developed for the public comment draft simplified, and we streamlined it a bit more and had some of the material moved down to the, for North America down to Grade 4 so that we could reduce the bulk of that course, but that was a course that most people seemed to like very much.

They wanted the systematic coverage of geography and, particularly, with the five themes that many of them have been using, we tried to address those in our standards. That remains in Grade 6. Grade 7 became a very coherent course for ancient and classical civilizations, very similar to a course that has been taught for many, many years in our schools, probably throughout the country and many teachers said that they were very comfortable with that course in middle school and would like to retain it. So, this was an attempt, again, to respond to what the field was telling us.

We, also, were able to work out, with the help of our Assessment Unit, the changing of when we will have our middle school assessment, and this has made a very big difference in what we could do with the rest of our standards. The middle grade MCAS will be at the end of Grade 7 and will cover world geography and world history as it is addressed in Grades 6 and 7. This meant that Grade 8 through 11 could be freed for any variety of sequences, and we are suggesting three basic ones; three different options that schools could use. So, for those four grades we have divided the world history and US history standards that our high school teachers and others indicated priorities for into two years of US history and two years of world history, and these can be sequenced, as you will see on one of the pages, in at least three different basic ways. There are possibly-- Page 48 in the version that is now available for you. So, here we have a variety of sequences for 8 to 11, and then we are providing, in Grade 12, two elective courses; one in US government, and one in economics.

I think those cover the basic changes, and let me just highlight, in addition, my invitation to those of you who would like to see any of this feedback to, please, contact Anders Lewis. If you would like to come in and look over the 700 comments, plus the almost 1,000 surveys -- if you're willing to endure that -- which some of us have, you're welcome to see what the field is telling us. I'd like to also point out that we have tried to address what we thought were the big ideas that we wanted this particular framework to address. The overview on Page 7 begins to get at these ideas from grade to grade. You will, also, see in the annotations for the different grade levels; particularly, on Page 42 and Page 51, how the big ideas are there being stressed for the development of those critical concepts in the evolution of democratic institutions, principles and procedures. American citizenship is, of course, a major idea that begins at the very beginning, and we talk about the development of civic identity with young children beginning in kindergarten and Grade 1.

We will be amplifying those ideas in a preface that we will write for the document over the summer. This is not the finished document. There will be examples. There will be more appendices, lots of appendices in all of our documents, and we will be also welcoming suggestions for seminal documents for world history, in addition to further suggestions for seminal documents for US history that we would like the teachers in the field to tell us they would like to see in some appendices. Those kinds of readings or other kinds of resources that they think students should be exposed to before they complete a history and social science curriculum. I welcome your examples or questions.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: First of all, I want to thank you. I think the document put forward has a lot more logical coherence to it than past efforts, not only drafts, but even past adopted frameworks. It has attempted to, I think, quite well, mitigate and negotiate all the competing interests in subject areas that need to be part of a comprehensive history and social science curriculum. So, again, I think the choices that have been made, the overall tone and content of the document is quite strong, even though I won't bore you with various edits that I might suggest, but I think those are all sort of in the category of tweaking, rather than any significant change in the overall structure or design. The document, I think, is extremely strong.

The one empirical question that I think would be useful for us to explore, and you may have a feel for it already, is the extent to which a scope and sequence that's suggested by this document would match or not with existing scope and sequence in the K to 12 system. I'm particularly interested, probably, in the K to 8 portion of that since I think we've gone around the high school part about as much as we can go, but the extent to which some of the changes, my sense is, in particular, it's going to come out wrong, perhaps, but the more limited focus in the early elementary years on US history and geography, the extent to which that will not be consistent with a lot of practice which may introduce ancient civilizations and areas of studies and other sorts of things which have a more global perspective at an earlier grade. So, getting some sense for, again, this is a little more quantitative empirically, the extent to which what we're suggesting here, again, especially in the elementary grades, is inconsistent with current practice, and, therefore, the kind of dislocation of cost that we may be imposing on school districts as we go forward in this direction.

DR. STOTSKY: There will be some changes, but no matter what we did, there were going to be some changes for some schools. There was no solution that would have meant no changes for our schools, but we did do one thing that will help this question of bulk of standards. We have reduced all of the redundancy that had been there. For example, Greece and Rome had been in Grade 4. It was also studied in the middle grades. It's now being studied only once. So, that will help, but it doesn't take away from the fact that some schools, no matter what sequence they followed, would have to be making changes and would appreciate help.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only other general comment I'd make is that there may be a couple of places, probably more in the world history sections and the US history sections, where some choice might be warranted in terms of the breadth or the number of areas that are studied and the extent to which schools or districts would be provided the flexibility to choose among some of those areas and to concentrate, obviously, more time and energy in studying them, rather than trying to cover them all. My sense is, and I, obviously, appreciate feedback you have, and I would just, also, need some more time to think about it, as well as to hear comments from educators in the field, but my sense is that we may be biting off a little bit more than we can chew in terms of requiring every school to cover all the major geographic areas during certain historical periods. So, this notion of trying to inject as much choice and flexibility in the process as possible is one other area that warrants further consideration.

DR. SCHAEFER: Well, I, too, want to compliment Sandy and the staff for an incredible job, which I didn't think was possible to do. I just wanted to ask about the compatibility of these with our English frameworks and whether the scope and sequence of things fits with what's going on in the English at those various grade levels. Has that been looked at?

DR. STOTSKY: For K through 8, and Susan, you can add--

MS. WHELTHLE: I don't know that we have any incompatibilities with K through 8 because we don't have any specific literary text that we're requiring in those grades at all.

DR. STOTSKY: The way the English framework is organized, it's very much about skills and literary content, but not specific books from specific periods. You know, I would say that in general, when districts do collaborate, they create very strong programs in which there are some readings that compliment the history and English together.

DR. SCHAEFER: Right. So, there is nothing in this that would--

DR. STOTSKY: Yes. I mean, I think that would be part of the work that the districts do once this comes into place.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, I read through this framework, and I thought, wow, I can't believe what a good job this state has done. We have got, as far as I can tell, the best history frameworks in the nation, and I really congratulate all of you. It's just wonderful.

I would like to say just a word or two in response to, again, Janet Buerklin who testified earlier on the history standards and raised doubts about what fifth graders could, indeed -- I think she picked out fifth graders -- could absorb. I've been looking at a lot of middle schools. Recently, I've gotten very interested in the middle school education because those years are such important ones in terms of students working up their identities, their futures and so forth, and I've been looking specifically at inner-city schools, overwhelming minority, with the most disadvantaged students. I have to say that the best schools -- there are great schools out there. I'm not talking just about Massachusetts' schools. Most of the schools I've looked at are in other states, in fact, but, you know, that's just happenstance -- not because they don't exist here.

The great schools I've been looking at the fifth graders can do extremely well with the material that is in this framework. I mean, there is no reason to lower expectations. I see kids, in fifth grade, who can answer historical and geographical questions that, at this point in my life, I would have a hard time answering. I mean, I saw fifth graders in an inner-city Newark school just the other day. There was a big map of Europe on the wall outside of a history classroom, and the countries were different colors and there were dots for cities but there were no names of countries, and there were no names attached to the cities, and the teacher was playing a game; go to Budapest, travel 500 miles west, drop 1,500 miles south, go northwest, whatever. Where are you? You know, all these hands went up. They knew the geography of Europe perfectly. Again, inner-city Newark. A school system that's done so badly the state has taken over the whole city. These were inner-city Newark kids knowing what we are asking kids to know. So, I don't want to hear about lowering expectations.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any comments or questions? Again, we are, essentially, being presented the document today. There is more discussion which will be on our agenda and, obviously, on the public's agenda as well, as we move towards final consideration of this framework. Henry, do you have something to say?

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: Yes, just quickly. Dr. Stotsky and staff, I'd really like to compliment you as well, and, also, Deputy Commissioner McQuillan, for your openness to hear a lot of the dissent and, and unreadiness around the frameworks as originally presented. I, particularly, am pleased to see how you have substantially incorporated Latin American and Latino studies, along with Africa and it's contributions to world history. It's a tough job. We're not done yet, but you've done a good job in being open and willing to hear everyone out, and, hopefully, we'll have an opportunity to hear some more from experts before we make a final determination on this framework, but I think we're on the right track. So, thanks for your hard work.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think we're done. Thank you, very much. You have to stay because we're doing the regulations, and Margaret is going to join us. Thank you all.

INITIAL REVIEW OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS ON EDUCATOR LICENSURE (603 CMR 7.00)

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you all, very much. So, we'll move into now which is the last item on the agenda which is consideration of the proposed changes to the regulations on educator licensure.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As we transition, two comments. One is I do want to compliment Belmont High School, a teacher and four students who competed in the economics challenge, which is a national contest, and they came in fourth in the nation. So, that economics elective at the twelfth grade will be important. Secondly, I just want to reiterate what the Chairman said. I think we need to look specifically at our budget request for next year for both training and, perhaps, some materials, if we find that this framework does cause some problems at the local level. I think we have to acknowledge that there has been a great deal of angst in districts, and I think we owe it to them to make sure that there are resources if there need be. So, I'm glad you commented on that.

Now, we switch to the regulations. The good news here is that these are being sent out for public comment, and I've given you some additional comments. I just want to make one brief statement before we turn it over. I think that it's very unfortunate that these regulations have become viewed in this sort of bureaucratic way. We always bring them to the Board. We talk about them as regulations. They have to go through the process. They have to go out for comment. They have to relate to the general laws, et cetera. It's too bad, because in a way, these opportunities provided in these regulations, I think, almost more than any other state, provide us with an array of ways to increase the quality and even, in some instances, quantity of our educator workforce because we're allowing more avenues of teachers and administrators in this country. I think it's getting lost in all of this bureaucracy.

So, I give you all this bureaucratic information today, asking you to send them out for public comments and have reaction back, but somehow, I commit to you that I've got to find a way to make these come alive in a reasonable way so that people understand what's out there, and what's out there is an opportunity to have people who have strong content become strong in teaching and learning and pedagogy; for those who lack certain background and content to get that kind of content; to look at a variety of ways to see to it that people are meeting standards, both programs that are being run at the district level and the higher education institution; that the variety is there. I just think the sum total of all of this, as it fits with our teacher testing program, with our preparation programs is a much better document than we are presenting to the public because we always seem to be doing it in a sort of formalized, legalized way. So, I give you the formalized, legalized form and ask you to vote them so we can get them out for public comment, but I would be working over the next few months to see to it that we're able to explain this in better terms to the public. I think, for example, for the districts, and even for other entities, there are all kinds of opportunities here and tools that educators can use and we're, certainly, not presenting it in that way. So, anyway, sorry for the speech, but I felt that was necessary. I give you the regulations and amendments here, and if you want to quickly go through the broad strokes--

DR. STOTSKY: Let me just highlight what we put into the cover memo that is in the Board package. There is the extra set of revisions that we are suggesting that fit within the broad categories that are in your cover memo. These changes have come about as we have been putting our whole system on line and having discussions with the higher education institutions and school districts in their efforts to provide alternate routes to strengthen their programs, to adapt what they have to the demands of the new ESEA legislation that asks for highly qualified teachers and to make sure that they can get the kind of teachers that they need as soon as they can. We found various gaps and we found various unintended obstacles as we were working with our certification office people, as well as with the others that I've just mentioned.

So, there are a whole variety of small changes, some of them larger than others. Some of them substantive, others simply more regulatory, but the whole thrust has been to make this system as efficient as possible, to make it as flexible as, in ways that it can be, for those, as the Commissioner just said, who want to take advantage of alternate routes, provide district based programs, both for initial license and a professional option, finding things that were of value that might have been left out, and finding gaps that we needed to put back in some way or address in a way that would enable us to be able to process all of the teacher licenses and do our program approval work. So, they cover a variety of different kinds of changes. That's why we're giving you both the strike out version, as well as the version that just shows what the text looks plain so you can not get confused, hopefully, and just see what we're trying to do.

The whole effort will be to make our regulations easier, make possible, certainly, for all of the special education license, which caused a whole variety of changes, make it possible for schools to hire qualified SPED teachers after four years of an undergraduate program or after a post-bac program that is a first license rather than a second license. So, these are changes that, in those areas, have been welcomed by the people in the field who have all had an opportunity to hear what kinds of changes we're making.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I've got a couple of questions. One is, there is a new requirement for 150 hour classroom days to clinical experience. I think it's leading up to professional licensure if I'm not mistaken. Could you define a little bit more clearly for me what classroom based clinical experience means?

DR. STOTSKY: That means that, we are going to be developing the guidelines for that particular requirement. It means, in our thinking right now, that teachers should have an ongoing opportunity, during their second and third year of teaching, which is when we lose many teachers because the induction programs cover only the first year, and then there may be mentoring programs that, also, end only in the first year. This is to provide an opportunity for the districts and the Department to extend a mentoring relationship or a relationship with college level faculty that may have a work relationship with a particular district or set of districts to provide teachers with ongoing seminars, perhaps once a week to have visits to their classrooms to enable them to receive support during the second or third year, which they need if we are to retain them. This is for the retention of new teachers. This is a piece of what existed in the old clinical master's program that was in the 1994 regulations which was for 400 hours. This is for 150 but it's for teacher of record, as opposed to what was someone still in a student teaching role.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So, is the expectation that the district would pay for this?

DR. STOTSKY: No. There is no expectation that any one particular group would be paying for it. It could come out of part of any of the four options for professional license that we've set forth. The performance assessment option, which is one, could have, as a piece of it, that 150 hours. That we shape ourselves, the Department, because that's under the Department's auspices and contract. There is a second option which could be part of the appropriate master's degree program that institutions of higher education could provide. There could be a district-based program which the districts could provide, and that is something they could do. It could be something that the candidate pays for as a fee because this is something that they would be doing which they would do if they were paying tuition to a college for a master's program or for the performance assessment program for which we have not worked out any fee structure yet, but, usually, people pay for whatever they take as a licensing mechanism. So, there are different ways in which they could be provided, and we hope to be able to use our core of master teachers who do have an obligation, at this point, to provide entering within the school districts that they work, that we could work out a way in which they would be able to help with the

seminars or with whatever kinds of observations or other activities that are part of this. So, there is no obligation on any one source that--

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The problem is, my concern, two things. One is that it may be, just in terms of the way in which the section of the regulations is structured, that you could clarify at least some of my concerns by simply defining that the performance assessment program or the district based program or the appropriate master's degree program includes a 150-hour classroom based clinical experience as part of the process.

DR. STOTSKY: That's possible. We could do that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And that maybe there are some waivers, in theory, for individuals who are at that level who have already had that prior to entering into one of those particular avenues. That doesn't address the issue of someone who has earned a master's degree in the subject area, rather than as an education master's degree, where, such a program would not be typically part of the experience. My concern is that, while this is something that would certainly seem very useful to encourage and to support, making a requirement for certification, making it a mandate that we have placed on the individual or on the district maybe a little bit more than we are capable of delivering. So, my, I guess, the question I have is whether this is more aspirational, whether this should be more part of the program approval process in terms of the various programs that are consistent with professional license or, some other, but I have some concerns about that piece.

My second question is all of us on the Board, I assume, have been getting letters from librarians. Would you please say what has been done or not done with respect to librarians?

DR. STOTSKY: The library license is now where it was a year and a half ago in the teacher category, and we are getting some help from the field. They have volunteered to help develop a teacher test for the library license. The whole category of teacher is one in which we no longer provide individual transcript review, and there will not be panel review; so, that means there is no way for someone to get a provisional license. Part of looking at the statute and the moves were designed to--

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No one, when you say, "no one", who would be in the no one category? All teachers? Teachers would not be able to get provisional license or librarians?

DR. STOTSKY: No, the librarians had been coming through, many of them, first with a provisional license, and then completing a program afterwards.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right.

DR. STOTSKY: What we will do is have a test that they will help us develop, and that will mean that, given our regulations, which are in place from the approved version, that if they pass the test, then they can get a provisional license, and that's why the test was a critical issue.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right. Okay. But it's safe to say that the librarians are going to stop writing us letters or--

DR. STOTSKY: Yes. We've already told them, I believe, and they are now very happy with the move, and, as I say, they are volunteering to help us develop a test.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. One last comment, which has nothing to do with the regulation, but I do want to note that, in the House budget, there is language that would, essentially, suspend our regulations governing recertification for the coming fiscal year, a move which I think would be extremely damaging, not only to the function of the recertification process, but, also, to the professional development and, and investment that we were making in quality teaching. This has, again, nothing to do with the regulations, but just on the general topic of certification and recertification, it's something that I think members of the Board, as well as the public, ought to be aware of, and it's something that I hope we can excise before the process concludes. Henry?

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I've received a large number of calls from teachers who are teaching on waiver, I guess -- they're either provisional or waived in – who are certified in other districts, other countries, and have been experiencing difficulty getting over the teacher licensing exam here in Massachusetts. Have you seen much of that as being an issued raised as to whether it would be appropriate to give full faith and credit or as what we call reciprocity, you might say, from other districts or other locales?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, let me answer that. This Board has made clear, through its regulations, that while people now have a year to pass the test, they can be hired and get a year's time. Every candidate that comes into this state has to pass our test whether they have certification in another state or whether they've taken a test in another state or not. They must take and pass our test in order to be fully certified here in Massachusetts. So, it's not anything for which we have any leeway at all.

VICE-CHAIRMAN THOMAS: No leeway at all. Even with English as those bilingual teachers who are coming from other countries who are certified? Same scenario?

CHAIRMAN DRISCOLL: Correct.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Again, the Department has no leeway. The Board can reconsider these regulations. These are regulations established by the Board. They're not statutory requirements.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, §1B and c. 71, §38G, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, §3, to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*, 603 CMR 7.0, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The motion is passed unanimously, and these regulations are sent out for public comment. Any ideas as to when they might come back, Commissioner, for final consideration?

DR. STOTSKY: Possibly in October.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to thank Margaret Cassidy, by the way, who has done and continues to do an outstanding job for the Department.

DR. STOTSKY: She has the archival memory on everything that relates to program approval.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: With that, I think we're done with everything on the agenda. We are adjourned.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the meeting adjourn at 12:30 p.m., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll
Secretary to the Board