COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

*****REGULAR MEETING*****

FLORAL STREET SCHOOL
57 FLORAL STREET
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2001
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT:

Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester
Mr. Henry M. Thomas, III, Vice-Chairman, Springfield

Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Worcester
Mr. J. Richard Crowley, Andover
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Mr. James Madden, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Randolph
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education Secretary to the Board

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this month's Board of Education. Commissioner let me turn it over to you to introduce our hosts to kick us off.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to thank the school system here in Shrewsbury for their kind hospitality. I'm going to turn it over to Superintendent Tony Bent who has done an outstanding job. In addition to all the other things—and I hope he'll brag about some of the things that are going on in the school system here in Shrewsbury – from our perspective, Shrewsbury offers a great model in the way in which school councils ought to operate. Of the many aspects of education reform, some have worked better than others have, and I think our experience with school councils has been mixed. Here in Shrewsbury, they have a terrific process, and I think the parents and other community members feel very much at home. So I'm going to turn it over to our superintendent to welcome us and introduce a couple of other people.

SUPERINTENDENT BENT: Thank you very much, Commissioner Driscoll. Let me start first by saying welcome to the Floral Street School. We're thrilled that you're in Shrewsbury for your monthly meeting, and let me turn it over quickly to the people who are with me. First, for a word of welcome from our State Representative, Karen Polito.

KAREN POLITO: Thank you, Tony. And thank you very much for being here. I know it's a bit of travel for you for nine o'clock in the morning, but it really means a lot to us here in Shrewsbury to have you here. Your presence is so important, and what you're doing in education in Massachusetts, certainly that's a premier issue for our Commonwealth but also for the Shrewsbury community. We, I have to say, are striving so high. We've done terrific on our MCAS scores with the help from you in guiding us, but also, our teachers, our students, our parents working together to make it all happen. We've done a great job here. Our school buildings are certainly -- our flagship building in the high school, which is underway, and this building right here shows our commitment to a solid public school education, so we're thrilled to be able to have you here so you can see our commitment to it.

As a member of the education committee, I also share your enthusiasm for public education K through 12 and higher education. It is really the key to the future. It is the key for each of our students to be able to thrive in an economy, hopefully which will be turning around, and we need them to have the skills and the tools to be successful. So we thank you in partnering with us. It really is a local/state partnership that makes this all happen. We appreciate your attention to us and being able to open up the line of communication. I think that school administrators and teachers and school committee members need to know that they can pick up the phone and call the Commissioner or call the Chairman or any of you as members and that you will listen to some of their ideas and comments, that I'm sure you'll be hearing some of those, too, as you carry on today. So thank you and welcome. We appreciate it, and good luck with your endeavors.

SUPERINTENDENT BENT: Thank you, Karen. I would like to reiterate that point around the accessibility of the Commissioner's office, because I have had occasion to need to call the Commissioner's office to get a clarification on issues, and there are some wonderful contact people who call me back quite quickly with responses, and I do appreciate that a lot, and I know other superintendents in the field appreciate that as well. Let me introduce the chair of our school committee. I have been superintendent here for seven and a half years, and I think one of the reasons that I have remained here, aside from the fact that I think they would like me to stay, is that I have had a dream school committee for all of those years, and it makes
the life of a superintendent quite pleasant when that's the case, so let me introduce Mark Murray for a welcome.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Tony. Commissioner Driscoll, Mr. Peyser, we're so happy that you're here today at the Floral Street School. It's our newest school in Shrewsbury. It's a beautiful new school. It was built four or five years ago. And we hope you have a very productive meeting today, and we want to invite you back to our new high school which will open up in September that we're very, very proud of, and we had a tour of it last night, and things are on track, and we hope that you'll have one of your next meetings there when that opens up in September. Thank you so much for being here.

MR. BENT: Thank you, Mark. Just a couple quick things. One of them is that, as you may have a sense, Shrewsbury is a growth district. We probably are the poster child for a growth district in the sense that I've been, as I indicated, superintendent for seven and a half years, and in that time this school system has grown 1300 students. When I came on board, we were about 3700 students in 1994, and currently we're 5,000 students, and we expect to go to 6,000 students by 2006. What that means is that SBAB has been
very, very important to this community. This school, for example, opened in 1997, but we are already receiving the annual payments and reimbursement for the school, which is a huge help to the taxpayers of this town. I think we receive annually $500,000 to help support the cost of this school.

Under construction at this moment there's a new high school in Shrewsbury, 280,000 square feet, capacity for 1475 students. Unfortunately we will open it over capacity, just as this school which was designed for 660 students currently has 750. Unless we do some continuous redistricting and moving of children, we will have over 800 in this school next year. We already have 23 modular classrooms in this town in most all of our school sites, so we're making maximum use of every possible space.

The other piece that I would like to indicate is simply that this is a district that takes MCAS very, very seriously. We put great energy and focus on the performance of our students on MCAS, and we're pleased that in a community where our per people expenditure is in the range of the state average, and may be below the state average, we ranked, according to the Boston Globe, in the top 10 percent of the
communities in this state in MCAS scores for the last four administrations, for all of the administrations of MCAS, so we're pretty proud of that as well. I could go on, but you have a long agenda. So thank you very, very much, and indeed welcome, and we hope you're comfortable, and if you need anything, don't hesitate to let us know.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you so much. The first item on the agenda is some comments from me, and I think I'll forego them since the most noteworthy developments since our last meeting have to do with the budget. We have a budget item on the agenda, and I think I'll make some comments about where we are as well as what's on the table for us in terms of '03 at that time, and we also have eight folks who have come forward to make public comments. So rather than delay the proceedings, I will turn it over to the Commissioner.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do feel compelled to say a few things. This has been an unusual run of good news here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Just yesterday, we were the recipient of a very kind editorial in the Wall Street Journal indicating the success that we've had here in Massachusetts, and, perhaps because I get it delivered a little late, yesterday was also the day that we appeared on the front page of Education Week, which was a story about our announcement of the scores at Brockton High School. I think you all know that last week on the front page of both Boston newspapers we once again were able to indicate that on the NAEP science scores we were number one in the 4th grade and among the leaders in the 8th grade, and in that regard, with the exception of Ohio. I want to give Ohio credit, because it is the only state that has really major urban areas among the leaders. So clearly good things are happening, and as I've said all along, it's a result of the hard work of particularly teachers and students and parents and administrators. It's a team effort, and we certainly are seeing, as I like to say, the fruits of our labors. The kind of progress that's being made is just tremendous. We've got a long way to go, as we know, but certainly we need to take a minute to celebrate our success.

I do want to comment on the situation in New Bedford. I think it's a great example of what we've been trying to accomplish as school districts and as a Commonwealth in terms of the communication and cooperation between the police and the school system, establishing an atmosphere whereby students will come forward. This was not, by the way, all started by a note found by a janitor. This whole investigation began a couple of weeks earlier. In fact, there was a court dismissal in which the school system had brought something before the court. So, I think as much as we always worry, as much as we have to be prepared, the kind of materials and programs that the New Bedford Public Schools have instituted across the board, programs supported both by state funds and federal funds,

have certainly paid off in this particular case, and they are to be complimented for their alertness and continued great work, and cooperation.

Very quickly let me just comment on a couple of things. We are one of five states that is part of the American Diploma Project. In fact, some of us are going down to Washington this week. The Chairman and I, and Judy Gill will be represented, and the University of Massachusetts. We're going to be talking about the standard setting between the K to 12 system and higher education and other ways of articulation.

As we talked about, the Governor has re-established the Joint Committee on Education Policy through an Executive Order. We have had our first meeting, and we are meeting in fact again today. This group includes the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Higher Education, this Board, and Judy Gill and myself.

A quick update on the Lawrence Public Schools. The new mayor-elect is actually the new mayor. Because they had a vacancy, he's actually been sworn in. So Mike O'Sullivan is the new mayor and the new chair of the school committee in the City of Lawrence, and we've been working very well with him and with the new members of the school committee. They elected their members by ward this time, and so it's a new format and they have several new members. We're meeting with the new mayor and the school committee members both new and old this next month, and we hope to have officials from Lawrence before us in January both to look at renewing our agreement with the Lawrence Public Schools and also to look at the progress which I might say, just as a prelude, is a positive story. I think I'll stop there, except I've had 42 people this morning tell me that yesterday was James' 18th birthday. And with that, I'll turn it back to the Chairman.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

MR. GORRIE: Good morning. First of all, for the record, my name is Steve Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and I'd also like to echo the comments that were made this morning that this is a magnificent facility. As I was driving in looking at it, I was trying to figure out how large it was, and they were telling me, and I think it's a wonderful tribute to the Town of Shrewsbury. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, thank you for taking my comments today. I'd like to talk about the fiscal year 2003 budget request which you are considering today as well. On behalf of educators across the state, I'm here to object to the budget proposal. We urge the Board to use its clout to defend public education and support spending levels needed to sustain improvements in our schools. As was noted earlier, Massachusetts has shown great improvements in several key measures of achievement, and as Commissioner Driscoll mentioned just a few moments ago, especially last week when our 4th and 8th graders were ranked first and second respectively in their scores on the National Assessment Educational Progress science exams. Now is not the time to cut spending in education, but instead to build on our past successes. We urge members of the Board to ask the legislature to protect the revenue side of the budget to reduce the need for making these spending cuts. Most particularly we ask you to join us in asking the legislature to delay the rollback in the state income tax, at least until this fiscal crisis has passed.

While all the proposed reductions, of course, are of some concern, I'd like to highlight our objections to several of them. First, while the Board's proposed budget calls for an increase of $84 million in Chapter 70 funding, that figure would result in an actual decrease of state aid for public schools when inflation and enrollment increases are taken into consideration. Consequently, if this spending

level is approved, some districts will have to reduce their staffing levels, increase class sizes, or deny cost-of-living increases to their teachers and other staff, all of which would have a detrimental impact upon education in Massachusetts. The impact would be especially severe in so-called minimum aid districts.

The proposed reduction in charter school reimbursements would also cause fiscal hardships in districts where Commonwealth charter schools are currently located. We believe this is a misguided approach to dealing with the ongoing fiscal problems caused by those charter schools. A better approach would be to support the legislation filed by Representative Tom O'Brien to place a moratorium on the establishment of new charter schools. Elimination of the Equal Education Program would hurt schools as well, those programs that serve low income minority children. We believe this is poor policy at a time when policymakers from the Governor on down have contended that closing the achievement gap is a top priority. Another area of concern is eliminating the Kindergarten Development Grant Program which we believe would also be a big mistake. Research has shown that providing students with high quality early childhood learning experiences is critical to their future successes in school. And while those services should begin before kindergarten, at least making sure that all children have access to full day kindergarten programs should be absolutely guaranteed.

We are concerned about the proposed cuts in school building assistance as well, and as has been noted, this is a beautiful building in which we're meeting today. Reductions in SBAB would prevent some districts from having such attractive and useful facilities. We understand that the Board has proposed a budget that fits within the parameters outlined by the administration. This Board should do more than simply comply with those requests for identifying ways to cut education spending. We believe the Board should passionately make the case to the elected officials and the public that education is the key to our strong economy and is the key to a well-informed citizenry. This Board should first support efforts to raise revenues needed so that education may be fully funded, and should only turn to cuts once those efforts have been exhausted. Thank you.

David Moriarty of the Medford School Department.

MR. MORIARTY: Good morning. I am David Moriarty, Director of Language Arts from the Medford Public Schools and proudly one of the schools the ten most improved in MCAS, Medford Voc Tech. Commissioner Driscoll, Mr. Peyser, Board members, if you're going to pass the MCAS test in grade 10, you need to learn how to read and write in grade 1, and 15,913 first graders in Massachusetts have difficulty learning how to read and write, thus the compelling need for the continuation of the Early Intervention Grant Program, currently funded at $3 million -- money that pays for Reading Recovery training in school districts throughout Massachusetts. Nationally, in the past 12 years, over 1 million first graders have been served in Reading Recovery. And these students who pass through Reading Recovery don't just read. They read at the average span or higher of their first grade class. Meticulous tracking of each first grade Reading Recovery student documents sustained reading gains in later grades. Reading Recovery has been shown to significantly reduce SPED referrals and costs. This year Reading Recovery will serve more than 5,000 students in 124 school districts in Massachusetts in both Spanish and English.

But in just the last ten days with the release of MCAS scores newspapers across Massachusetts have captured the success of Reading Recovery. For example, the Frontier Regional Union, Number 38 school districts grade 3 MCAS scores showed all 144 grade 3 students passing the reading test with 80 percent scoring as proficient, including over 30 Reading Recovery students, the majority of whom performed at the proficient level. In Springfield, the Glenwood School, the first in the city to use

Reading Recovery, third grade scores showed that every student in the school passed the MCAS test with an 85-percent proficiency rate. At the Haley and Mather schools in Boston, both with full implementation of Reading Recovery, 92 percent of first graders at the Mather were reading at or above grade level, and 93 percent at the Haley. In Easthampton the school superintendent emphasized that, "cutting the program would result in lower MCAS scores as well as higher special education costs in the upper grades. MCAS scores showed that almost all of our third graders can read, 94 percent, and I attribute that success to the Reading Recovery Program. Without it, those students struggle for years." The superintendent cautions at a loss of Reading Recovery and its negative impact on this success.

Today in the era of both comprehensive and whole school literacy reform, a school must confront the lowest achievers, the most complex achievers since few solutions exist to change the literacy path of this lowest 20 percent, but Reading Recovery helps with the most challenging literacy learners. It is one solution to sustain gain over time. For the Department of Education here, Reading Recovery contributes to what you're already doing by removing a high percentage of literacy failure before it becomes a year-to-year challenge for districts. Finally, on behalf of the bottom 20 percent of first graders in Massachusetts, 15,913 children having difficulty learning how to read and write, I thank you for restoring the funds for 2002, and urge you to level fund the early intervention grant for 2003. Thank you.

Joshua Bogin of the Racial Imbalance Advisory Council.

MR. BOGIN: Good morning. By way of introduction, my name is Joshua Bogin. I'm presently working as a director of the magnet school programs in the Springfield Public Schools, but I speak today in my capacity as the co-chair of the Commissioner's Racial Imbalance Advisory Council, and speak to express the council's collective view, respectfully, that the Commissioner's proposed FY 03 budget eliminating all funding under Section 1 of Chapter 636 that supports compliance with the state racial imbalance law should be reconsidered and revised. This Council has reiterated on numerous occasions in recent years the position that attention to the issues implicated by Chapter 636, nondiscrimination principles in public education that lead to schools and classrooms where children are actually able to learn under conditions of equal opportunity, remain essential ingredients in our state's overall approach to educational improvement, especially in our neediest urban school districts. Without funds to support educational programs designed to ensure compliance with state mandated student assignment plans, the promise of equal educational opportunities takes on a hollow cast, and our district's ability to promote policies consistent with that promise becomes seriously compromised.

We're aware of the pressing economics facing our Commonwealth and our school systems and appreciate the terribly difficult choices faced by legislators and by the Governor even as we meet today. We also understand the critical importance of sparing no effort to promote increased academic achievement for all of our students. Chapter 636 funding provides specific supports aimed at equalizing the playing field based on nondiscrimination principles. It is the one state funded program that takes specific aim at the academic injuries that can result from segregated and other potentially injurious practices that send messages to students based on the color of their skin or their racial ethnic backgrounds. Unfortunately a message delivered from the state Board of nonsupport for the nondiscrimination principles embedded in Chapter 636 will invariably lead some districts back to segregative assignment practices both among and within schools that can only lead to many of the same inequitable practices our school children of color were faced with prior to adoption of this legislation so many years ago.

Equally important, the work driven by Chapter 636 funding drives the nondiscrimination principles on which our very democracy is built. We believe that our nation is unique because of our historical insistence on finding ways to embrace all of our citizens. In our time we've used policies such as those driving Chapter 636 to ensure that all of our citizens at home, even those historically victimized and disenfranchised, believe that they are key parts of the American family. That belief sustained across racial and ethnic groups and over time is the distinguishing feature that must survive to set our diverse society apart from the many diverse societies around the world where democracy, tolerance, and respect are foreign concepts. And that belief ultimately that all of our children are valued and respected will, if put into practice, show results over time that will emerge throughout every level of our society, at professional schools and the work of our professional institutions.

In the wake of September 11th, when American citizens without regard to the color of their skin or their ethnic background paid the ultimate price for being Americans, it is more essential than ever for our leaders to stand up and restate our commitment to eradication of all vestiges of inequitable treatment in our own land. We urge you, Commissioner Driscoll, to reconsider your recommendation, and we urge you as board members to take this opportunity to reinstate in your proposed budget full funding for both Sections 1 and 8 of Chapter 636 to support desegregation activities in these 22 districts that have such profound need. Thank you very much.

Kharis McLaughlin and Jean McGuire of the Racial Imbalance Advisory Council and METCO.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Good morning. Thank you for allowing us to speak. Good morning, Commissioner. Good morning, Board. It's wonderful to be here, and especially given permission to speak since I just called yesterday, so it shows how willing people are to put you on the agenda. We're here today to speak about the devastation in the funding for equity for children across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The legislature has removed $3 million from METCO, and really I think it's about $10 million from the 636 category. And at a time when our nation is struggling with a war, with children who are being targeted in communities because of their racial background, because of the way that they look, we believe it's a time where even more resources should be dedicated to this sort of work.

Lots of us would like to believe that America has now achieved equity on all levels. However, I'm here to tell that although this nation truly is one of opportunity, one where somebody can change their circumstances in a generation, that the issues of race still do matter. When we look at schools across our nation and within our Commonwealth, we can see the school populations are really determined by the ability to buy in certain neighborhoods, and because of this we have neighborhoods within our Commonwealth that are either 98 percent white or 98 percent students of color. And if we look at the educational outcomes for those systems, they reflect in many ways the inequities in America. And I understand clearly that this Board has dedicated its resources to making sure that education is equitable for all children. I believe that is your intent by instituting the MCAS exam. However, there's another part of education that remains important, and that perhaps is the character building that comes out of children being educated together, making sure that staff understands the needs of children so that they can proceed well into a world-based economy.

As I think about the events of September 11th, I am certain that there's an environment that's very similar to the need for this bill in 1965. When the Racial Imbalance Act was created in 1965, it was deliberately done because there was inequity within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although we've done lots to create a more balanced system, I would dare predict that we have much more work to do in the upcoming year. I was devastated to learn about the cuts that this Board made to the 636 funding. Instead of decreasing the funds, it is now the time to think about increasing them. We have

children who will benefit from environments and schools that bring kids together. And I'm not suggesting that this is not work that schools could do on their own, but sometimes we need to have policies in place that ensure that children will not be going to school separate, separate and on equal programs, and so I'm asking you to reconsider the appropriation made to 636.

It's very difficult to spend most of your time advocating for money, and I know that we're going to have to go back to the legislature to make sure that funds are reinstituted for this year, but I would much rather spend my time educating children than parading up and down the halls of the State House to make sure that they understand that these kids are still in important and that this money is still being used in a beneficial way. So I ask you to reconsider the allotment for 636 and to also reconsider the increase for METCO from $15 million to $18 million.

MS. McGUIRE: I'll begin by supporting the comments of the two previous speakers, and rather than being redundant, I'd like to make an observation. Every year I subscribe to Municipal Profiles of Massachusetts. Up until about two decades ago they were provided free of charge by the Commonwealth. All you had to do was go to the Saltonstall building and pick them up. There's very interesting information in there regarding the cities and towns, and I particularly focus in on the cities of Boston and Springfield and their surrounding suburbs and the demographic changes, and the last couple of years I've been using Lynnfield as a bellwether. In 1990 the Municipal Profiles lists the number of blacks as 10. 1999/2000, there were 11. This year, I just got the book, it's now 50. It's that slow pace of change which reminds me of why this program is so important.

I had hoped, as many did back in 1965, when the Racial Imbalance Law was finally passed by the Commonwealth, that fair housing programs under which METCO actually began, that's how people talked about it when we were meeting around fair housing, that this access to mortgage financing, to not being steered to certain neighborhoods by realtors, to having an understanding that there are opportunities in other communities, would be an easy way for people to make better changes in their lives, and here it is 36 years later, and in most of our towns, with the exceptions of Framingham and Newton and perhaps parts of Brookline, which are really getting priced right out, except for public housing, the demographic changes for people of color, linguistic minorities is still pretty small. It hasn't kept pace with other surrounding suburbs in the United States. Therefore a program like METCO or the Interdistrict Transfer Program outside of Rochester and the decimation of what was a program outside of Hartford -- and Hartford has its own problems now with the state being asked to do something around Bridgeport and New Haven and the inequities between those cities and the surrounding suburbs -- makes me realize how important it is for you the Board to understand what the METCO program does.

The 6,000 plus graduates of this program, over 200 schools in 36 years, are some of the Commonwealth's best advertisements of what a good education is. Buildings like this are already built, many of them were under-utilized in terms of local populations, and so in the interest of time people who were on the fair housing committee said let's bring some kids out and let them go to school out here so our children won't have to wait for housing to change, and so the support, first with Carnegie and then with the, I would say the wisdom of the legislature in 1968, an appropriation was attached. And when I came in '73, there was about $2 million attached to the program. If the level of minimum funding for the foundation budget were to be used for METCO, then we would be at at least $22 million. That would then allow the program to do what we would like to do to make this a maximum -- an optimum education for our children. If children want to stay for, say, MCAS after schoolwork, they need a late bus, that's extra money we don't have, that means everybody has to stay so that two or three days a week students can stay who need to have that extra help. If we want to work to bring the numbers of children up to the amounts that the

towns would like, we would have to have more transportation, and we would have to have something more than $3100 to $3800 per pupil with transportation to educate the students in Boston and Springfield.

I don't think there is a bargain in this Commonwealth like METCO. I don't know anywhere you use buildings like this, which often are under-utilized, bring children from the cities of Boston and Springfield, give them a good education, turn them into first class taxpayers wherever they live, they don't all stay in Massachusetts, and see them give back to the Commonwealth in the incomes that they earn everything that was invested in them over the 12 years they stayed in the METCO program. I don't think you have a better bargain than this. I think you need to look at the METCO program with a different light. This is probably the best investment that you make in education in this Commonwealth, under $4,000 -- well, $3100 to $3800 per kid, including transportation, to get students a good education and to provide the normalcy of learning how to go to school with kids which you might perceive to be different, or not, and grow up without stereotypes and not be prey to demagoguery and the foolishness that goes on in what I call the tyranny of culture that we see reflected even in MCAS, which often reflects the culture of access to income and money and privilege and good stuff in life, and how we in city schools try our best to make up for that with what goes on between those school walls during the day.

We know we're doing an uphill battle, but we'll do it anyway because that's upon which a democracy is based. I ask you to rethink -- I invite any of you to come and get on the bus and ride and see what a bargain you have in your minuscule investment in this program. The changes that have gone on, even for women, have not kept pace with what Massachusetts offers with schools like Regis and Wellesley and Radcliffe and Smith and Mount Holyoke. I think of Isa Zimmerman who was the only women superintendent when I came on as METCO director, and now we have more women as superintendents. I have yet to see a person who's a minority as a superintendent in a suburban town since I've been here. I'm waiting to see the changes so that when I go into a school there will be teachers who look like me, who are Latino, who are Asian who are not there yet, but because of this program, many of the staff that are now hired by suburban school systems are METCO graduates. Many of the principals in Boston are METCO graduates.

I contend that you need to take a personal look, not just at the statistics, but at what really goes on between people in this program. We talk every day between city and suburbs in ways that most people don't talk, about our children, about what we're learning, about friendships, about what it means to be knowledgeable with other people in Massachusetts in ways that really don't happen too often. Personally, having had a child that went through this program and who now repairs the trains for the T and keeps them running, to know that what my son got getting on the subway and going to Brookline was worth every penny of it, and he says now, even when he sees other students he says, "You know, they didn't have a lot of the coursework I had." Well, part of that is because I made him take things he didn't want to take like Latin and calculus, but that's okay, he took them, and it paid off. Those opportunities are there.

Buildings like this are available. They're not all full. Some towns have increasing populations. There's no reason why you cannot even expand this METCO program to the extent that suburban superintendents have asked to have more students and get more bang for the buck. This is a first class bargain, and I want you to take a new look at it. I welcome any of you to come ride, talk, see. Alumni, superintendents, teachers, principals, bus drivers, monitors, custodians, ask them what they think about the METCO program. Thank you.

Philip Dinsky, Chair of the Framingham School Committee.

MR. DINSKY: Good morning. My name is Phil Dinsky, and I'm chair of the Framingham School Committee, and I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here this morning to address three aspects of the Department of Education's preliminary budget for FY '03. Framingham is an urban / suburban community of almost 70,000 children from a wide range of economic, ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. Although we are faced with educational challenges found in the cities of our state, Framingham has not received the level of funding that other urban centers have under educational reform. Only 15 communities in the Commonwealth receive a lower percentage of their foundation budget in state aid than Framingham. We are greatly concerned about the level of school funding and inequities in the current law.

Representatives of the Framingham School Committee have testified repeatedly over the past four years before this Board, the Legislature, and the Foundation Budget Review Commission. Although the evidence suggests that our arguments have fallen on deaf ears, I welcome the opportunity to again provide some input as you consider next year's state budget. Along with citizens throughout the state, the Framingham School Committee was appalled by the secretive process and the lack of public discussion in the legislature's adoption of a FY 02 budget last week, and we will take any opportunity available to testify before the decision-making bodies within the state.

This morning I would like to urge the state Board to reconsider three specific items in the preliminary budget. They are School Transportation, the Charter School Reimbursement Fund, and the Equal Education Program. The difference between the way transportation aid is distributed is one of the many inequities of school funding in Massachusetts. The DOE preliminary budget calls for reimbursing regional school districts at a level of 92 percent. In recent years Framingham has received less than 30 percent of its transportation reimbursement entitlement. Framingham's 26 square miles includes both rural and urban neighborhoods. We are crisscrossed by major roads such as Route 135, Route 9, Route 30, and the Massachusetts Turnpike. It is beyond logic that the wealthy communities such as Dover and Sherborn should be reimbursed 92 percent for transportation while Framingham is reimbursed 28 percent.

Our second concern is the proposed change in the formula for charter schools. The Framingham School Committee is not opposed to the type of innovation that alternative programs such as charter schools can provide. We are opposed, however, to the system by which the state has chosen to fund charter schools. The per pupil dollar amount taken from local schools and given to charter schools is a paper figure that bears no relation to the operating costs for educating students or to any decrease in those costs when a child leaves. The proposed elimination of the graduated three-year reimbursement for money taken from the school district and given to the charter schools will be devastating to Framingham's 2003 budget. I urge the state Board to leave the current reimbursement schedule in place or to seek an entirely different funding mechanism of the charter schools.

Our final concern is the elimination of funds for mandated state-approved racial balance programs. Under Chapter 636, Framingham has a racial balance plan approved by the Board in June of 1996. The plan has played a key role in our efforts to provide all of our students with equitable educational opportunities and to ensure that all of our children achieve at comparable levels. We believe strongly that race is still an important factor in our society and our educational systems. That reality is vividly demonstrated on statewide results of the MCAS examinations.
Public policies such as Massachusetts Chapter 636 are important to ensure that our schools do not become resegregated and racially isolated and to further the academic improvement of our minority students. Along with my testimony, I've submitted a lengthier submission paper on Chapter 636 drafted by our Superintendent, Dr. Mark Smith, in response to attacks on funding for this law a year

ago. I urge the state Board to restore full funding of Section 1 as well as full funding of Section 8. Thank you for your attention.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the October 23, 2001 Regular meeting.

The motion was made by Mr. Thomas and second by Dr. Schaefer. The vote was unanimous.

FY 2003 BUDGET PROPOSAL – DISCUSSION AND VOTE

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is the FY 03 budget request. Tony and Jeff will join us. Let me just make a few prefatory comments. One is that obviously all of you who are watching the reports, not only on the economy in general but on the impact of the economic downturn on state tax revenues, know that we are still in a period of certainly deep reductions in tax revenues to the state but also continuing uncertainty. Up until this point, all of the projections for declining tax revenue have been overshot by the reality, and therefore we're in a position where it is very difficult at any point in time to take a snapshot, especially this far in advance of FY 03 which begins in July of next year, to get a true picture for what resources are actually available to us. Therefore there's a certain amount of uncertainty as well in the numbers that we're proposing today for spending. The realities of the situation may force the Governor and the Legislature subsequently to make changes to what we propose, as they obviously have a right and obligation to do. Nevertheless, this is our best guess at what may be available to us, and the judgment of the budget committee of the Board that has met as to how we ought to allocate our resources.

There obviously are some other things going on in here as well. One in particular is that the Legislature has now produced an FY 02 budget which is in some significant respects greatly at variance with what our expectation was the last time we met. Last time we met, we were operating off of a provisional '02 budget that essentially took the lower of the House or Senate proposals that were being considered in conference committee. What has come back out of the conference committee is often either not the lower of those two figures or below either of those two figures, and the cuts have been made in a way which I think are, at least from my perspective, somewhat difficult to explain, but are quite deep in some areas and extremely problematic in terms of their implementation.

Just a couple of areas where there were substantial reductions beyond what we had expected at our last meeting: the state wards account, which is $14 million, was eliminated. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, which is the new office that has just been established, saw a 40-percent reduction in its budget. The adult basic education programs were cut by $13 million, which is a reduction of over 40 percent. I'll come back to that in a second. The Dual Enrollment Program was eliminated, and after-school programs were severely reduced. The Competitive After-School Grants were eliminated entirely, and the other after-school item, called After-School Programs, was cut by a third. The Department's administrative accounts also were reduced by about $700,000 which is a significant amount of money in the context of the overall budget.

The thing I want to comment about specifically, or about these cuts in general is not so much the reductions themselves but the timing of the cuts. As you know, we are well into the fiscal year 02,

and the Legislature, whose obligation it is to produce a budget by certainly the end of the prior fiscal year, was unable to do so. As this process dragged on and on, decisions had to be made about the actual expenditure of funds based on reasonable assumptions about what funds would be available and ultimately appropriated. When the Governor put together her final budget submission, which was introduced last Monday, we went through a fairly painstaking process of trying to identify those line items where either the local communities or the school districts or the other recipients had not built into their spending plans already the level of spending that was anticipated in our budget requests.

So, in other words, there were certain discretionary grant programs where we knew we could make reductions because no grants or no commitments had been made, and therefore no specific dislocation would result. There were other programs where we had been conservative in the allocation of resources, and therefore we knew that we could again make some reductions without causing severe dislocations. Not to say these would be painless by any stretch, but they would not result in, again, the kind of dislocations that would cause programs to be cut midstream or people to be let go without any warning or forethought. And I want to note the Commissioner's role in particular in making sure that during the deliberations in the Governor's office that we took very close account of all of those specific line items where any cuts this late in the fiscal year would result in that kind of disruption.

The cuts that the Legislature has made does not take any of that into account. Indeed, some of the cuts that they have made, and I'll point specifically now back to the adult basic education line item, have the effect of essentially eliminating state funding for the remainder of the year. We're effectively halfway through the fiscal year, and half of the funding has been cut. That half that they have appropriated has essentially already been spent. And by cutting the remainder, essentially we're saying to the providers, many of whom are small nonprofit organizations, that they're out of business, and that kind of thoughtless cutting which has gone on in the 02 budget the Legislature has submitted to the Governor is certainly inappropriate and indefensible. Again, I'm not necessarily saying that all the choices they made were wrong had they been made at the beginning of the fiscal year, but making them in the middle of the fiscal year is impossible to defend.

Now, the Governor doesn't have the authority to veto up spending. She can veto spending and recommend lower levels. She can submit supplemental appropriations requests that the Legislature must act on as they would any bill that would be submitted to them, but she can't by legislative authority increase spending that hasn't already been appropriated or approved by the Legislature. And also certainly at this late date, but also reflecting the political realities of the situation, she can't second guess every spending choice that the Legislature has made. There are certain areas where she has indicated that she will go back to the Legislature and try to revisit some of the decisions that they made, specifically where there are legal requirements for us to expend funds, Medicaid being a good example of that, but there are some others, or where by cutting program budgets and state spending we are sacrificing revenues, in particular federal reimbursements that we would otherwise be eligible for. So, in other words, cutting $10 million in state spending only to lose $10 million in federal revenue. So she is certainly going to revisit those, and during the course of this week the Governor and her staff will be meeting to talk about how she might respond to the budget that has been submitted to her. But, again, I think overall there are a number of cuts that have been made by the Legislature in the 02 budget, in particular around the Department of Education, that are indefensible and problematic.

That being said, our responsibility here is to deal with the FY 03 budget, and while what happens in 02 has an impact certainly on 03, overall we are moving forward recognizing that some things are

beyond our control. So what you have before you in the FY 03 budget request is a reflection of meetings that have gone on between our last meeting and this involving the Budget and Finance Subcommittee. I want to review a couple of main points and then note a couple of the changes that have been made since our last meeting.

In terms of the basic facts of the situation, there are three areas where there's substantial growth that is essentially built into the 03 budget. There's Chapter 70, and to fully fund Chapter 70 requires us to increase spending on that line item by about $85 million. School Building Assistance is projected to grow by $20 million, and that, by the way, is a significant reduction in growth that we're seeing this year, but nonetheless is significant dollars in the context of FY 03 resources. And then finally, the Special Education Circuit Breaker Fund which we'll talk about a little bit later today is another $50 to $60 million that is an increase over FY 02 spending levels. Taken altogether that's about $160 million in growth. We don't have $160 million in growth that we can spend, which means that we need to make some choices elsewhere in the budget to reduce spending in order to make up the difference. And, again, I think as we discussed at the last meeting, we were given a target of about $126 million over the provisional budget that we were then working off of as our target. In order to get back down to those numbers, we need to make some hard choices and some spending cuts in other line items.

What I want to do now, rather than go through all of those choices which we went through at the last meeting, is to go over some of the changes that have been made and some of the additions perhaps that have been placed into this current proposal before us. First, with respect to MCAS Low-Scoring Support, one thing that we have done specifically here is to suggest that at least $2 million of the MCAS Low-Scoring Support money, this is MCAS remediation dollars, be made available through a competitive grant program to community colleges for the development of MCAS programs which are targeted not only for students who are in high school trying to complete their degree, but also and more importantly for the establishment of programs for those students who in the fall of 2003 will have completed their local requirements but may not have passed both portions of MCAS and will be looking to continue their education and to identify educational opportunities in the public higher education system so that they can continue to work towards their high school degree and begin the process of working towards a higher degree.

In addition to that, the Educator Quality Endowment line item, there's not a change in the appropriation that we're recommending. However, we are recommending that the authorizing legislation be changed to allow us to spend down over a ten-year period the $70 million in principal which is in that account to allow us to expand teacher mentoring programs and other programs designed to attract new teachers, to enhance teacher quality, and to develop stronger leadership skills among our principals and superintendents.

There's a line item here called School-To-Work Connecting Activities, 7027-0015, that is a new line item in our budget. These funds are currently administered by the Department of Labor and Work Force Development, and there is obviously a work force development component to this program since it involves students who are in high school who are engaged in work experiences that are tied back to their educational objectives, but this is primarily an education program and a school reform strategy, and therefore is more appropriate to be in the Department of Education budget rather than in the Department of Labor and Work Force Development.

Under the Early Childhood Grants, we are making explicit what was not clear at our last meeting with the Home-Based Parenting Grants which had been a separate line item or consolidated within this $111 million Early Childhood Grant Program. And moving down a couple of lines, that the Early Intervention Grants, which relates to the Reading Recovery program that David Moriarty spoke

about earlier today, is now consolidated into the earlier literacy programs, and you'll see that the funds go up from $19 million to $22 million recognizing that transfer.

A couple of other notes. One is the recommendation as to level fund METCO based on the FY 02 appropriation. And, also, on the Magnet Education, the recommendation is $4.8 million, which is to fund Parent Information Centers, and I would note that had been referenced earlier by some of the folks who made public comment, that that $4.8 million would now represent almost a doubling of 02 spending in this area given the cuts that were made by the legislature. There are obviously other things that we could talk about which were introduced at our last meeting. But with that, I'd like to open it up for any discussion, comments, or questions from Board members. Let me preface that by saying, Commissioner, is there anything that you'd like to add, is there anything that any of our panels might like to clarify from what I've said?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: A couple of comments, and let me talk about the mechanics first. If you remember, we've been operating in FY 02 based on taking the lower of the two numbers with the House and Senate, and so that's the budget we've been relying on up to this point. When the Chairman mentions that we were surprised, the problem becomes items that we thought were safe, in the sense that there was money in both budgets, and we took the lower number. We're now faced with the situation where both branches have agreed to lower the bottom number. So, for example, in the case of METCO, that was an $18 million appropriation in the House, an $18 million appropriation in the Senate, and so we assumed that to be an $18 million appropriation. This Board carried it as part of FY 02 for that reason, and in fact had originally included it for FY 03. Now both branches have agreed to reduce that to $15 million and so we need to correspondingly reduce both FY 02 and FY 03.

When we talk about surprises, I think about the Equal Education monies, that has been a point of discussion by this Board for a number of years, based not so much the programs themselves but the idea that it had been a program in an earlier day, in fact it was a precursor to the foundation budget back in a time when the urban superintendents made the case that they were being disadvantaged. And so this Board back many years ago established this fund to help urban areas. This Board had discussed many, many times that given the foundation budget and the formula, et cetera, that perhaps it was a little anachronistic and needed to be folded into Chapter 70. This Board has found different ways of trying to do that through the budget process over the last few years. Ironically last year there had been a reduction made, I believe it carried all the way through House One, and this money was then restored by the Legislature to its full amount, and so we carried it in FY 02 obviously because again it was in both budgets. Now the Legislature, the very body that chose to reinstate it last year, has now reduced it by a significant amount of money, so that's a problem for, obviously for school districts because that's money that has already been counted on as State Wards and so forth.

To shift to the Department budget for a moment, there seemed to be a point at which the Legislature introduced a 6.94, it turns out, call it 7 percent reduction in the final accounts, so you can see a series of reductions through a whole series of accounts across state agencies of 6.94 or 7 percent. That has affected a number of our accounts. Our administrative line which reduces us by about $700,000, again in the middle of the year, in a line that both the House and Senate had increased recognizing that our rent alone, et cetera was not enough to carry that line, so now that's been cut by $700,000, again in the middle of the year, which makes it very difficult to effectuate any savings when we've already spent well more than half of that line.

Minor items, but equally difficult, is the Certification line. It's only $122,000, but it's devastating because that line item is gone, and the same with Technology, $123,000, that line item is gone. And

one other reduction of 2.1 million dollars for MassEd Online, which is a line item that we carry in our budget, but it's for subsidizing classroom teachers who are online, and we pay a certain amount, they pay a certain amount, so that's been just part of our budget, and now that's been zeroed out, which means we've already paid anywhere from 25 percent to 50 percent of a commitment there, and actually had a supplementary budget that the Governor filed and the Legislature seemed to approve, and then at the last minute that was pulled last year with all the difficulties.

So I just want to make sure that the Board recognizes we're going to have some real serious issues at the Department of Education as a Department. In fact, it's not just a matter of transfers or whatever. We've got some serious issues to deal with. Secondly, this sort of a mechanical process to establish the base for FY 02 to then build for FY 03, and the target that we've been given by the administration is the same, and that of course we need all remember is subject to change as we've seen FY 02 change about 30 times in the last few weeks.

There is some hope. I'm hopeful that there will be some corrections made. I think that there was a contingency amount put in the budget by the Legislature. The Chairman mentioned that there are some legal obligations. There are these revenue neutral items. We have one ourselves in our budget. There was a reduction made in the nutrition area that is a hundred percent reimbursable. It makes really no sense to cut that line. And certainly there are a number of people advocating for our adult basic education programs and a number of other programs. So it's quite a moving target.

The last thing about the mechanics -- the Governor has until Saturday to veto and / or propose supplementary budgets. The Legislature is scheduled to come back in session, both branches, on December 5th, at which time they will consider the Governor's vetoes and perhaps deal with other issues of this budget. But that, to the best of my knowledge, will be it. Once that December 5th session is over, then our FY 02 budget, like it or not, will be solidified, and we'll have to make whatever adjustments need to be made at that time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me just make one other comment. I mentioned that the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability suffered a fairly significant reduction in its budget from what we expected was a three and a half million dollar budget to $2.1 or $2.2 million. Just so you can get a clearer picture of what that means, we have interagency service agreements presently with the Department of Revenue and the Department of Education that amount to about $2.6 million which are, in terms of DOR, payment for services already rendered. With respect to DOE, it is partially in payment for services already rendered in terms of their School Accountability Program and is payment for the ongoing operation of the School Accountability Office, which does not only the data crunching around MCAS and converting those results into the rating system that we use with respect to schools, but also to fund the onsite evaluations that we do as part of the Under-Performing Schools Program as well as the evaluations we do in terms of the Compass Schools and the recognition programs.

So all of those things -- on the assumption that all those things go forward, the new OEQA, which was responsible for district level accountability work, is essentially dead in the water. Now, we're figuring out how to keep it alive, but under the best case scenario, we'd be barely breathing, and I think all of us understand, and I thought the Legislature did as well, that accountability was one of the cornerstones of education reform, and it's one of the ways we were going to drive improvement beyond just the publication of test results. So, it's again in the greater scheme of things small dollars, but a very dramatic impact, especially coming in the middle of the year. Are there comments or questions or any other issues that Board members would like to raise about what we just discussed, and in particular the 03 budget?

DR. THERNSTROM: I want to go back to the 02 budget a minute. You didn't talk about what the impact of the reduction of student assessment.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: There are so many examples. That's correct, and I suppose we should pay a little bit of note to some increases, the --

DR. THERNSTROM: But on the 02 you --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. No, this is '02. First of all, there is an $11 million trust fund for educational technology that was approved by both branches, so that's a plus, if you will, and then the MCAS Low-Scoring line was ultimately increased by $10 million, so we should note that. And, then, as you point out, Abby, and I should have pointed this out, there were a couple of other places that we also had reductions. But worthy of note to be sure is the $1.6 million reduction in our assessment line which directly affects our ability to assess students. And, frankly, it's not just about development. People think, well, maybe you just don't test the 8th and 10th grade science and social studies or something, but that's not really where you're going to save a lot of money, because we're already testing the kids, we're already sending the materials out. That's not the issue. So if that stands, and one would think it will, then we have this odd situation of having the MCAS tutoring, so to speak, increased, but the actual MCAS test itself reduced, and where we're adding the 6th grade math and we're doing other things, and we want to continue to make that program stronger and get results back quicker, et cetera, that's going to be a setback.

DR. THERNSTROM: So that the concrete implications in your view are likely to be what, specifically? Where can we make the cuts without compromising significantly the quality of what we're trying to do?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'm not prepared to answer that yet today. There are going to be trade-offs. We're either going to have to eliminate certain testing at certain grades, ironically at a time when the federal government may be telling us to increase it. So we have to look across the board and make kind of those trade-offs. In one way or another I think it is going to reduce the quality without question.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think it probably would be appropriate at our next meeting, which is not too far in the future, December 18th, to have -- because at that point the '02 budget will be resolved -- to have an update on how the Department plans to respond, and give us some sense for what the practical implications of all this are going to be.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Sure.

DR. THERNSTROM: And on the Early Literacy and the Home-Based Parenting programs consolidated into the Early Childhood Grants, is there a reduction in the funding of those programs or is this an accounting change or a change in the level of funding?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There are maybe two different answers. On the Reading Recovery example, we did increase the line item by $3 million, which was equivalent to what had been allocated to that program. On the Home-Based Parenting, we maintained the same level of funding at $111 million in the Early Childhood Grants, and one of the reasons for doing that was to try to inject more flexibility in the allocation of those resources. There are six to seven home-based parenting programs that are run by the state involving both educational issues and public health issues, and I think as just a

matter of public policy looking at how we might be consolidating some of those in order to save money and also improve effectiveness would be well worthwhile. So it's a little less clear, at least in the proposal that we put forward here, whether it's -- the funding level would be kept at the same point. I guess the short answer is we're not recommending a specific earmarking for the program, even though we expect that the resources will be at approximately the same level. Other questions?

MR. THOMAS: First I want to recognize the Commissioner and the Chairman and the finance committee for a task in a no-win situation that really puts us in a precarious position not only as a Department of Education but as a Commonwealth. I think Abigail asked the question of the day, and it doesn't apply only to 02 in my view, I think it applies to both budgets, and that is how do we make and substantiate cuts that in effect have the potential of compromising what we're trying to do with respect to education reform?

I was moved by much of the testimony today. I thought that many of those who testified really hit on some salient points that really reached to the core of our dilemma here. I have a real strong concern around the 636 cuts and a few others. I could tacitly talk about the adult education. I agree with the Chairman that the adult education cuts really are indefensible when you think about the implications and when you think about the level of adult literacy that exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It really makes it a very untenable situation. I think after-school programs in effect reach the students that we talk about when we speak of closing the achievement gap. I think that those are a major cut. I'm concerned about the implications of the SBA reductions as to what the implications will be, and I would like Jeff to speak to that at some point. And the wards of the state in fact have even less status now, and ironically, and that is very uncomfortable. I believe that the gentleman who testified with respect to the charter school reimbursements being cut out for Commonwealth charters puts us in a pretty interesting dilemma again, because what I think what might happen is that you'll have communities that may have had an open mind to accepting Commonwealth charters, will all of a sudden see them as being a major drain on their resources, and therefore not as willing to cooperate and be supportive of those efforts, and that's a challenge without those cuts, that's a challenge anyhow, but I think it exacerbates the issue.

But going back to 636, one could argue that the cuts in 636 are laced with the presumption that the social and economic dynamic within the Commonwealth has reached a level playing field status, and I don't necessarily agree with that presumption or the notion. I'm from the western part of the state, and I think about a year ago in the Union News there was a report looking at the housing and demographic patterns of that particular region, that Western Massachusetts is I think -- I won't be held to this particular exact quote, but it's I think the fourth or fifth most segregated region in the country. And if in fact the eastern part of the state is not that far behind, looking at just the number of minorities that are within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I think that we still have a major issue of segregation, and it's not caused by education. I think the housing and economic patterns relate to it. But the manifestation goes into how our kids are educated and where they're educated and what kind of resources are available where they're being educated, and I don't think the playing field is level. 636 funds help eradicate practices that are contravening to providing equity in education, and to take that off the table I think is premature, and I don't think supportive. I don't think it's justifiable at this point. Now, maybe there could be more resources available through Chapter 70, and we've had some prior discussions, and I'm not sure that that could be totally achieved, but that is a strong concern that I have, and in good conscience I can't support that. I also believe that the METCO program does give kids a world of good and communities a world of good, and I believe that that program deserves the kind of support that it has received in the past. But those are my concerns. The 636 I think really is a major, major issue for me with respect to supporting the budget.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One or maybe two follow-up comments on that point. You referenced the Chapter 70 issue, and, again, I think the Commissioner talked about this as well, that the Chapter 70 formula as it's been working for the last eight or nine years has been designed to reallocate resources toward those communities of low income which also tend to be those of high minority population. So there has been a reordering of resources in that direction in a way that really swamps the resources that have historically been allocated through 636. The other thing is the MCAS Low-Scoring Support monies which have been $80 million over the last three years and would be, at least under the budget approved by the Legislature ,will be $50 million in this current fiscal year. Those funds too are skewed towards those districts with highest failure rates which also tend to be districts with disproportionate populations of color. And, again, I think those numbers also swamp the funds in 636, and are, more importantly, directly associated with what I think is ultimately the core issue here, which is making progress against this achievement gap across demographic roots. Frankly the 636 money hasn't historically made a lot of progress in that area. The program has been around for quite a long time, and I don't think it has produced results in terms of the achievement gap. Now, it's not necessarily designed specifically for that purpose, because a lot of the things that are funded through it are more culturally oriented or enrichment kinds of activities. Nevertheless, I think the greater value is in ensuring that all students, regardless of their ethnicity or their color, are given the kinds of educational and academic opportunities that are necessary for them to succeed. So while this reduction in 636 certainly causes some pain and dislocation with respect to existing programs, I don't think in terms of aggregate resources it's much of a reduction at all because I think that the new funds that are being put in are better targeted.

The only last thing I'd say is that we do have $4.8 million remaining in the budget which is targeted towards Parent Information Centers, and this is specifically designed to support the Choice and Control Choice Programs that are effectively mandated by the state as part of the Racial Imbalance Act and are associated with the granting of other benefits such as School Building Assistance, or at least historically have been so. Those are funds which I think we should not take away, A) because of a direct, the direct impact on some of the issues that were raised here today; but B) because it would effectively be an unfunded mandate if we did so. Nevertheless, I understand and accept your points, and I guess the question before us is: Given the cuts that we have to make in certain programs in order to support others, is this a reasonable trade-off to make, and that's I think the choice that each of us has to make.

MR. THOMAS: Could we ask Jeff to speak to the SBA?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Sure.

MR. WULFSON: The budget calls for roughly $20 million in new spending. That's certainly the lowest level in recent years. We've been actually averaging a little bit over $50 million a year in new spending for School Building Assistance. The short-term implication, it simply means that some projects that would otherwise have received their grants this year and their first payments next year will have to wait an extra year. In the long term, it's hard to say. Even with the more stringent requirements of the new SBA law, I believe there's a bigger demand for school projects than $20 million annually. We obviously hope that the recession is short-lived and that we will be able to restore that funding sometime in the next few years, but clearly we have let districts know that for at least the next year or two, there's likely to be some slow down in the funding for that program.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to give you some sense for the scale of this problem, which I think will give you an indication that the 03 issue is, relatively speaking, a small component of a larger issue.

Schools or districts that have been approved, that are being approved now or have been approved in just the past year are not likely to receive their first payments for six or seven years, even going at the $50 million a year pace, which is to say there's a huge backlog or demand certainly. There are now projects that are going into the ground or in the ground already that are waiting for money that are going to have to wait a long time even if we fully funded this at the prior year level of $50 million, all of which suggests that there's a much bigger overhang here than we can even begin to address no matter what we do in 03.

MR. THOMAS: Is there a formula as to what communities can do in terms of bonding? Can they bond five years out or can they --

MR. WULFSON: There is currently a five-year limit on the temporary borrowing that most communities do if they want to start construction before their grant is received. As the Chairman suggests, at the current funding levels we're likely to run up against that sometime four or five years hence. At that point, we'll have to make a decision as to whether to either extend that five-year limit or to require communities to do their permanent financing even though they haven't received their state grant yet, and there are pros and cons to both of those. We have some time to deal with that.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

MR. MADDEN: Not in interest of being redundant, but I would like to mirror the concerns of Henry and many of our public commenters today in regards to funding dealing with desegregation projects of equal education. I believe it's not something that should be traded off. It's not something that can be cut, even flat funded really, even given financial hardships at this time. If the 2001 MCAS exam scores show anything concretely, it is that there is a huge achievement gap, in fact it widened as compared to the 2000 MCAS scores, and I don't know in light of that that any funding could be redundant. I could be wrong, but I think these communities need everything we can give them. And aside from just the MCAS perspective of it, the raw numbers perspective of it, I have grown up in one of the few towns in this state that is very well racially balanced, that has no need for a program like METCO, and that has been one of the greatest assets in my own education. Much more so than anything I've received in the way of curriculum, in the way of testing, in the way of information has been the experience of going to school and living with students from really all across the world, from having a French class where half the students speak Creole. It's an incredible asset, and I think it's something that needs to grow in the state, that it is not necessarily supported enough. And obviously decisions will have to be made, but I would personally like to see this as a decision that would be made for progress in this area.

MR. BAKER: I just have a couple comments. One is that I think the State Ward piece is sort of a leading indicator about the Circuit Breaker discussion in 2003 which I think people need to think about. I don't think people should change necessarily what we're submitting in 03, but I think the signal that's being sent by collapsing that into the Circuit Breaker line and not really funding it just doesn't bode well for what's going to happen with regard to that next year, and it's a big ticket item. It's a big policy decision. It's a lot of things, and I think in that context it's something people need to remember. The second is we have a big number in there for adult literacy in 2003. I think somebody ought to have a conversation with somebody in the Legislature about adult education, and not just this year but next year or this one could end up being treated badly next year as well as this year in the context of expectations, funding levels, and decision-making and all the rest.

The third is the bump on the MCAS piece. People ought to think about that also in the context of 03. It's $10 dollars. It's halfway through the year. It's a 25-percent increase. We've got a bunch of things

incorporated in for 03 year as well. People just ought to think about that in the context of how 02 and 03 ought to be related to each other. And then finally I would say the same thing about the student assessment stuff. If I'm sitting in the Legislature, I think I just gave DOE a 15-percent increase from 01 to 02 to fund student assessment programs, so I would be annoyed that the DOE would characterize that as a cut, because it's actually about a two and a half million dollar increase over what people spent last year. We've got about a $27 million number in 03 for that issue. We should just be thinking about it.

And I guess my larger comment would be, I'm sure the Legislature thought real hard about that 636 issue before they did that, given what happened last year. That one needs to be thought about in the context of 03 as well. My view at this point is that Parent Information Centers are probably in jeopardy, which I would not have expected when we started this discussion would be the case. So I guess my major comment would be when you get a budget this far into the year and this close to the point in time in which you have to submit a baseline document for next year, it would probably be worth -- in some of these key issues where there's huge variability between the '01 number, the '02 number, the '03 number, just trying to get some -- where these areas matter and are really important there ought to be some outreach to try to come up with some sense about what people's expectations are with regard to next year as well as this year, because people will be flipside otherwise.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think that's a good point, and I would also in that same vein urge Board members to stay in touch with the Commissioner and me over the next month or two as the administration develops its House One, not only because the financial and fiscal circumstances are going to be changing over that period, but also for the issues that Charlie raises. You look at an 02 budget, which now in certain line items may be dramatically lower than we anticipated, then you look at our 03 recommendation which reflects a doubling or more of a certain line item as a result of the base being lowered, and those end up being pretty difficult conversations to have, because those are savings that a lot of people are inclined to just take and carry over into the next fiscal year. And so I think there's a lot of education, a lot of discussion that needs to go on. There's going to be some negotiation that we're going to need to engage in over the next couple of months to figure out how we influence the process.

DR. SCHAEFER: Given this situation, are we really in a position now to vote a preliminary budget? I know we have to do something, but can it be in some way provisional, pending --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, I think almost by definition it's provisional. In other words, we do not submit a budget to the Legislature. We submit a budget for consideration by essentially all the players. There's not a bill that's introduced with our budget on it, so we effectively begin the process, and I think we just ought to do so, and three weeks from now we'll know a little bit more than we did now, but not much, and we'll still be six weeks out from the Governor's House One Budget. So I think there's only so much we can do to influence the process, particularly in an environment where there's so much changing kind of as we speak. So I think having put something on the table at least is useful for the administration and the Legislature as they start to think about 03, even with all the caveats that this represents a snapshot in time and is not going
to be what ultimately comes out of it. Hopefully what comes out will be close, but what comes out is always different than what we put on at the beginning.

DR. THERNSTROM: Just a small request. You said you would urge Board members to keep in touch with you and the Commissioner. I would ask you and the Commissioner to keep in
touch with us.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Fair enough.

DR. THERNSTROM: I mean, I think you've got the information, we don't, and it's important that you feed it to us.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is there discussion or amendment?

MR. THOMAS: Just on discussion I just wanted to state that I'm not going to support the budget because I do think the trade-off is a little bit too much for me to acquiesce to, so I won't be voting for it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. Is there other discussion? In that case, we'll go to the vote.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. C. 69, Section 1A, approve the FY 2003 budget proposal, and authorize the Commissioner to transmit the budget proposal to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and the Humanities, and the Secretary of Administration and Finance.**

The motion was made by Dr. Schaefer and seconded by Mr. Baker. The motion passed 7-2. Mr. Madden and Mr. Thomas voted against.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I certainly want to particularly thank the staff. Jeff's phone has been ringing off the hook, obviously with SBA and all the issues we have to deal with. As you can see today, we have the Circuit Breaker Regs and also SBA, so it's certainly been a crazy time there. Tony, and I want to introduce Jeanne Elby, I'm not sure she's been before the Board before, but Tony DeLorenzo and Jeanne Elby have done just yeoman's work. I can tell you that the long weekend, it was a long weekend. It wasn't a long vacation weekend. They worked Saturday and Sunday and Monday and have worked weekends and nights, and I want to thank both of them for all their tremendous work.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE: DISCUSSION

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Mr. Chairman. As I think we all are aware, just from a content point of view, let alone philosophy of whether economics is more important than geography or whatever, this particular content area across the country is always one that can never satisfy everybody. Of course, we've proved that happens in mathematics too, but certainly in the area of social studies, there Is so much to deal with and so much to do and so little time that it always becomes a concern.

I just want to first of all compliment the staff for putting together this document, which to my way of thinking is a tremendous starting point, and I think that's the way we ought to look at it. We know there will be concerns and issues and so forth that we have to deal with. Kind of my rule of thumb, however, is for people who want to add things, they need to tell me where we can make some reductions, because the fact of the matter is we just can't handle it all, there's no way. There's something about this area that just suggests that there's just so much that it just brings out automatically too much to do, and somehow we have to -- and it's true of all of our subjects, but in this particular case it's more pronounced.

So, again, I think it's a tremendous starting place. I think there are some concerns that people have. I think we need to have some conversations and debates about certain issues, but I think generally speaking this document has it right, and, as I say, a good place to start. I'm going to turn it over to Sandra, but I want to thank obviously the people on the staff that have done such a great job and the panel and many others in the public that have weighed in. We're going to continue the discussions. I hope to be a personal part of a number of meetings that we're going to have in the foreseeable future as we talk about many of these items, and then ultimately by that discussion the Board's involvement as well in it, and we will come out with a, as we have, and it's not just my word, it's the word of some national groups, we'll continue to have the best standards really in this country.

Sandra, why don't I turn it over to you and give us a quick summary of what's different and introduce others, and we'll go from there.

MS. STOTSKY: Thank you very much. I'm very happy to be here to present this discussion draft for the Board to consider. Let me introduce first all who you see before you. On my left is Anders Lewis on the staff. We have John Keh, Susan Wheltle, and then someone who may almost feel as if she's a member of the staff, but she's a member of the advisory committee that has been working with the department on the history draft, Susan Szachowicz from Brockton, and Sue has a number of other hats that she's worn. She was a member of the original committee that drafted history standards and lived to tell the tale, and she has been a member of the ADC committee as well. She is also a past president of the state affiliate of the national social studies organization. So Sue has been around and is familiar with all of the various versions and most of the issues that have arisen. We also have a number of members of the history panel here in the audience, and I don't know if I can spot them all right away, but I can see Gorman Lee. We have, sorry, Tom Hickey, and Diane Palmer, maybe you could just raise your hand, Kathy Babini, and I know we have -- and Rob Wedge, I'm sorry. Oh, I'm sorry, Charles Horn. I couldn't see you. Am I leaving anybody else out who is here that I should just indicate? Thank you very much for coming. I just wanted to be sure we had them here and acknowledged. And we have also had as people giving us advice or input into this document several historians and political scientists, and there are several Geographers to come, and there will probably be more in the future as well. So we've had a lot of advice and input from a variety of people.

Let me go over very briefly the major differences between this document and the '97 document. The first major difference that will strike anyone looking at the two documents is the way in which we have formatted the standards. We have one set of standards per grade level from preK-K through grade 8, and then we have a group of standards at the high school level for both world history and U.S. history. For the most part we have the grade-by-grade leveling of the standards because this seemed to be what the field wanted and was one way in which we could make sense of a variety of different kinds of standards that were in the '97 document. The second major difference is that we have integrated all of the subdisciplines for the most part at each grade level so that we do not have distinct subdisciplinary standards, one set for history, one set for civics government, one set for geography, one set for economics. For the most part we have tried to integrate all of that so that we could get one set of standards for each of the beginning grades K through 8.

Third, we have tried to have as much as possible a narrative approach for the way in which the standards are phrased and laid out. We have done this in contrast to a comparative approach because it highlights what is historically significant, and this is particularly the case for the most part at grade 4 and grade 7, and it is also suggested by much cognitive research that has been done over the decades for better learning by students. So that you will see as much as

possible, a narrative approach to our standards with history as the backbone. We've also tried to alternate as much as possible world history and U.S. history standards throughout the earlier grades. So that you will see in grades 1, 3, 5, and 8 U.S. history for the most part, if not completely, and then world history, anything that is non-U.S., world history 2, 4, 6, and 7, and then of course at the high school level. We have tried to feature, to address one of the major criticisms of the old document, a full systematic coverage of geography around the world in grade 6. This is a striking innovation that we have really tried to systematize for this document because the lack of attention to geography in the '97 document was brought out by almost every organization that looked at the document. We've done another thing in this document in response to what we know has to be there and current events. We've expanded considerably Islamic history both in grade 7 and at the high school level, a major area that we had very much less on in the other document. We have, as the Board wanted, a full set of world history and U.S. history standards at the high school level, as requested by the board as a result of its vote in July. And in response to the surveys that we gave out to teachers, and we received about 1,000 responses from high school history teachers during the late spring and early summer, we have tried to shape these two sets of standards in response to what they gave us as their preferences, choices, recommendations on what topics, based upon the core knowledge topics that were in the '97 document, what ones they thought should receive greater emphasis, what ones they thought should receive moderate emphasis, and what ones they thought should receive less emphasis so that we could be guided by what the people in the field at the high school level felt they wanted to see at the high school level in these standards.

Finally, we will be preparing a public comment form, as we have done with all other documents, all other standards documents, to ask people in the field again about each set of grade level standards with respect to whatever questions we think we would want to get their feedback on grade by grade and any overall questions about the document. That will be prepared and then be sent out when the document is approved by the Board for release for public comment so that we then can have the field responding to all of the various questions that in some cases are still at issue, may not ever be totally resolved.

I think that probably covers what are the major differences that we have tried to consciously work out for this document, and we would be very happy to have any questions directed to any of us, particularly high school level.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, thank you very much, and reiterating the Commissioner's comments, thank you for all the work that's gone into this up until this point. I know that it's a Herculean task, and in some ways seems never ending, maybe for Sue and Sandy in particular, but I think the document, especially in terms of the work that's gone on to try to integrate the various sections and strands into something that is a little bit more coherent and easier to use, is really a significant improvement and very hard to do. And, I think, as a result of that, hopefully we'll see this through the feedback we get from the field, will be recognized and appreciated by the people who need to use this who are the history teachers out in the field.

In doing so, of course, you're confronted and are faced with a very difficult problem of how to integrate all these diverse disciplines in a way that is sufficiently respectful of all of them without sort of unnecessarily placing one above the other, and I think history is and should be at the core of any history and social science curriculum, curriculum frameworks document, but I'm a little concerned that some of the other disciplines in the social sciences are given too short shrift, and I'll focus a little bit, I think, on the economics part in particular, although I think to some extent the same might be said of civics as well, not that the, not so much on the civics side that the issues aren't there, but that in the way they're presented it may not be, it may not facilitate the kinds of discussions in classrooms

around the kind of specific aspects of civics education, slightly removed from historical context, and I don't think those two things ought to be separated or hermetically sealed from one another, but they aren't necessarily topics that should only be -- your civics topics should not necessarily be considered only in their historical context.

In any event, on the economic side in particular, I guess I would encourage you all, and maybe you did, to refer back to the April '97 draft which did not become part of the framework, but to look at the economics section in there to give you some flavor for what I'm about to say. I think -- and I'll talk about these in grade spans because, that's the way they're referred to here, and I'm not sure exactly how to break these out by individual grade level. But in the K to 4 area, as an example, there's really no discussion of personal finances or of some very basic economic notions such as scarcity and competition and voluntary exchange. There's some discussion about trade and barter and those things -- voluntary exchange, as an example, may come up, scarcity may come up, competition may come up -- those things may come up in that context, but they're not called out for in the draft that's before us.

And in grades 5 to 8, there doesn't appear to be any discussion of supply and demand, of business accounting or management topics, of entrepreneurship, and of the notion of marginal cost benefit analysis. There is a discussion or a mention, I'm not sure if it's in 5 to 8 or not -- of cost and benefit. I think it may be in 8th grade. But the notion of marginal cost benefit is particularly important, and I don't think that's reflected in the document.

In grades 9 to 12 I think largely the economic strand seems to be absent, other than in a historical context. Issues of macroeconomics and international trade and finance are just not present. And there are obviously issues about depth of instruction in these areas, but I think at a minimum there should be exposure to these issues in those various grade levels. I just don't see it fully reflected in the document. Again, there are indirect references to some of these issues that may come up in a particular historical element, but absent some more explicit guidance I think those would largely be lost, and these are not topics that necessarily need to be or should be discussed in a particular historical context, because they're more easily discussed and more directly addressed outside the context of a particular historical situation or context. So on that issue in particular, in economics, I think there is more work that could be done. I can't give you any guidance at this point as to how to fit it in, but the integration aspect, while important, may not be the only value that we ought to reflect in the document, and that there may be points at which essentially suggesting units in either civics or economics that are not directly connected to the historical period being studied might be appropriate.

I'll just make two other comments, and then I'll open it up for other folks to raise questions. Massachusetts state history doesn't get a whole lot of coverage here, I don't think, except in the third grade. That is called out in the statute, and we probably would need to go a little bit further in bringing in particular the U.S. history section some more Massachusetts specific kinds of references and topics. Then the other thing is -- and, again, I apologize if I missed something here, but, and this may relate more to the civics discussion we just had than anything else -- but the issue of judicial review, and Marbury v. Madison in particular I don't find in here, and that may have just been an oversight or maybe I missed it myself, but somehow in the discussions around the legislative process and the various roles of the branches of government and levels of government somehow the judiciary probably got a little short shrift, and its role in particular as an arbitrator of the Constitution relative to acts of the Legislature and the Executive I think probably needs more attention. Again, I may have missed some of this here, and I know in the 8th grade there's a reference to the role of the judiciary,

but I just don't think there's enough there. Let me open it up to anyone else who's got some questions or comments.

DR. SCHAEFER: First of all I want to thank the staff and reiterate what the Commissioner and the Chairman have said in thanking the staff and the members of the committee for the work that they've done. I had the privilege of sitting in on a number of meetings. I was impressed with the lively discussion and the debate that went on around this.

I think that there are about six people sitting around this table who are Board members, and the two Sues sitting at the table, who were probably very much looking forward to this day when we could have another document in front of us other than the one that was approved before, given the shortcomings that many of us recognized in that one four years ago.

Having said that, I would like to say that I think this document improves a lot on that one, and that there are a number of features to it which are different from the other one, and, you know, considerably improved. In particular I think that the 6th grade geography course is certainly a very good start, and I was skeptical about what could be included in that, and I think that the way the various facets have been worked into, of those five themes have been worked into the issues raised for each of the regions I think is certainly a very good way of approaching it.

The 4th grade piece that really focuses on the roots of western civilization I think is very good as well, and I would like to -- I shared with the Board an editorial that appeared last week in the Wall Street Journal entitled the "Pilgrims' Magna Carta," and it pointed out that a survey was done of 55 of the leading colleges in the nation, and there are three that require a course in western civilization and none in American history. So even though our colleges are failing us doesn't mean that we have to fail our students in K through 12. The comment in the editorial is by this, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni which conducted the survey, "What is not taught will be forgotten, and what is forgotten cannot be defended," and I think that this document with the change that the Board has recommended in terms of making U.S. history the requirement focuses on an area that I think, and the way it's presented throughout the grades, focuses on what I think was somewhat missing in the 1997 document. I think that the Board has been clear in that this really needs to be, this piece needs to be focused on, and that we need to have a real emphasis on American history so that students do learn it and hopefully won't forget it.

MR. MADDEN: I'd first like to join Roberta and the rest of the Board in appreciating the work you've done with this. There were some pleasant surprises for me as I read this over, seeing things included that I had never learned in school but had through my own reading and wished could be included in school curricula and was very happy to see them.

However, the largest concern I have, and it was a concern shared by many of my colleagues on the Student Advisory Council, was that we see 20th Century history, especially under the American history framework, being slighted somewhat, and I think it's very important for us to keep in mind for even the oldest high school students the Reagan administration is history. They can't remember it personally. Desert Storm is a distant memory. So that there's a considerable amount of 20th century history that needs to be included. And early American history is covered three times under this, in the 5th grade, 8th grade, and at the high school, 20th century only once. And with the assessment we're proposing, which would only cover up to reconstruction, I believe that inside the classrooms 20th century history would not be, may not be taught properly, not be taught in depth. And if we're trying to promote civic participation, 20th century history is extremely important for students. This is -- you know, we actually started electing senators directly. A lot of democratic changes don't happen

until the 20th century. A lot of developments in Civics happened in this century, and a prime example is the antiwar movement and the student movement, which isn't even mentioned in the document. It's just reviewing this document a few of us thought that a lot of things in the 20 century were left out and the 20th century history was under emphasized. A few of the larger omissions that were mentioned to me by my council members, things that are more recent, during the Reagan administration there's very little talk of his economic policies. It mentions tax cuts, but little more than that, and that has direct relevance in the world we live today. There's very little talk of anything that happened in the '90s. There's no mention of Watergate. There's no mention, as I said, of the antiwar movement and student movement. A lot of social history in general seems to be lacking in the 20th century, and a number of students I spoke with were very concerned about that.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: Can I put some issues on the table, 'cause it might impact the discussion?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Sure.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: And, by the way, I'd like to thank Mr. Madden for bringing out the age of all of us, that President Reagan's administration was a distant memory. Thank you so much for doing that.

MR. MADDEN: I apologize.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: That's all right, I understand. The Gulf War, when was that? As a member of all of the committees, I think there's a number of big unresolved issues, and while I appreciate the support, I want to put them out on the table because it might impact the discussion that you all are having. My role is Associate Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at Brockton High, and I want to say first, though, that I want to see this MCAS include history and social science as a high-stakes assessment, because in my 27 years at Brockton High I have never seen anything drive academic improvement the way MCAS has. I don't want to see MCAS go away. I've seen really dramatic improvement in the work and the writing that has happened in my school system, and so I'd like to see this added to it. I just haven't seen anything else make that kind of a difference. And so I want to say that I want to see this happen, but I think we have some really unresolved issues. I think Mr. Madden just brought one up, but I want to just throw a few out for the purposes of discussion.

First of all, I know you've had so many important things you probably haven't had a chance to read it in any great depth, and we understand that. The high school standards are still problematic here, and they need more time to be developed, and here's why. You'll see in the document that it marches along grade by grade by grade by grade, here's what the content is, here's what the standards are, and then it goes to the high school standards which are just two generic bodies of standards, 65 U.S. standards, 65 world history, that doesn't inform me as a curriculum person and a person responsible for implementing this how am I suppose to do this, and so I think one unresolved issue is the high school, and that that has to be faced by us, and it really has to be faced before it goes out for public comment, because I think any person looking at this is going to say, "What do you want me to teach and when are we suppose to teach this?" And there's a lot of content in there. So that's I think an unresolved issue that we haven't gotten to yet. I would say this also, we face -- I understand that the Board was trying to give options to schools, but I thought one of the strongest points about the framework was being directive about curriculum. Brockton has a lot of transient students, as people here well know, and we have students moving in and out of our community from all over the place. Having a statewide grade-by-grade curriculum I think is a huge advantage, and if we have options in there about, particularly at the high school where the

high stakes may likely kick in some day, well, it could be at grade 10, it could be at grade 11, you might offer world, you might offer U.S., I think that's something that still needs to be addressed and focused, and -- I mean, I think that's something that has to be resolved by the Board because it's going to -- the framework should inform the MCAS, and right now at the high school level the framework doesn't inform the MCAS. It just provides a long list of standards.

So I would say that's a serious issue, and it gets at the issue that you were raising about the 20th century, because I would say a third unresolved issue is just that. We need to -- here's a pragmatic reality, which I saw far too often, if U.S. history is tested, which it should be, I think that's one of the best decisions. If that's going to be the high stakes, better it be on United States history than the Ming Dynasties. I mean, I'm not -- I hope I haven't offended anybody studying Chinese history. I didn't mean to do that. I just mean in terms of what's a high stakes assessment, it should be U.S. history, but it needs to be the whole picture of U.S. history, and getting at the 20th -- and preparing kids for the 21st century and this -- it's not that the document doesn't do it. It's just that we haven't assigned anything anyplace. I think there is a short shrift given to a presentness about this that we still need to address, and that should be done before it does go out for public comment. so I think that's an issue.

Here's the bottom line, and I know this is sometimes hard for people to hear, but what gets taught is what's tested. So if it's not tested -- I mean, people like me are going to be saying, "We need to get these kids over the bar, what is it we need to teach them," and so I want this document to be the best possible document that informs the MCAS in a way that all of us sit down and say kids really should know and be able to do this, and this is a good study of history both United States and the world, and I think that this document is still a bit aways from that, and I think there's some important issues that really need to be resolved at your level, particularly around the high school.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, I very much appreciate that comment, and I think given the transience of students, as you say, in many of our communities, obviously, it's particularly important. I want to associate myself very strongly with what Roberta has said. This is a day we've looked forward to for a long time -- some of us have looked forward to for a long time, seeing this kind of revision.

I also want to support what Jim said in terms of more economics. The level of economic illiteracy among our students, among American adults often shocks me. I think it's a very important part of public education and a neglected part.

I also want to associate myself with something else that the Chairman said, and that is on the partial neglect of the judicial story of the expansion of the evolution of the Constitution and the changing role of the courts in America. You've got, for instance, on "Cold War America at Home: Economic Growth," you've got "Summarize the key events of the civil rights movement, including Brown versus Board." You really need, it seems to me, to have phrases at points like that which basically add some consideration of the role of the court, the impact, the kind of ripple effect of Brown versus Board in changing our concept of the role of the Supreme Court and our view of constitutional law. There are all sorts of other constitutional questions that are just neglected. There's a certain proper focus on the change in 14th amendment, birth of civil rights, but we've got also an expansion of the rights of the criminally accused, a changing understanding of the first amendment and so forth, and I think that those need to be in here.

The Commissioner said before you can't add, and I do understand perfectly what he's saying, and I actually have a suggestion for a subtraction. I'm unhappy about -- and this I guess in disagreement

with you, James -- about this whole unit on Contemporary America 1980 to 2001. Frankly, I would not be prepared to teach, and I think it's too soon for anybody to be teaching, for anybody to be analyzing at this point the presidency of Ronald Reagan, explain the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s, debate over multiculturalism, Bush v. Gore. I'm not satisfied that these topics can be properly covered at this point, and I would like to have the teaching of American history to stop before --

DR. SCHAEFER: 1989?

DR. THERNSTROM: No, it starts in 1980.

THE CHAIRMAN: That might allow more time for post-World War II.

DR. THERNSTROM: It would allow more time for -- I just would not do such contemporary events. I don't believe they can be done well. I couldn't do them well, and that's my business in life.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm not sure that you just can't do them. I think maybe what you're suggesting is that you can't do them in the academic way that you would be doing the previous 2 or 300 years. They do have to come up.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, I would hate to hear a high school discussion of Bush versus Gore. I just participated in one in Washington with 850 lawyers, and, you know, it's too complicated.

DR. SCHAEFER: But it can't be ignored. There has to be some way of discussing it, but maybe a different way from how you would treat previous material, but I think maybe that's a discussion that the group would have to have and so on, and maybe we could --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Also, it might be, and Bush v. Gore may be a good example, in a civics context that might be a very useful exercise to go on in a classroom. In a historical context, it might be premature.

DR. THERNSTROM: I don't know, Jim.

DR. SCHAEFER: This is somewhat tangential, but I have been -- since I participated with the committee on a number of occasions, I've been privy to the e-mails that have come across with the suggestions, and I think there was one that talked about the problem of the way that history is, the way that social science is structured at the high school level now, what about alternative courses, and I was just -- to be put on the back burner, but something I would like to throw out -- the possibility, somebody raised the issue of AP U.S. history, could we think offering AP history, that and if the student takes the exam and passes, let's say at the level of a three, that that is an alternative to MCAS, that that becomes -- if the student passes, instead of the regular history requirement that we have? I just wanted to put it out there for the record, that's all.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think that's an assessment issue, which is obviously related. And there's the timing issue as well, but it's on the record, and we'll revisit it.

MR. MADDEN: Well, you and Roberta actually kind of beat me to what I was going to say in response to Abby, is that obviously very recent history cannot be taught in a cold academic sense, cannot be taught as a narrative and cannot be taught as facts. The argument can be made that no history can be taught that way. Obviously any discussion, probably even further back than 1980, is

going to be -- the way it's going to be taught isn't these are the facts. It's this is what we think of the facts, these are what different historians, different social scientists say, what do you think about these, how do these affect your daily lives, and more recent American history affects the daily lives of students much more than anything else in history.

I think that also gets back to what you said at the beginning, is that civics needs to be taken out of the context necessarily of one historical event, and bringing modern American history into the curriculum more could facilitate that kind of civics discussion. And just quickly, even though we're not talking about assessment right now, I think that would be almost the better subtraction, that it kind of gets at this. You can add all the facts you want, people are always going to disagree about what facts are here, and maybe the best way to address that is when we do design an assessment have it concentrate on civic discussions, have it be mostly essay, mostly open-ended, because people are going to disagree about these facts, and even with 65 points, which may not be so much, very few people are going to be able to cover all of that in-depth. So that despite all the points that could be made in here and all the facts we can put in the curriculum, if the assessment is geared towards that, these additions might not be a problem.

MR. THOMAS: First of all, to the committee, thank you. Good work and tough work. Having said that, I do have a couple of things that I'd like to query at least, and I confess that I did not scrutinize the whole draft with a fine tooth comb. However, I did take a good scan of it. And someone said that history is his story, and I'm looking for my story in the draft here. And notwithstanding Egypt and the late dynasties that are referenced in the work here, which is North Africa, notwithstanding the map of Africa and the related exercises that go with the map, and I guess thirdly I see Africa mentioned in the 19th -- treating it within the context of the 19th and 20th century, but it's within the context of imperialism and how Europe and others imposed their will on the continent through imperialism and colonialism. I really don't see a substantial treatment of Africa when you consider its role in human history.

One considers that -- anthropologically speaking, the beginning of mankind starts in East Africa. I don't see how that is adequately treated stopping, or starting with the 19th century. Again, it may be more of a bias but I do think that we do have a substantial number of diversified groups within our public education grasp, and so it helps with the learning process when they can see themselves in what they're learning. And when you think about even Egypt, there were some 26 plus dynasties in Egypt. I know 4th grade you're not going to treat them as if you want them to become Egyptologists, but maybe in the later years a revisit of Egypt, but certainly the sections of the continent of Africa I think have some historic significance and value. Ethiopia actually played a significant role in the development of Egypt, and Ethiopia is closer to the beginning of civilization and has also biblical implications as well. There are just so many things that I won't go through my litany of things, but the bottom line is that do you think that you've treated Africa with enough breadth and depth, and to some degree the wind of my question is deflated a little bit in that the last statement that you made is that what is usually taught is what's tested, so perhaps I should be talking to testers before I talk to the historians who are putting together the structure. But, anyhow, that's kind of like a statement and a question, how do you feel Africa is being treated, and is it adequate in your opinion?

DR. STOTSKY: I can just add some comments to that. Adequacy is a judgment I would leave others to make, but we did have for the geography course some historical standards that dealt not only with African history. We also had standards that dealt with Asian history and a few areas in the middle period where there was a question of where they could be put into some historical narrative that

would make sense, and then there was a recommendation to take those history standards out of the geography course, so they then disappeared, but that was where some of what you probably would be looking for would have appeared. We do have what you are suggesting on page 46. If you look at WH33, you will see that it is the 19th and 20th century, but it's not the period before then, and you're right that it is associated with imperialism, but it does deal with African history in those two centuries. Where one would put more of the middle period for, say, Japanese history, for Chinese history is something that, one, we could welcome suggestions for.

The question that the Commissioner raised, what would we take out, where would we add. Periods of, or areas of history that were given less emphasis by the teachers in their surveys for several reasons, most teachers don't know as much about middle periods and Japanese -- Asian -- other aspects of Asian history, and the question is how much do you fit in that students will literally retain in some meaningful way by the time they graduate from high school given all the areas of the world in which one could spend standard time on.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I ask you a quick question on that point? Around the 4th grade standards in particular, but probably also around the 6th grade, is the expectation that all of this material would be covered in the 4th grade, or that there would be some selection process that goes on on the part of the school or the teacher in terms of which civilizations to study, which regions to emphasize?

DR. STOTSKY: We did not set up options at this point. For the most part, these ancient civilizations are civilizations that the group as a whole, there were a couple of little exceptions here, but for the most part these were the ones that they thought should be part of the grade 4 curriculum.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Because I guess my overall impression of those two parts in particular is that we are asking too much to cover all of these civilizations in sufficient depth to give students a meaningful understanding of not only what life was like, but also its implications for our own lives. It seems to me we'd probably be asking too much, and, again, I would say the same is true for the geography section as well. And if, in fact, we go to an approach which allows more choice at the local level, it seems to me it allows us to put in some things that may have gotten short shrift because maybe they don't reflect an agreed upon core. I think Africa would be one of those places where having a unit similar to what we have here in the ancient civilizations on Africa in the context of allowing schools and teachers to make more choices about where they would emphasize, where they would place emphasis and where they would either perhaps ignore altogether or at least place less emphasis may solve some of the breadth / depth issues. At one level it would be wonderful if we could in the 4th grade get students through all this material, but my experience with 4th graders is that that's more than you can expect, and some of these do connect well together because they're in the same region, in the same relative time frame, so doing more than one is certainly possible, and doing two or three civilizations might be reasonable during the course of a year. Doing all the ones that are listed here I think is probably beyond not only the ability of 4th grade teachers to teach but certainly beyond the ability of 4th grade students to learn.

I like the standards that I see here, but the issue that I would put on the table is whether there ought to be more choice in the selection of which civilizations and which geographic regions of the world to focus on, which I think also opens it up for more inclusiveness, especially in the area of Africa, so that would be my basic reaction. Again, I think I would underline Henry's point which I think is a good one.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: I would say that school administrators and teachers would welcome the opportunity to have choice. It's not been something that's really been an option in the past, and I think if the Board was open to that there would be excellent ways of suggesting choice. The issue has been raised before, how does that impact testing, so there'd have to be some careful coordination about making sure that -- we can't have a guessing game here, like is this the year we're going to have to answer questions on China or is it going to be Africa? That's got to be clear. But I think there's been a lot of people in the field who have said just that because -- in answer to your question, Mr. Thomas, about are you satisfied with the depth, I would say I'm not satisfied with the depth on virtually any topic here, because I think we've fallen into the same trap in this document. I think it's better. I think everything gets better if you keep working on it.

I still think we're in the too much, too much, too much mode. I mean, you look at some of those grades -- I think you picked out one, Mr. Peyser, the 4th grade, and you think, "They're nine. They can't do this when they're nine." So I think we have fallen into that, and so from -- I mean, my heart and soul is -- I'm not in the classroom anymore, but it's what I love most, and as a classroom teacher I would say to you, and my area was world history, no, I'm not satisfied with the depth we have here across the board, so I think choice would be absolutely a way to get at that.

DR. SCHAEFER: If I'm not mistaken, we changed MCAS to 5th grade.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Correct.

DR. SCHAEFER: So that's the American.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: Which is a big help on that.

DR. SCHAEFER: So then in 4th grade you certainly could have options because we don't have to deal with the issue of --

DR. STOTSKY: Some of the grade 5, the present grade 5 test does cover grade 4, just as some of the present grade 8 test covers 6 and 7, so they're not just devoted to U.S. history.

DR. SCHAEFER: All right, so then there may be some piece of it that may be a direct link to American stuff could be -- in 4th grade you say that that piece is required, then the other civilizations are -- choose from among.

MR. IRWIN: I'm not going to talk about one specific area here, but, Sue, you made mention earlier, and I agree with you about options. When it comes time to take the assessment test, there can't be options. We're now talking about giving people options in the 4th grade to teach in different areas, but when you talk about the transient issue about students, it can't work for us because it's going to be a Massachusetts-wide test, and you're not going to be able to give the test for somebody who took a certain part of the history course in the 4th grade in one school system who moved in the 5th grade to another school system that didn't have it then.

I think we've got to be clear as a Board on what exactly we're looking for as far as in the testing part of it and let them design it to equal that. We're never going to hit in depth all of history, as history has shown with this Board itself as far as what we've done with these. I mean, some of us have been around since the beginning on this, and it's like deja vu here again. I mean, we're now getting into the parts that each of us have a particular interest in in history, and I can get into the labor part of it

again, but I'm not going to do that. But I think it's very important for us, as this is a document that's being worked on by this committee -- by the way, you've done a great job. I sat on a committee here before. Sue, I think you remember this, the many meetings that we had over at Boston University, and it's really tough to do. But we as a Board, we can't go all over the place on this. We've got to give this committee exact marching orders on how they should proceed, especially with the 9th and 10th grade. With the way that MCAS is set up, options aren't out there. Options are not an option, let me put it that way.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In moving towards a more uniform focus in terms of our assessment program on U.S. history, it resolves some of those issues, not entirely. As Sandy has mentioned, the assessments, at least in the 5th and 8th grade, are cumulative, and therefore they include a mixture of questions that include world history questions. But I think, because of the breadth both over time and over space of world history, that it is possible to include some questions on the assessment that allow some choice on the instrument itself, so, it may be, for example, an essay question where you get to choose from a menu of three or four different -- and I'm not trying to make Jeff Nellhaus' life harder than it is, but there may be some ability to create some flexibility in the assessment instrument itself to accommodate more flexibility in the world history components, because we've put a heavier emphasis on U.S. history which I think rightly, in following on your point, has less openness and choice as part of that part of the assessment process.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let me just offer a couple of observations, and, again, I go back to the point this is a good starting point. I'm glad I said that because obviously everybody stuck to the thing about taking things out as they wanted to add things. We'd have twice the document if we just listened to what people suggested we put in it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I can't wait to go to a national meeting and say "I'm the Commissioner of Education of Massachusetts, our frameworks stopped in 1980. We ignored what happened from 1980 on because we're not sure what happened or how to interpret it." But any way let me -- I'm only joking.

3 DR. THERNSTROM: I don't want the

4 partisan screaming.

5 COMM. DRISCOLL: I understand

6 that. Let me just suggest a couple of things.

7 I think we do need to go back to the drawing

8 board, and I don't know how you organize this

9 such that we do accommodate the -- given that

10 there's too much. I mean, that's a given. It's

11 too much. People say there's too much and

12 everything, let alone this area which clearly is

13 a problem. I think we need to get some

14 definition, and I think the Board perhaps does

15 have to come to some policy decisions. For

16 example, it was sort of an unwritten rule when

17 we started the framework process that the

18 framework was only going to represent a certain

19 percentage of the year and that, you know, there

20 was some freedom for teachers to do other things

21 even in mathematics or science or whatever, and

22 that that represented one. We've certainly gone

23 way away from that here. We're talking 110

1 percent, let along 85 percent or whatever it
2 was.
3 The second thing is this issue of
4 choice can come in two ways. One is to have a
5 core which everybody has to deal with and which
6 can be tested or, as the Chairman suggests, then
7 have some options where you can pick from
8 several places, and I think those are policy
9 decisions we ought to get to.
10 Finally, what's more troubling to
11 me is this whole issue, and it may sound like
12 I'm completely shifting my thinking here, but
13 we've got to get away from the focus on the
14 assessment. You know, I don't think there are
15 many bigger supporters of MCAS. But it always
16 to me was about clarity and standards and what
17 kids ought to know and be able to do certainly
18 as a minimum, and then more importantly into
19 proficient and advanced, but it's always been
20 about the connections, and so to me the
21 Federalist papers are fine, but to an 18-year
22 old kid you got to connect it back, or 16-year

23 old, you got to connect it to something beyond,

1 you know, John and Abigail Adams or something.
2 So I think that's another thing we have to think
3 about from a pragmatic point of view, how do we
4 handle it all, but also how do we come out with
5 what students ought to know and be able to do,
6 and I think it's just -- it's so interesting in
7 this area that there's no way you get a group of
8 people together that they don't add, and somehow
9 we've got to figure out a policy decision to
10 inform this -- 'cause you're going to go -- I
11 don't care what document you put out. This
12 document is out there, and we've got 57 e-mails
13 in 57 different ways to add to this document.
14 Whether it's labor, whether it's Africa, whether
15 it's -- now of course it's Afghanistan and et
16 cetera, et cetera, and I don't know how you get
17 away from that mentality, but somehow we've got
18 to do that for the sake of the committee, and I
19 think it does come back to policy perhaps,
20 Mr. Chairman, and some direction by this Board.
21 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think
22 procedurally is where we ought to go. You've

23 heard all these comments, some of which are

contradictory, others of which may be impractical, others of which are brilliant and insightful which certainly encompasses my comments, and I think you ought to go back and somehow through whatever alchemy you may possess, you know, produce your best attempt to incorporate those comments that are feasible and in your mind reasonable. But I think at the same time, Commissioner, you and I working with Sandy and the committee ought to also formulate a small set of questions, policy questions to present to the board for the December 18th meeting so that in voting to send the framework out for public comment we are also at the same time sort of making explicit what are position is on some of these kind of critical issues, and framing the questions will be important for us to do to make sure that we don't have a conversation that just goes on forever.

Yes, Sandy.

MS. STOTSKY: Could I just mention I discussed with Sue a little bit before this

23 meeting a possibility that she thought might

work with the field, and that was to have several board members, including the Commissioner, and a group of high school chairs in history get together to think about several alternatives for how the high school standards might be divided into grades, but to have a meeting that would involve a number of high school chairs who are responsible for what they do with scheduling and a subcommittee of the board that might include you and the Commissioner and a few of us and to see whether we could hammer out before December 18th some alternatives that could be then presented on the public comment questionnaire for the field as a whole to vote on, that's one suggestion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I mean, I think this issue -- the issue of grade-by-grade standards in high school is one of the policy questions that we need to specifically address. I mean, I think it's problematic. Put it differently, I think there are at least two sides to the argument. One of the issues that

23 we thought we decided at the last go around here

1 was that we would allow choice in the 10th or
2 11th grade in administering the end-of-course
3 assessment, and doing grade-by-grade framework
4 would obviate that policy decision.
5 MS. STOTSKY: Not necessarily.
6 They could come up with several different grades
7 and then decide what they wanted to handle at
8 what grade. I mean, that's still a possibility.
9 I can't predict, but --
10 THE CHAIRMAN: Could be. I don't
11 know. I mean, it seems to be -- I mean, I would
12 disagree with Sue somewhat in that I think we
13 need to be clear and we need to provide
14 guidance, but we need to be careful of being
15 overly prescriptive, especially in this area
16 where there are so many different choices that
17 good teachers and good historians could make. I
18 think we need to create some flexibility and be
19 open to different approaches, and that includes
20 different ways of sequencing material in courses
21 at the high school level, but that's an issue
22 that I think we need to make a decision on.

23 MS. SZACHOWICZ: Could I just say

one thing about the testing piece, though?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: I'm speaking from a large high school in an urban area. Whatever option you give me, I'm going to take the -- what is the earliest date I can test the kids. It would be irresponsible to do anything else. In other words, I can't say you're giving me a choice to go 10 and 11 for the assessment, that's no choice. It's the 10th.

THE CHAIRMAN: But other districts would make a different choice.

MS. SZACHOWICZ: Well, but then you're setting up a difference in terms of equity because districts that have affluent -- more affluent communities where huge percentages of kids are going to pass have options. Urban districts have none. We have to give the kids every opportunity to be as prepared to take that test as we can, including remediation. So what that would mean is there's no option. Grade 9 is going to be a U.S. or a civics and government

23 and economics, and grade 10 is going to be --

1 because I'm already worried about the number of
2 kids --
3 THE CHAIRMAN: Sure, but I don't
4 think equity implies sameness. I don't think
5 those are synonymous with one another. So I
6 think having differences is not necessarily
7 inequitable. I mean, there are a lot of
8 differences. It doesn't mean they're unfair or
9 inappropriate. And, you know, providing choice
10 and flexibility is a value in and of itself, and
11 you hear it all the time, people complain that
12 we don't provide enough, and I think the
13 question is how do you strike the right balance,
14 which is what we're grappling with. But anyway,
15 I think that's one of the policy questions we
16 will address, but there are others, and I just
17 think we need to frame the questions as clearly
18 and as precisely as we can so that we can have a
19 very focused discussion on the 18th and resolve
20 these things so that we can send out a document
21 that people can react to.
22 Judy, do you have a closing

23 comment?

DR. GILL: I was going to thank you for your comment on the need to have questions for us or provided to us so that we can think about it. I'd also appreciate it if the members of the committee could perhaps give us some information in terms of the practical kinds of concerns that you have as we think about these policy issues 'cause that would be helpful for me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you all very much. We'll be back in three weeks.

COMM. DRISCOLL: Moving to item 3.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moving rapidly now. And I will warn people that there is going to be an acceleration that happens at this point.

COMM. DRISCOLL: Item 6 and 7, unless somebody wants to talk about them, are being delayed until the next meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: You don't need the grant approvals?

COMM. DRISCOLL: No, I do not.

THE CHAIRMAN: So we will defer 6

23 and 7. 6 is the appointment of members to the

1 advisory councils. You've just recently
2 received the names here. This will give you an
3 opportunity to look at those names, to study in
4 depth, to request dossiers on, you know, all the
5 individuals, but we will consider it for
6 purposes of the Schaefer rule to have been on
7 the agenda and eligible for a vote at the next
8 meeting.
9 MR. THOMAS: Are they being
10 deferred because there are some more amendments
11 you're going to make to the Board or --
12 THE CHAIRMAN: To the members, no.
13 I think it's more a matter of giving board
14 members, and I would count myself among them,
15 time to look at who the nominees are.
16 COMM. DRISCOLL: There might be
17 changes.
18 THE CHAIRMAN: There may be
19 changes.
20 MR. THOMAS: I did look at the
21 advisory committees with the eye of curious
22 scrutiny to see if the western part of the state

23 was adequately represented, and I was a little

1 dismayed as I was going through, and then as I
2 got toward some of the end, you know, towards
3 the end of the pages, there were a little more,
4 there was a little more representation than it
5 was looking like in the beginning, but to
6 whatever extent you can do that, we could take a
7 look at --
8 COMM. DRISCOLL: Why don't we talk
9 about those. Unfortunately in some cases it's
10 who we have come in the door.
11 MR. THOMAS: Right, okay.
12 COMM. DRISCOLL: But I want to
13 talk to you about that because I do want board
14 members to let me know if there are people you'd
15 like to add or whatever. Some of the best
16 members we've gotten in fact have been recruited
17 by board members, so.
18 THE CHAIRMAN: I think the issue
19 you raised about balance is a good one, not only
20 geographical but otherwise. To the extent that
21 the advisory committees reflect a balanced set
22 of opinions and views on issues, I think that's

23 also a plus.

Yes, James.

MR. MADDEN: The student member on the Educational Technology Advisory Council may change. We were given about three hours to give a name.

COMM. DRISCOLL: No, I understand that. In fact I had indicated we would probably wait till December to make it final. And, by the way, I think there was some discussion, there were two kids, there may have been two students that were interested, and I suggested, I think one was a junior and one was a senior, that we should perhaps appoint both or appoint one and have the other, feel free, they're open meetings anyway, perhaps appoint the senior and let the junior attend with the senior, and then be the member next year, but I'll talk to you about that.

Okay, moving right along, item 3.

THE CHAIRMAN: But do we have to come back to the grants or are those deferrable?

COMM. DRISCOLL: No.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, so we're

deferring the grants.

So the circuit breaker which is item 3 in your books.

MR. WULFSON: The Special Education Reform Law that was passed last year included a major new state reimbursement program for special education costs. It's called the Circuit Breaker Program because the reimbursement kicks in once the costs exceed a certain threshold. This program is scheduled to take effect on July 1st of next year. Obviously with the budget situation influx we are still not assured that it will be funded in its first year, but in the meantime we have to be preparing for the administration of the program come July 1st, assuming it is funded. The regulations before you are primarily technical in nature, defining the types of reports that districts will need to submit for the reimbursement, the reimbursement schedules and so on. They've been put together by a group working with our special education office and

23 our school business services office who've been

meeting with special education directors and school business managers, and we would like your permission to put them out for public comment with the intent of coming back in February for final adoption.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have a couple of quick questions for you. The 80 percent reimbursement for in-district placements and the 65 reimbursement for out-of-district placements, are those percentages specified by law?

MR. WULFSON: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next question is on annually establishing pricing standards for each instructional cost group. Is that something that we currently do?

MR. WULFSON: We do not because right now we do not pay for any cost for in-district programs. For out-of-district programs, it's a fairly easy thing. You know what the tuition is, and you can base it on that. What makes this program difficult to administer is we are now going to be in the

23 business of pricing out the services provided to

1 students who are in the regular school building,
2 and the proposal is being made through these
3 proposed regulations rather than to pay on the
4 actual costs in each district and then have to
5 be in the business of trying to determine
6 whether those costs are reasonable to use a
7 pricing standard as is often used for purchasing
8 human services by the Commonwealth where we will
9 establish standard rates for different types of
10 services that will be adjusted annually and to
11 base the payments on those.
12 THE CHAIRMAN: How big of an
13 administrative burden is that likely to be?
14 MR. WULFSON: Well, we're
15 expecting to have probably about 12,000 students
16 eligible and four payments a year, so we're
17 looking at processing 50,000 payments a year,
18 roughly, plus the administration of coming up
19 with the cost standards at all. We would expect
20 that we're going to need several staff people to
21 fund this program, to operate the program.
22 Where that will come from I'm waiting for the

23 Commissioner to tell me.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: And then the last

2 question I've got is on the second to last page,

3 subsection C of part 7. It talks about special

4 reimbursement rates for districts with high

5 rates of students with hearing impairments in

6 out-of-district placements. Is this North

7 Hampton?

MR. WULFSON: North Hampton primarily, also Framingham. They right now receive extra funding in a separate line item, and the assumption is that that line item will go away as they receive extra benefits.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But is this a requirement of the statute?

MR. WULFSON: Yes. Oh, yes.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Anyone else have

17 questions?

18 Yes, Abby.

19 DR. THERNSTROM: Just a brief one.

20 I don't have a sense of how much of this

21 represents a change.

22 MR. WULFSON: This is primarily a

23 brand new program. Right now all we fund in

CATUOGNO COURT REPORTING SERVICES, INC.

terms of special education, other than what goes through the Chapter 70 formula, is for students who are in a residential program. They're actually living there. We will pay basically the nonresidential costs. We are now coming up with a new rubric and extending it to all high cost special education students whether they are served in a residential program, a private day school, or in the general education classroom.

DR. THERNSTROM: So the parenthesis number 2 here, school districts which enroll non-resident students, school choice receiving districts, METCO, et cetera, they pay for the SPED programs if they're operated within a district, is that a change?

MR. WULFSON: No. Right now, that's basically -- the current process is that we always assign financial responsibility to a certain district, but now we're going to be helping those districts pay for higher special education costs.

THE CHAIRMAN: Again, this is part

23 of a statutory change which happened a couple of

years ago. Well, last year. And in the budget discussion I made reference to the fact that there's a new item of 50 to $60,000,000 which is to pay for this program, so these are regulations to make those payments possible.

MR. WULFSON: It's a recognition that the Commonwealth historically has really under funded special education. It's been the one area that has sort of stuck out like a sore thumb where we have not really met our obligations and commitments to the local districts.

THE CHAIRMAN: Bill.

MR. IRWIN: Move the motion, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? All in favor? Opposed? They are sent out for public comment. Thank you, Jeff.

(Passed unanimously.)

(Mr. Baker is not present.)

23 THE CHAIRMAN: The next item is an

amendment to a charter, in particular the Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School, and basically I think, if I'm reading this correctly, they are disaffiliating, if that's the right word, from the Marva Collins Seminars, I think they're calling it, in part, I think perhaps in large part because of some rigidities in the system relative to special education students and their requirements under state law, is that a fair statement?

MS. McINTOSH: That's our understanding of the board of trustees.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any other sort of subtleties here that we ought to know about in terms of why they're making this choice?

MS. McINTOSH: No.

COMM. DRISCOLL: It's a requirement that we bring it to the Board.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. THOMAS: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a second?

23 DR. GILL: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion or comment? Roberta, you look pensive.

DR. SCHAEFER: It's a much longer discussion, so let's not go there now.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. In that case, all in favor? Opposed? Any abstentions? Okay, so it's adopted unanimously.

(Mr. Baker is not present.)

THE CHAIRMAN: The last piece, I think this is now the last piece, if I've got this correct, is number 5. Which is school building assistance, and this is just an update. There are no votes associated with it, although there's some action that may need to occur prior to our next board meeting.

MR. WULFSON: Well, we will not be asking you to vote on the grants because even though the budget has been approved by the Legislature until the Governor signs it we can't do that, so we'll just hold the grants until the December meeting. We have in here a draft of

23 our annual report to the Legislature and would

only ask that if anybody has any comments on the draft to let the Commissioner or me know by the end of this month so that we can finalize that. Other than that, the materials in your packet are strictly for information, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, do we need to approve the report? Does the Board need to formally approve the report prior to its submission.

MS. SCHNEIDER: Mr. Chairman, the statute says the report will be filed by the Board. It's largely an administrative matter. It's a report on funding, so it's up to you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if there are no objections, if you all are comfortable with the Commissioner and I signing off on this report, we'll file it in the interim. Is that okay?

MR. IRWIN: As long as it's your name.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, the

23 Commissioner and I will sign your name to this

report.

Okay, I think we're done. Are there any questions of Jeff? Again, we're going to come back in December with actual votes on grants.

With that, that's the only, that's what's left on the agenda. Are there any other comments, urgent items that need to be taken up before we depart. Hearing none -- yes.

DR. SCHAEFER: Can we have the next meeting in Shrewsbury too?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. The next meeting is in Malden. Is that correct, Commissioner?

COMM. DRISCOLL: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And we hope to see you all then. Thank you.

(Meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, MARYELLEN COUGHLIN, Registered Court Reporter, hereby certify that the foregoing transcript consisting of 157 pages is a complete, true, and accurate transcript of the Board of Education Regular Meeting held on November 27, 2001, at 57 Floral Street, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

I further certify that this proceeding was reported by me, and that the foregoing transcript has been prepared by me.

Maryellen Coughlin