COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
350 MAIN STREET
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 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-Chairperson, Springfield
Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
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. Roberta R. Schaefer, Worcester
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning everyone. I just want to make a couple of comments at the outset. The first item on the agenda after the approval of the minutes is to talk about MCAS and the competency determination, and the appeals process. I think at that time the Commissioner may go over the results briefly, to the extent that we have the data from the 2001 administration of the test. I think all of you are pretty familiar with what those results are, and in fact the news is good. I just want to make a quick comment at the outset that we need to make sure that in looking at the data and talking about MCAS results that we don't lose sight of the fact that MCAS is primarily here to let us know whether education reform is working, and education reform, and standards-based reform in particular, is a much bigger subject than MCAS itself or the results of this administration of it.

Thankfully, the results are an indicator that education reform is in fact working, that teachers are collaborating more to establish common and consistent standards for student performance, not only from classroom to classroom within a single grade but across the grades. Schools are upgrading their curriculum to include more rigorous mathematics at all levels for all students and to include writing as a more consistent part of the student's everyday experience in school. And struggling students are getting access to a lot of extra help, by some measures well over a million hours per year, which is really quite a significant change in the amount of time devoted

to core academic subjects in our schools -- a change in the number of hours and a change in time on task -- that we haven't seen for years, maybe ever, in terms of the speed with which we've ramped this up.

In addition to that, I think it's useful to note that there are other indicators that reinforce the data that we're getting from MCAS. The NAEP scores that were released recently, the SAT scores, and other indicators all suggest that we're making steady progress. The results, for 10th grade anyway, were taken by some to be somewhat jarring. As the Commissioner said, the students fulfilled his expectations not only in trying hard this last time, the 10th graders that is, but in not giving their best effort in the prior administrations of the test, which is to say that I think there's been a lot of growth over the last three years in improvement. It just hasn't shown up in the numbers, and now that the test has counted for something, we've seen the full impact of those three or four years of improvement in one year's worth of data.

In short, our faith in our young people and our teachers has paid off, but there's much more work for us to do, and we can't lose sight of that fact. There are still significant numbers of students, many fewer than we may have thought or others may have anticipated a week or ten days ago, but nonetheless there are still many individual students out there who need our help, and now is the time for all of us involved in the continuing policy debate over these issues to put aside our differences and join together to ensure that every student in the Class of 2003 and beyond has the opportunities they need to succeed.

One other thing I want to note is that on October 8th, the Governor signed an Executive Order establishing the Joint Committee on Educational Policy. This is a group which is comprised of representatives of the Board of Higher Education and the Board of Education, and there are four members of that group here today: Judy Gill, Henry Thomas, myself, and the Commissioner. In addition to that, the chair and vice-chair of the Board of Higher Education are also members of this group. The purpose is to make sure that we're communicating better between the two boards and that we're working harder to make sure that, where our two interests intersect, that we are not only communicating with each other but consciously aligning our policies, so that we're ultimately creating a system from preK to 16 that is far more seamless than it is today. There are a couple of things immediately on the agenda, at least in the short term. One in particular the Governor notes in her Executive Order -- let me just see if I can read from it here: "The Joint Committee is requested, in particular, but without limitation, to explore options for those students who complete high school without a competency determination to earn their high school diploma, and advise the Governor as to such options by no later than December 1, 2001." In other words, for those students who complete 12th grade in the Class of 2003 but have yet to earn their diploma because they have not passed one or both English and math portions of the MCAS, putting in place policies that will ensure that those students have continuing access to learning opportunities and continuing opportunities to pass MCAS and earn their diploma. Some of those will obviously involve higher education, and other opportunities may be either in the community or in high schools or in businesses. But in any event, that will be one of the first tasks of this Joint Committee. With that, I'll pass it over to you, Commissioner.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We are going to talk about the results quickly. We have some overheads, and I certainly want to reiterate what Jim Peyser has said. I think both the Chairman and I and others have been unhappy about the fact that there's been such a focus on MCAS, and that this graduation requirement has really taken over, and that's never what was intended with education reform. It seems to me that we've lost sight of the fact that our major challenge is to get kids into advanced and proficient. We obviously recognize that a number of our students are challenged, and therefore job one is to get them out of "warning" or "failing" on the MCAS. So hopefully now the results will be put in their current perspective.

Two things I'll say, and then we're actually going to do a presentation on some of the scores. First is, of course, you know I was going to Disney World, and the next day the Governor announced no out-of-state travel, so that took care of that. Secondly, we are trying our best -- and, believe me, the staff has been just tremendous. I mean, I can't say enough about Jeff Nellhaus and Kit Viator and Charlie DePascale, and others, just a fabulous, small core of people that do such a terrific job. We're trying to absorb all these statistics, and Harcourt is working around the clock basically to get the results out to districts, which they will receive on this Friday. And once I'm assured, when they look it over, that districts have reviewed the data, we will release the scores some day next week, and so probably midweek at this point.

We just received yesterday, and we're verifying it, the statewide data as it relates to the subgroups, male, female, special education, LEP, black, Hispanic, and so forth, and we hope once we're assured the data looks good -- and we're going to excuse Jeff after the MCAS appeals discussion so he can sort of crunch the numbers -- hopefully Jim and I and the Governor will be announcing those statistics tomorrow, because, again, the strength, in my judgment, of the MCAS program is all of the data and information that's available. Let me just say before I mention a couple of other things, if back in 1998 I had said to you that Massachusetts was going to introduce a test for 10th graders with graduation requirement, and the first time it counted, 93 percent of the kids would score between 216 or above in English language arts, and 91 percent of the kids in mathematics would score 216 or above, would we have had the controversy we've had? I remind you again, look at our web site, look at failing work, and tell me that's a high school graduate.

This Board has the standard right initially. It's still going to be tough for a lot of kids, and we're going to work to get them up over the line, and we'll talk about that, but this is the right standard. It's a very hard test to get into proficient and advanced, but the minimum graduation requirement was set at the right point. And I must admit when I was a 10th grader if it didn't count I'm not sure I would have tried that hard. So I think it's just an indication of what MCAS does.

A citizen out in the western part of the state about two years ago wrote a letter to the editor. He told a story of the person that went on a diet, and he didn't stick to the diet, and he looked in the mirror, and he didn't like what he saw, so he threw away the mirror. He likened that to MCAS, that MCAS is the mirror, and I believe and have always believed that is the fact. We work very hard to have a program that's very valid and reliable as to what the level of competency of kids really is, their level of performance, and I think it is now time to put aside some of the emotion and really look at the facts and the truth, because that's what MCAS does.

A couple of things before we get to the MCAS scores. One of my favorite times of the year and my favorite events is to award Milken scholarships by the Milken Family Foundation, and this year we were fortunate to have Dr. Tom Boysen, former Commissioner of Education in Kentucky to join us for all three awards. The Governor joined us for two of the three. This year, the awards were presented to secondary teachers, and were held at all-school assemblies, and all three were tremendously exciting. We awarded June Eressy, a 17-year English teacher at University Park Campus School in Worcester; Cynthia Latham, a 23-year math teacher at Lynn English High School; and Edward Noonan, a 15-year business teacher at Dorchester High School in Boston. That was a tremendous opportunity, and a great time to celebrate the nobility and dignity of teaching by awarding these three teachers a trip to California, a $25,000 award.

We had an event at Madison Park High School yesterday to announce our online tutoring opportunity for all kids who have -- initially it's for 11th graders, all kids who failed MCAS at the 10th grade level last spring. Any student who failed, all 20 odd thousand, are able to access an online tutoring service in mathematics and English with questions geared to MCAS, starting yesterday. Every single student has a unique confidential identifier which allows that student to log on through VES, which is the portal. It was demonstrated yesterday by the students at Madison Park themselves, and each one of them walked several of us, including the mayor and the superintendent, through the MCAS remediation program. It was a great tribute to the young people who told us how much they enjoyed having control of the program so that they can use it for the questions and answers but it also tells them what they did right or wrong. I think this is a tremendous step forward for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. People say to me all the time, "Commissioner, what are you going to do about kids that fail?" And I would hope to think it's a joint effort. I mean, after all, the schools, parents, others have some responsibility here. But here we are as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and every single kid as of today who failed MCAS can be online, and they can access it from home, from libraries, from, as Mayor Menino said, from community centers, and I think it's a tremendous step forward. I want to compliment Alan Safran and his group that is working on Project 2003 and beyond. The Princeton Review is the vendor. It allows this access, as I mentioned, from everywhere, and it also allows a teacher or mentor to join in on behalf of that one student. They can sort of couple in on the progress of the student. So I think that's a tremendous step forward and just the beginning. We have a number of other programs to help these kids, and I think that has to be our focus.

Very quickly, in addition to the results which obviously got tremendous news, we had another very newsworthy event which didn't get much news, and that was that Achieve, the national organization established at the time of the Governor's Summit, who has a tremendous reputation as a bipartisan group of researchers, has done an analysis of the standards and assessment in ten states, and they have ranked Massachusetts' standards and assessments as the best in the country. They use the phrase that I so much value, that our standards are "challenging but attainable," and that's music to my ears. So that was a tremendous report -- and by the way, they made a number of suggestions and critiques which I think are right on. They're very well thought out and thoughtful and explain the things that we need to look at, both in English and in mathematics.

I'm also pleased to report that we are one of five states who received a grant under the American Diploma Project. Part of the project involves working with the chancellor and higher education to talk about how to align the K to 12 standards with the admissions policies, and also the curriculum policies and teacher preparation requirements and so forth in higher education. It works right in line with what Jim talked about in establishing the Joint Committee on Educational Policy. Quite frankly, if I were at the higher education level, I would have been concerned up until the release of these tests because no one had any way of knowing, except me that knows kids, that this would turn around. I did have faith. In fact, they did better than I thought. And so if I were sitting in either a community college or a state college, I'd say to myself, what is this, I mean they're failing kids, it just doesn't seem to add up, if you looked at it from that perspective. Now I think we know we have it right, with 82 percent already passing the English, 75 percent passing the math and two years to go, a very important two years in the lives of kids. We will get kids up over the bar. So I think that will give some solace to higher education that there's a much more alignment, and we know this, between the way they go through the admissions process and what they look at which is not just SATs but looking at grade point average and other things will be a much better alignment. So I think with the CEP, with the America Diploma Project, with the new Title II reporting requirements, et cetera, we're going to see a lot of action finally, something Judy has been asking for, a lot of action in aligning K to 12 and higher education in a meaningful and real way, and I think that's something that will be great.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I have one small, small correction. On page 9, in the top paragraph, I think it's the second to last sentence, I'm reported as saying -- it's talking about the appeals process and talking about those students and talking about multiple indicators. And it says, "To some extent, this is a move in that direction for those individuals who "haven't been qualified," and it should say "have been qualified" for the appeal. Any other comments or corrections?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the September 26, 2001 as amended.

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

MCAS - Discussion

a) Report on Results of 2001 MCAS Tests

b) Competency Determination: Proposed Amendments to 603 CMR 30.00 Establishing MCAS Appeals Process - Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Hopefully, this will be the beginning of many opportunities to really look at the numbers and take advantage of this very strong program. The report that was issued at the time of the release of the results is also very important. It has a lot of good information in it, and I don't want to spend a lot of time, but I did want to quickly go through

the 2001 results. As I mentioned, beginning tomorrow we will have results for the subgroups of students, which I think is also extremely important. So this is the summary, in my judgment, of what the statewide trends look like, and we're anxious to look school- and district-wide. Obviously the failing rate in English and mathematics decreased dramatically, so that instead of dealing with a 45-percent failing rate in mathematics, it's 25-percent, and instead of 34 percent in English language arts, it's now 18 percent. We'll see later what the makeup of the failing is. So that was obviously the number one issue because of the graduation requirement and so forth.

However, one of the things that we're also very pleased about, in addition to trying in such a way that kids passed, students also showed their ability in proficient and advanced, which is, after all, our ultimate goal. The percent for proficient and advanced at the 10th grade level increased substantially as well. So our goal of getting kids out of failing and into advanced and proficient was achieved pretty dramatically in grade 10, and, again, I think it's because the kids tried. Other people will try to find all kinds of reasons, including the fact that the scaled scores were changed, and they're starting this nonsense. I'm going to call people in one at a time starting perhaps with the professor at Boston College, and we're going to go through this line by line, because I think the truth has got to win out, and I think that's just nonsense. The change in scaled scores has nothing to do with the percentage of kids that failed and passed.

In grade 8, there was improvement, and we did get a drop in "warning" at grade 8, but I'll come back to that, because if we're doing our job right, this is not all about great news. We've got a lot of work to do, so these results show that, grade 6 in particular. You might remember we were concerned about the drop off in mathematics between grade 4 and grade 8, which by the way is a national trend, and so we introduced a 6th grade test. We had to go through that careful process of piloting and so forth so that we get validity, and so now we're able to give the 6th grade test and get results, and low and behold that drop off occurs by the 6th grade. That was the important thing -- knowing first of all, is this something that occurs at the 7th grade or just at the 8th grade when they all become teenagers? No. The answer is that the drop has already occurred by the 6th grade, and this will be very helpful when we look at our standards and our curriculum and our alignment to see just what's happening, and again, this is a national problem. People are looking very carefully at our math curriculum, and Achieve made some recommendations in that regard.

Grade 4 continues to be strong, which is a good thing. It has been strong since the beginning, and it is the foundation, obviously. And while we say the math results remain strong, you'll see later there's a drop off here, and it's something we have to watch. If it's a one-year blip, fine. If not, it's something we're going to have to watch.

So let's go to the first chart. Let me kind of orient you to this chart. First of all, the top is obviously English language arts, and the reason we only have two years, and we will be able to provide four years eventually, is you might remember this is grade 4, and we realigned the cut scores, and so we've only been able to interpolate the 2000 results as compared to the new cutoffs for 2001. We have not yet done this -- just haven't had time. I might add that Jeff and his people have worked weekends, Saturday, Sunday, and I have no idea what time you left last night, Jeff. So we just haven't had time to do that. We've interpolated for 2000, not 2001. We will give you 1998 and 1999 in an interpolated way. In mathematics we have all four years.

We've saved the same standards. The left is the number of kids in warning, and the right are the number of kids in proficient and advanced. So if you're mathematically inclined, you add those two, subtract from 100, and you can find out how many kids are in needs improvement. But you can see in grade 4 a nice reduction in warning and an increase in advanced and proficient, so we're going to look at that trend. In mathematics, it's fine. I mean, it's a four-year trend that's pretty good. It's just we do have this blip where it's only 34 percent are in advanced and proficient, and it's something we need to watch. It can be a one-year thing, it can be a cohort thing, but it's something we have to watch very carefully. So 4th grade fine as it goes.

8th grade you can see, and the unfortunate part here, I guess, is of course this is the last year of the 8th grade, so it will be 7th grade, but you can see the trends very nicely over the four years. Thank goodness 8th graders do try, it seems. So we've had a reduction in warning in English language arts to 8 percent, which is very good, and 67 percent in advanced and proficient, and you can see the mathematics is problematic when compared to the 4th grade. We're not going to try to put spin on anything. If you look at national results, and the NAEP and et cetera, and you look at other standards, I would say it's fair to say that our numbers in 8th grade English language arts appear a little high. Wouldn't you say, Jeff, it would be more around 60 percent in advanced and proficient? So, you know, this may be something. We're done with 8th grade anyway. But if this were to continue and we had 8th grade, that might be another threshold we need to look at. We can't be afraid to examine and change. People say, "Well, why are you changing?" We should change. If that's what it calls for, we ought to look at it and correct it. Anyway, that's a problem in 8th grade math. Those are not good numbers for 8th grade math, have not been since the beginning. So we have this kind of dip. Now it shows with the graduation requirement it's going back up, so that's a good thing, but it’s something we need to watch.

This finally is 10th grade, and of course you see the significant change in 2001, and, again, the significant thing is a 12-percent increase in advanced and proficient in mathematics and a 15-percent increase in advanced and proficient in English language arts, which is very good. Hopefully there will be more incentives, certificates of mastery and so forth.

Here are a few interesting slides, I think, of what the makeup of all the class of 2003 is. First of all, from the time that we released the results there's always a fraction involved, and it's not unusual to have a slight change of 1 percent as we round, and actually the percentage of kids who passed both went from 67 percent to 68 percent, so we got a little bump there. So 68 percent of our kids passed both tests, and 32 percent failed one or the other or both, so that's a good graphic of that. Here is the breakdown of the 32 percent, and as you can see, 19 percent have not passed either, and it's 9 and 4 on the other that passed one or the other.

This is probably to me the most significant result of all, and that is of the kids who failed. In the case of English language arts, 60 percent of the kids that failed scored between 216 and 218, so one would hope that with natural growth and development, let alone some tutoring help and some practice, that those kids should easily be moved into the passing range. I shouldn't say easily, but should be moved in. So that's a significant change. It may be slightly, slightly improved because of the scaling, Jeff, in terms of kids at 216 might have been lower before, but nevertheless that's accurate now and -- so that's very interesting. And for that matter, 22 percent are between 212 and 214. So that I think is very good news. And then in math, the

same kind of thing, even 65 percent and 16 percent. So 81 percent of those that failed, which is almost 16,000 kids, 81 percent of those kids are above 212, and 65 percent are above 216, so that I think was the most encouraging of all. So as time goes on, there will be a number of other statistics that are important. Does anybody have any questions or comments?

DR. GILL: Commissioner, I'd like to thank you. The information you have here is very important information for us to have and for the public to have, and, Jeff, I'd like to congratulate you.

MR. NELLHAUS: Thank you.

MR. THOMAS: Jim, first of all, I'd like to compliment the students of the Commonwealth for their effort, teachers for their commitment, administrators for their leadership, and to the Commissioner and his staff, Jeff and his gang, for their due diligence. I think that we are pleased and impressed with the results thus far. Notwithstanding, I have to say that I don't think it's time for us to declare victory in light of the fact that we still have 21,000 students who are on the wrong side of the ledger. I think that the online illustration of what we can do to enhance their possibilities down the road is a great example. I just want to remind you that the digital divide is real, and there are a number of students who are within that cluster of 21,000 who don't have access to the Internet, and thus I would suggest that we work hard to find ways to make access available.

There are community kinds of common space or common access points, libraries, et cetera, maybe even higher education institutions that can play a role, but many of those individuals don't even have the knowledge of that particular access, so there's a public awareness, an education agenda that is implicated in light of that. But I would say that I know that we're diligent around making sure that all the districts do all that they can to help students, and I think that they're posed to do that, but I don't think we should take it for granted. I think we should have a monitoring and due diligence with regard
to that as well.

I think that when we take a look at the disaggregation of data when we look at different sectors, we need to closely examine any major disparities or gaps of performance with all groups. And if in fact we do find some significant trends or indices that trouble us, we need to come up with strategies and game plans appropriate, not on the long term but in the short order, to address those disparities as well. I know that we can predict some differences around ethnic and class kinds of considerations because the challenges are pretty formidable, and we're not going to change all those challenges overnight, but I don't think we should accept -- I don't want to get the cart before the horse, but I don't think that we should accept that when we know that there are going to be some disparities and just kind of let it be that and not be aggressive about closing any kind of gaps that we might witness. But all in all, I'm impressed with the effort by all those who have really applied themselves to this overall process, and I think education reform has got a good positive shot in the arm as a result of the results on this past test. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, Henry. I'd just add on the note of the gap analysis that obviously there's some data coming out this week and more data next week which will give us

more resolution on that, but in the numbers that were released last week there was some aggregation that was done of urban districts and vocational schools at the 10th grade level, and what it showed was two things. One is that there was dramatic improvement in the pass rates. I think on the vocational side it went from something like 20 percent to 50 percent.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: 46 percent.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: 46 percent -- so more than doubling of the pass rate. And on the urban side it was mid 30s to almost 60 percent, not quite doubling but a significant change which seems to exceed the overall case of change across the state. So again, the numbers are yet to be published on this, but I think we are seeing a narrowing of the gap, and the gap has not gone away, but at least I think we're starting to make some progress, and I think we'll get better resolution on that this week and next.

The other thing is I was at the National Education Summit a couple of weeks ago, and Hugh Price was there of the National Urban League, and I thought he made an interesting comment which was, while we need to focus on the achievement gap in making progress in reducing these disparities between groups, our first goal needs to be to address the preparation gap, I think is the terminology he used, which is to make sure that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, you name it, gets what they need, gets over the threshold of what they need to have a chance in life and in higher education and in the workplace. I think we've made a lot of progress there, and that's clear already by the data. I think it will be even more clear over the next week. There's still more work to do there, but I think we're very close to having real success on the preparation gap, and I think we're even showing some progress on the achievement gap.

DR. SCHAEFER: Would it be appropriate to comment on the Achieve report in connection with --I do think -- I agree with the Commissioner that this has not gotten very much play, and I really think it's an incredible achievement on the part of the folks at the Department, particularly Jeff and Sandy and their staffs. This is, you know, vindication of all the hard work that has gone into this and all the disputes about what should be in the standards, and what should be on the test, and I just think it's absolutely a marvelous thing to be able to point to that we have done so well compared to other states. I really do wish that the media would pick up on this more. Having said that, if I could, there were just two questions that I wanted to ask about that were referenced in the Achieve report. I can't find the reference on the math at the moment, but it did say -- I think there was some indication that the praise for the algebra strand, that the standards were higher than integrated math, and I was just wondering at this point what happened to the 8th grade algebra test? Is that something that's being worked on, because I know we just have the one math test at the 8th grade level, so I wanted to ask that question first.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: If you want to comment on the sort of development of a test over time, but again, this has to be gradual. Our obvious intent would be to have as many students introduced to algebraic concepts as soon as possible, and we know from the data of course-taking that kids are at a decided disadvantage. Many of our 10th graders haven't even had geometry, et cetera, so certainly the right goal is to get kids to algebra early. The problem is it should not be done in an artificial way, and that's the concern. Just to say "We now have

algebra for all kids in the 8th grade" when they're not prepared is the problem. So I think we're trying to go through a careful transition process to obviously encourage algebra and algebraic concepts earlier. In fact, they should be developed all the way up the line.

That's one of the things that Achieve talked about, and I always worry because in mathematics no matter what you do you get into these two worlds immediately. It's like the phonetics versus whole language debate. Achieve really talked about the fact that we need to concern ourselves with the conceptual understanding more, but they phrased it in a way that wasn't a negative. It was a comment that needed to be developed. And we need to look at mathematics anyway as we're looking across the country. People say it's a mile wide and an inch deep. One of the more encouraging developments in mathematics education has been the use of Singapore mathematics, which has started in a few schools here in Massachusetts, and they've had great results, teachers really enjoy it, and it's more about developing fewer concepts but really doing them in-depth, and everything else kind of falls in place as you understand the balance and the symmetry, if you will, of mathematics. So it's a topic for another day. My concern is that we not just get into a knee jerk 'let's get everybody in algebra' reaction, but recognize the larger, more deeper concept that we need to get kids to that level of thinking quicker, and it seems in America that we get bogged down not just in getting the right answer, because I'm all for that, but in dealing with so many issues, so many -- our history in mathematics has been so many things that it's just difficult for kids to ferret it all, that seems to be the theory.

MR. NELLHAUS: I'll just add that what Achieve observed with our 10th grade test -- in fact they observed that some algebra concepts or some number sense concepts were sacrificed given our emphasis on algebra. In fact they were suggesting that we de-emphasize some of the algebra and actually emphasize the number sense standards a little bit more in the 10th grade test than we have been. So I found that interesting. They thought that some of the number sense questions we were asking were really more like algebra questions, and I think if you look at our tests across the board beginning with grade 4, there's a substantial amount of algebra concepts even beginning in the early grades 4, 6, 8 and 10, so I don't think their criticism was that we weren't emphasizing algebra enough. I think they were saying we were doing it at the expense of maybe some of the more complex number sense concepts in the 10th grade.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just one quick follow-up and then Abby. We did have a discussion around the 8th grade algebra test, and we did start thinking about how to build it into the program, not as a replacement for the existing test but as an alternative for those students who are taking four-year algebra in the 8th grade. Nevertheless, I think there are obviously issues about just how much we can do at once, and there's a lot of change going on in the test system right now, and there's a lot of test development that's going on. I do think it needs to get on the schedule.

The other thing, though, is just a more technical comment. I think the comment that Achieve made about the standards in around the separate math course, at least one of them, and maybe there was another in algebra, there was one around geometry and the fact that the single course curriculum frameworks put more emphasis on proofs than the nonintegrated framework, and that may be one area worth looking at in terms of your incremental improvements and overall standards.

DR. SCHAEFER: I just had one other question I wanted to ask about this. On the English, they praised us for -- on page 31, the quality of the reading passages on the grade 10 test is quite high, suggesting that we use a Shakespeare play instead of a sonnet which was used the last time, and I guess I wanted to ask how difficult is it to find appropriate passages for these tests, and, is this something that we're going to be able to -- I mean, they're praising us for this test, and I was wondering if we're going to be able to perpetuate this kind of program.

MR. NELLHAUS: It takes a lot of work to find those passages, and I think it's something we're always struggling with. We want to improve the quality of the passages from year to year, and that's one of the most difficult challenges in developing the English test, is getting passages that are accessible but challenging and also reflect what our framework is calling for. So it's something sounds like it would be an easy thing to do, but in fact we spend a lot of time reviewing passages.

DR. SCHAEFER: Well, that's why I asked. I mean, what is the procedure, how do you pick the passages?

MR. NELLHAUS: Well, we have our, teacher committees suggesting passages, and bringing in passages. The contractor will also suggest and bring in passages. So it's again, it's just that collaboration between our contractor and our community members and our staff also doing the research and finding passages and bringing them into the meetings and discussing them. So it's something we do day in and day out, looking for the correct passages for this test.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One of the things that Achieve did mention was that they didn't feel there was enough nonfiction in the 10th grade assessment. I don't know if you recall, but we discussed this in the English language arts framework, in 10th grade in particular, and that change was just made, and hopefully the test will now have time to catch up. But I think there is a question that was raised by Achieve as to whether there was enough balance in the selections to include both fiction and nonfiction, and I guess they even made the comment that the nonfiction passages were fairly literary themselves, and so trying to get the right mix, which I think, again, is an accurate reflection of where we were trying to go in the frameworks, and I think the assessment will catch up.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, a couple of things. One, I obviously came in a little late, so I'm not sure if the Commissioner said this, but -- it is such an obvious point. As I read the media from across the country, Massachusetts is really a unique story at this point. I think every other state is backing down. We're the only ones standing tall, sticking with our schedules, sticking with our tests, and it's quite incredible. We are the model for the nation at this point, and I just couldn't be more pleased. Obviously I want to see the breakdowns. I think they're very, very important. We do have a lot of work to do, and when we see the breakdowns that work will become even more apparent. I think Henry raised an important point on this digital divide, though, I would hope -- I know the national figures. If you look at families earning under $15,000, you've got 27 percent that have access to a computer. You go up to families above $75,000, and you've got 93 percent. I mean, this is a social class phenomenon. And I would hope that the schools would be working very hard to make sure

that low income students have access to these computers off hours, whatever. Churches should be working hard, community centers, et cetera, because this is obviously very important.

The other points I was going to bring up actually have just been made. I was concerned about the balance between fiction and nonfiction in the ELA, and I would like to see more nonfiction, and the algebra point was just made, so, with that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any other questions or comments? Okay. There's another part of this item on the agenda which is to talk about the appeals process which obviously has more direct policy implications and for which we are going to try to take a vote today in order to send out these draft regulations for public comment. As you all are well familiar, public comment means that when we ultimately vote on these regulations there may very well be some substantive changes. And therefore while any recommendations we may have for amending the language are certainly welcome, we ought to just all be aware that there will be opportunities going forward here to revisit some of the specific language, not only in terms of our own thinking but also in terms of comments we receive from the public. So with that, Commissioner, let me turn it back over to you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Okay. Just a couple of very technical issues, and thank you, Rhoda, for the correction. On the eligibility, we had talked about -- on the green sheets it suggests that no more than ten days of absence from school in a 180-day school year. We are correcting that to nine days because technically you can take 95 percent at 180 days, it's really could be considered nine days. I think the important point here is that I'm making recommendations based on what I think, but I also value and assembled a Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee, and perhaps this was the point of most agreement, was that we ought not to be bashful about a high attendance rate, and that's why we moved it from 90 percent to 95 percent. We're looking for kids to meet us halfway. We're looking for kids to take their responsibilities seriously, so I think a 95 percent. Now, we understand that there's kids that have broken legs or asthma or there are extenuating circumstances, and those things we can build into the superintendents, with the superintendent and/or principal letting us know any extenuating circumstances, but generally speaking I don't want to settle for less than 95 percent attendance. I think that's the least we should require, which is really nine days of absence. And if it's a 185-day school year, it can even go up to ten days, so I think that that's one change.

DR. THERNSTROM: I just have a question about that, Dave. I think I've asked this before, but I don't remember what the answer was. Is there a uniform definition of what attendance at school constitutes across districts? That is I would think attendance would have to be there on time in the morning, there for all classes, leaving at the hour at which kids get out, but I have perhaps an incorrect sense that that isn't the definition of attendance in all schools.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You have what would appear to be a reasonable sense, but I think you need only go to your favorite high school and look at the complexities, but -- I mean, one would hope that attendance means they're there versus not there, but it does get complicated.

DR. THERNSTROM: Can we say something?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: No, I don't think -- we talked about this, and one of the things that Jeff and I had originally recommended was to go by the local policy, and really the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee was very strong and helpful in this regard, and we have principals on that committee, some of whom have a much more liberal policy than others. Some high schools have sort of unexcused -- they have like excused absences, and then the kids get a couple of days where whatever, like almost like a college. So it's all over the lot with respect to not only what the policy is but also what's excused and what isn't and how they handle all that. I felt it was very important for us -- you have two choices. One is to go by the locals and say, "Well, whatever your policy is is fine with us." The other is to say, "Look, we don't really like some of your policies. We don't have control over it, but in some cases I think they're too lenient." And I think as a state for an appeals process for this standard, it's important for us to be stronger than the average. So whatever it is, they have to either meet the 95 percent which means they're there, no more than nine absences a year, or else they're not eligible even for an appeal. So I think the simplest way is for us to set a higher standard.

With respect to whether kids are in or out or up and down, I mean, there are some state regulations and laws by which you are considered in school for the day or not, and they have this old register kind of thing where if somebody comes in a half hour before the school day ends they're not considered in, and if they come in five minutes after the first period they are, and the districts have to decide all that. It's very complicated. And that's why I don't want to get into those complexities that are just -- some kids are on release, some kids have an hour work release. You know, there are all kinds of situations, but I feel comfortable from a state perspective that we're sending a very strong message. This is only the eligibility. This is not the evidence. This is just to get in the door. I think this makes sense and kind of jumps over all of those complexities that locals find themselves in.

Just the second issue is on page 4 where we had said the Commissioner shall appoint approximately ten members and so forth. We've replaced that to be more general, not get into a specific number, and I'm anxious to see how this plays out anyway, but this whole issue of the regional boards, how many there might be and so forth, is something we need to look at and think about during the period of public comment, so I think it's easier to put that general language in at this point and see what develops.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: A couple things I want to add and also put a couple of issues on the table, but the last meeting of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel included a principal who brought some data in order to run the analysis -- actually, he did the analysis that's suggested here of trying to correlate MCAS results of a student's peers with grade point averages, again for students who are in the same grade who are taking the same set of courses, and it was remarkable. I think he had a dozen examples, and he brought several of them with him, but it really clarified the discussion tremendously when you're able to look at a student's particular set of courses and grades and compare the MCAS performance of that student with other students in those same courses with those same set of grades or the same grade point average, and it really did break out very much the way Jeff had predicted it would, which is that there are some courses that are offered that are clearly not exposing students to the kind of curriculum or rigor that are necessary to perform well on MCAS or to meet the standards we've established, and high grades in those courses do not translate into high MCAS performance,

and therefore you have to be able to have some system for discounting those grades in order to make sure that they're a truer reflection of student performance.

Another example in addition to the taking a course that doesn't have very high expectations is the case where there was a substitute teacher in for half the year or for most of the year, and so the grades the students received were at best unreliable, and it showed up when you tried to correlate student performance in that classroom to their MCAS performance, all of which is to say that I think the mechanism that's been put in place here, that is in some ways the core of the evidence that's to be presented, certainly appears to be very effective and very powerful, and during the next few months we ought to be running more simulations like that, especially including now data from this year, to verify that that's true. I think the initial findings that came through the advisory committee were very reassuring in terms of our ability to really determine the extent to which grade point average is a legitimate measure of student performance and whether a student's MCAS performance, when it's at odds with grade point average, somehow reflects something having more to do with the interaction between the student and that specific test as opposed to whether the student has met the standard or not.

DR. SCHAEFER: Did you see any case where students had done well in the course, had passed MCAS, but there was one student who had not?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It seems to me the ones that were brought forward and discussed all sort of fit the model that they may have had a high grade point average, but other students who took similar courses with high grade point averages also failed the test, and for the principal there was a clear explanation for why that was so.
Now, again --

DR. SCHAEFER: So you didn't find any anomalies?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't believe there were any anomalies presented.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, I think there was one. I think he talked about one student, but statistically we now probably know that that student more than likely scored 216. I'm just guessing, but the statistics are pretty overwhelming.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right, that was the student -- if I remember, that student scored in the proficient range in 8th grade -- is this the one I'm remembering? -- and then did poorly in 10th grade, so something happened or something was anomalous. Anyway, the point is that it seemed to work very well, and I think running some more simulations over the next few months will be very helpful just to verify.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I was going to add one of the things we learned is we're going to pilot with a number of high school principals in the next few months so that when it comes back here we'll have some real on-the-ground experience.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But one of the other things that came out of the simulations was the principal did use 9th grade courses and grades, and I think, at least as he presented the data, that did seem to add to our understanding of what the student may have, what had been going

on with the student, and here we have, we talk about courses and grades in 10, 11, and, if available, 12th grade, and I think we ought to consider at least putting 9th grade in the mix, and so in soliciting public comment I think that's one of the areas we ought to be specifically asking for, should we include 9th grade courses and grades. The other thing which I think we ought to be getting comment on is the extent to which the superintendent ought to be applying some judgment in terms of which cases to pass forward. In other words, as we saw with this principal, folks in the districts are perfectly capable of running the data and crunching the numbers themselves.

While we haven't established any sort of hard and fast rule -- you know, 90 percent of the students with the same grade point average have to have passed MCAS in the subject area or anything quite as concrete and specific as that, I think there is an argument to say the superintendents ought to be reviewing the data, using those guidelines, and making some judgments about whether a particular appeal has any likelihood of success, just so that we aren't flooding the system, and flooding may be the wrong word, but we aren't putting into the system cases where there just may not be much of a case at all and then forcing us to go through the exercise of verifying that. Now, I don't know how you would actually do it in a way so that superintendents are not put in either a difficult position or ensuring that there's consistency across the 350 some odd districts. Nevertheless, I think in terms of public comment that would be interesting to know, essentially trying to understand whether there's something we can do to strengthen the role of superintendents in evaluating these appeals before they go to the panels. Those are my two suggestions, and, again, I'm not confident enough in them to suggest that we ought to change the language now, but I think they're areas where we ought to be specifically eliciting comment. Are there other comments that folks have?

DR. THERNSTROM: I just have a question. I don't suppose superintendents have any data on the number of kids with high grade point averages who when they go on to institutions of higher education in fact have immediately been put in remedial classes because they don't have the skills necessary for college level work, which would be one indication of something out of kilter in that school in terms of its grading policies?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, we do report -- Judy may want to comment.

DR. GILL: If the student went to a public institution of higher education, we do have that data.

DR. THERNSTROM: And you do have the data --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And it's fed back.

DR. GILL: And it's fed back in terms of students who then are accepted in an institution but need to take remedial education courses or developmental education courses.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Now, in most cases, my anecdotal information is that principals will tell you that there are great surprises. That doesn't get specifically to your question. Maybe they're not surprised about grade inflation in their own schools, but they're not surprised usually with the students who wind up getting accepted but have to go into remedial courses.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, it's one more --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'll have to ask that next question to hear about the grade point average, but.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes, but I mean, it's additional information for us as to what's going on in schools when we look at grade point averages and MCAS scores.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any other questions or comments?

MR. MADDEN: I had a question on the eligibility requirements for the performance appeal in Section D of that. It's on page 3. It says, "The student has participated in all of the tutoring and other academic support services made available by the school under an individual student success plan or under any other plan." I was just wondering who makes that plan. Would it just be teachers or administrators, do the students themselves or the student's parents have a say on what services go into that individual success plan? And, also, the word "all" there seems -- I'd like a little bit of a definition on that. I'm not quite clear on exactly what that could mean for students.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's a good point about "all", but, again, with eligibility, we're looking for kids that meet us halfway, and the success plan is the obligation of the school. Under the law, it's to establish an individual plan for a child who has failed, so they have that obligation. And when a district applies for monies under our academic support services program, they must agree that they have a success plan for kids. So that is developed by the school, and not necessarily with the parent, by the way, although hopefully they're communicating with the parent, but the obligation is for the school and district to establish that success plan for every kid. That program at whatever school district is likely at this point to be tutoring, because that's one of the things that we're offering. Most schools are offering some form of tutoring. Perhaps mentoring and other things, but tutoring, and then other services that they offer through their plan. So if they offer it, tutoring and other academic support services, we believe that the student should have taken advantage of those. It's being offered, it's being provided, and if the student isn't taking advantage of it, we think that's an indication that they should not be eligible for an appeal.

MR. MADDEN: Yes, I was just concerned about the word "all" in that respect. Some of my other council members were, because I can see that conflicting with family obligations, business obligations if the parents and the students aren't involved in that process.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think that's a point well taken. I do believe the Blue Ribbon Committee -- I don't specifically remember on this Rhoda, do you, or Jeff?

MS. SCHNEIDER: As I recall, the committee members agreed with your concept that students should have to demonstrate effort and meet the school halfway. The school has an obligation to make services available either directly or through community centers and so on, but the students should have to demonstrate that they are making an effort. They did not specifically discuss the word "all".

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Okay. I think it's an interesting point. It may be something the Board wants to change or send out for public comment and see what happens, and you will remember it, it will be back before you.

MR. MADDEN: I will remember.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, Dave, I can't believe that the word "all" is in fact that important. If you can't make a tutoring date, you make it another day. I'm sure schools are flexible enough. I mean, because the alternative of leaving that out is to open the door to the student who shows up every once in a while for a little bit of tutoring.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm just wondering, for example -- no one really intends to interpret "all" as meaning 100 percent.

DR. THERNSTROM: Exactly.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: On the other hand, that's what the word means. I mean, maybe if we say something like "substantially all" or "made a good faith effort to participate in all" or something like that.

DR. SCHAEFER: Why don't we change it around to say something that they participate in the tutoring required by the program, by the --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Individual student success plan?

MR. IRWIN: How about satisfactorily participated?

DR. SCHAEFER: That's too much judgment.

MR. IRWIN: There's going to be judgments no matter what you do.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: One of the options is for the Board to either completely change it or leave it and let public comment and ask the question.

DR. THERNSTROM: Leave it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Leave it, and then --

MR. MADDEN: I think public comment would be valuable on that idea.

DR. THERNSTROM: I mean, nobody is going to actually stick to the letter of the hundred percent law.

MR. CROWLEY: Dave, it's the establishment of the 216 as the minimum score. Given that 65 percent of the kids that failed, which is about 7500, will now qualify, how does that affect your thinking in picking that number?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I was thinking about this. It will affect --

MR. BAKER: I wasn't going to bring that up.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Of course you would. I have such confidence in kids, of course, and it's now been reinforced, that I believe that all the kids that are currently at 216 will get up over the bar, although focus test is the first time we've done it, and we'll have to see how that works, et cetera. So in answer to your question, I believe the scattergram will move, and all of the kids who are at 216 or above, frankly a lot of kids that are at 212, will get up over the bar, and there will be a smaller number that actually at the end of the rainbow after three tries are at 216, and so I think it will work to our advantage. Now, if we look at the results of the focused retest, and more importantly a year from now at the 2002 results, and 90 percent of the 60 percent are still at 216 and 218, I'm going to cry uncle and change this policy. So, you know, it's just I think the wisdom of having a test at the 10th grade level allowing this tremendous growth, and you think of any student -- I always say I have one of my four that didn't grow during those two years, but frankly kids grow tremendously in the 10th to 12th grade in a number of ways, so I'm very confident that the number will be small. Again, 93 percent in English and 91 percent in math are at 216 or above today, that's phenomenal in my judgment. So where's the hard standard, by the way? So we'll see. But that does -- of course it would trouble you if they were stuck.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Also, I think it does relate, at least potentially, to what I was asking for public comment on earlier which is that there are some cases, and I think we saw this in the simulations, where even though they may be eligible under the four criteria that are listed here, when you look at the data it's quite clear they're not meeting the standard, and the question is whether we ought to have a way of keeping those from being put into the appeals process, and therefore potentially gumming up the works and not allowing us to focus on those cases that really need our attention.

MR. THOMAS: I'd like to revisit Performance Appeals D, but not to discuss "all" but to discuss another issue. I have "tutoring and other academic support services made available by the school." It's a little narrow. There are a number of support programs that are outside the school system that are generating up because many districts don't have the capability or don't possess the capacity to meet the needs of all the students because of logistics or just as a capacity issue, so I would think that it would be smart to have a broader context where students -- it should be acceptable by the school, and I don't know if that actually addresses the issue by giving them the power to say whether this program is acceptable or not, but I would think that outside the school there are going to be viable and appropriate programs that could support student performance.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So, in other words, it might be an individual success plan talks about the student participating in an after-school program that's operated not by the school but by another organization?

MR. THOMAS: Exactly.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I see that as a little problematic because we can only control what we can control, and I think it's wonderful, and there's just some fabulous examples across this Commonwealth of community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, et cetera, that have stepped forward. My concern is as a state body those kinds of things I'm not sure we could either mandate or require. It's almost by default. What we can say is that schools are given the opportunity through academic support monies, and hopefully through their own wherewithal to develop programs for kids who have failed, and I think the numbers are such that we're going to be able to track this. If I'm right about the 60 percent, wait till you see, in future meetings we'll break this down and really talk about -- you know, this is sort of a precinct fight kind of thing. So I'm just worried from a policy point of view, Henry. I absolutely agree with what you're saying, and I think school districts have counted on an awfully lot of great partners in the past and will continue to. I'm just not sure we can put it in policies that it's a mandate of the student to take advantage of something that's outside of the school.

MR. THOMAS: We could give maybe the school administrators the option of sanctioning or validating a program that would be acceptable to the district.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. I agree with all that. It's just to me -- assuming the school doesn't offer much and the student takes advantage of a bunch of things outside, to me that's not an eligibility issue. And if they didn't take advantage of things outside the school, maybe it would be, but I think it's hard to hold a student to that. So I just think as a policy matter it's getting outside what we can control.

DR. SCHAEFER: What if the school contracted with that agency?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Oh, then it's fine, then it's a school responsibility.

DR. THERNSTROM: And therefore why couldn't you have language, made available by the school or an organization or an institution allied with the school, under contract and monitored by the school?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, as long as it's part of the academic support services, then that covers that. It's what the school does with its money and its programs for kids who are failing, what they offer to kids. If that happens to be contracted out, that's fine, that would be the same. It's still being controlled by the school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But I guess it may be a case where there's a very strong and successful community-based or business-based remediation program for students which is not paid for by the school. It's paid for by someone else, and so the school is not actually contracting, but it might be in the student's success plan that you're going to participate, for instance, in the Classroom in the Workplace program over the summer or something like that. It may not be in schools.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, again, I think -- I don't know that we can, as policy makers, get into all of this. If it's part of the success plan, and that gets into a question, but certainly if the local WIB provided a work based -- if, for example, a school had a school-based

learning program and it was part of the success plan, then this would cover it. I understand what your intent is, but I'm just worried that as a policy matter, I'm not sure we could hold ineligible a student that didn't take advantage of a community-based organization that ran a tutoring program quite separate and distinct from the schools and the kid didn't take advantage of it. I'm not sure we should hold the student ineligible.

MR. THOMAS: I agree with you on that point. I just think that it should be expanded where schools know that they have the latitude to utilize assets within the community that they are aligned with or funding or not funding but in fact feel that it's appropriate. But that a student couldn't arbitrarily -- in my thinking, at least, a student wouldn't arbitrarily pick a program from a menu of programs available. That success plan would have to be developed in concert with the school district, and the school district would sanction or approve a particular resource, an asset that is in the community that's acceptable to the school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Couldn't we say here "has participated in all of the tutoring and other academic support services made available by or approved by the school under the individual success plan"?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Available by, approved by the school would be fine.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. Is that all right.

MR. THOMAS: That's broader language. Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So you can make that change without objection. Any other comments?

MR. MADDEN: I had another question, but this time on the score appeals, just on the process for submitting them. On page 2, in Section 4, it talks about the superintendent shall submit the appeal no later than 60 calendar days after, depending on the section being appealed, the receipt of the School Composition CD or the Test Item Analysis Report, and I was just wondering do students or parents get to see either of those documents or, I guess, CDs, and how much time is there going to be between the release of a test item analysis and the release of a student's individual scores? I think there was a substantial amount of time this year at least. So if there is going to be that time and students can't see or this wouldn't be made available to see these reports, should administrators be expected to go through all these tests and look for anomalies? Hopefully there wouldn't be many, but assuming that there may be some.

MR. NELLHAUS: Well, this year the compositions will be returned to schools probably within about a month, about 30 days of the individual student's results being returned to them. But I think what the appeal is really going to hinge on is our ability to return student work to all of the tests beginning next year to the schools. Because if there's going to be a score appeal, it's going to be based on actually looking at the student's response to a particular question and then looking at that response against the scoring guide and the actual sample papers that we release, and all of that will be done in the amount of time that superintendents and principals can examine that work and submit the appeal in time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The tricky part, though -- wouldn't the difficulty be that since

we don't know who passed or who failed, and while appeals might be made irrespective of that, there's certainly more urgency to technical appeals and scoring appeals when a student has actually failed, and it might be that in a 60-day period they wouldn't know whether any of the students had failed. They may have an indication but wouldn't know for sure. I think that may be part of the problem.

MR. NELLHAUS: I think it's a good idea for us to take a look at this particular provision of the regulation here to make sure that we are allowing sufficient time for all of this to transpire. You know, sometimes these things come out on schedules that we can't always anticipate, so I think it was good that attention was brought to this particular schedule.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, in any event, we wouldn't worry until the spring of their junior year test, right?

MR. NELLHAUS: No, they could do this for any 10th grade test.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: No, I understand that, but time isn't so much of the essence until we get to the fall of their senior year which is the results of the spring test, and hopefully -- we want these appeals to be looked at in sort of a first semester of their senior year, that's our guess. I mean, if we go all the way to the focused retest in their senior year, we're getting close to graduation. And if we get to the spring of their senior year, we're out. So I guess what we need to look at, Jeff, is what our longer range plan, which would now be another year, as to how quickly compositions we'll get back and how quickly they're going to scan them, et cetera. Each year we're going to make gains, but we ought not to have a time limit that's going to, in case Harcourt regresses.

MR. NELLHAUS: What we need to work towards is releasing the individual student results and release the student work at the same time so there is no lag between those two. Everything is optically scanned immediately. It's just a matter of doing all these different things simultaneously and getting them out together, but that would be our goal, to have no lag between the time the results are released and the student work is released.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And aren't we doing 10th grade first or kids who are in the class of 2003 starting? Aren't we doing those first?

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Anyway, I think it's a point to look at. Thank you, James. We don't want to get hung up on a deadline that doesn't make sense.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think in that regard also we ought to think about somehow applying this section of the regulations perhaps a little sooner, in particular now that we have students who have received their scores who know whether they've passed or failed. The item analysis is available, and there may be some scoring anomalies that are out there, and it seems to me we want to encourage people to come forward now and present those anomalies. Anyone should jump in here if this is legally suspect, but if we can begin the process of reviewing those now,

and when the regulations come into effect we can make determinations, I think that would also be --

MR. NELLHAUS: I think this formalizes the process. In fact, we'll do this -- we've done this even in past years. Some schools have brought in some student work and asked us to justify the scorings, so we've done this even before now.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So at least for now we should encourage districts to come forward now, even though the regulations are still just in process. Any other comments or questions on this?

MR. MADDEN: I just want to quickly say what you said about trying to get out now is a very good point, in that it needs to be remembered that this appeal won't be important just for students who might have 216 or 218 on the score. This could be very important for students who are just under the proficient line, more important for students who might have 259 and want a certificate of mastery, because that could mean a lot of money for college. So a scoring miscalculation there could be very important as well.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As luck would have it, I heard from a parent of twins, one of whom scored one point higher than the other. One was in advanced, and the other wound up in proficient. And as twins would be, naturally the one that you'd like to see get a little boost was the one that scored in proficient, and the one that doesn't need a boost is the one that just made advanced. That other twin is probably very much looking forward to retaking the test.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only other point I'll make before I'll entertain a motion to try to get these things voted on is that there are some items in here, especially on the eligibility, such as attendance which we've spoken of, participation in the remediation program which we've spoken of. The clock is already running on those items right now, and so the message needs to go out very clearly, and the Commissioner has sent out a letter to all districts confirming this, but we need to reinforce the message here that students who haven't gotten over this bar yet need to be going to school. They need to be participating in the support services that are offered. They need to be doing the work necessary to make it possible for them not only to succeed on the MCAS and hopefully not need an appeal, but in the case that they do need an appeal to make sure that they've met the eligibility requirements. Students who are absent from school now, that's going to create a problem for them when it comes time to appeal if they need it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: If I could just make a couple of quick general comments. I want to make sure the issue is understood. I am frankly tired of hearing "you're lowering the standard." When a recent school committee voted unanimously on a resolution that they were going to continue to give diplomas for the class of 2003, et cetera, I was very clear in our response. First of all, besides the fact I think it's irresponsible and a disservice to kids, it's against the law. A diploma suggests graduation, and in order to graduate under our law, a student needs to earn a competency determination, but I think it's the words that I chose in talking about what the student has to do in order to earn a competency determination are very important. It's not pass MCAS, and unless you think MCAS is perfect, and I think it's pretty close to it, and it will show, no surprises with the kids that fail. But unless you think it's perfect, then it's much better to say that students will earn a competency determination when

they can demonstrate that they can do 220 work in mathematics and English language arts. That's the standard, and so what happens here is a system that's going to allow those kids who for whatever reason can demonstrate 220 ability but can't do so on MCAS, and so this is a very important distinction to be made.

We have two parts to this policy. One is eligibility which is just a way to get in the door, and that's only important in the sense that it's going to screen, and make sure that people that come in are very legitimate in terms of their effort, in terms of the kinds of things they ought to be doing anyway and showing some potential for being able to demonstrate 220. Once they're in the door, then it's a matter of evidence, and we're going to be very clear on the evidence, and so I want to make sure that that's understood.

With respect to the specific comments that were made, the Chairman raised a couple of very important issues. First of all, I think on the 9th grade work, one of the things that we're trying to do is keep it simpler, and there are a number of kids who for whatever reason perhaps didn't exactly kill themselves in the 9th grade, so we don't want to penalize them. We can again ask the question in the public comment period. I think that's handled by the fact that we ask for other evidence. The superintendent or principal is able to submit other evidence. So if the 9th grade grades are important towards evidence, then they ought to do that. If not, I don't think we should necessarily require it, because it's going to cause people to go back. So I think that's covered, but I'm certainly open on that issue.

With respect to the fact that superintendents ought to clean this out first and not put appeals forward that aren't -- just because they're being pressured by the chairman of the school committee who has a tenth grader or something. I think that hopefully will be handled by the staff. In other words, these appeals are going to come to the panels anonymously, and I believe that staff ought to be hired in this regard. It's very important. We will be presenting packages to the panel by which kids have met the eligibility without question, and then the evidence is also at least somewhat persuasive so that the panel can then make a decision. So I hope that's how we handle the issue of superintendents just passing on. They have a strong responsibility, and I think the staff will see to it that what's coming forward has some validity at least to be looked at with respect to both eligibility, which is a given, and evidence. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I certainly appreciate the discussion. I think there were very good comments. In all of these cases, we made one change, which I think makes sense. If people want to make a couple of other minor ones, that's fine, but I'm anxious to get these out there so we can actually try it out and see how it works.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is there a motion to send out for public comment the regulations as amended?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education , in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, sections 1B and 1D, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, section 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for the**

Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00, as amended. The proposed amendments would establish an MCAS appeals process for score appeals and performance appeals.

The motion was made by Dr. Gill and seconded by Mr. Thomas. The vote was unanimous.

FY 2003 BUDGET PROPOSAL

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is the budget, and I have a couple of things I want to say before we start going into this in greater detail. The first is that we had a meeting of the budget committee which included Rick Crowley, Roberta Schaefer, Charlie Baker and myself, as well as Tony DeLorenzo and Jeff Wulfson of the Department staff. We went over on a line-by-line basis the budget proposal that you have in front of you now, and I thought the process was very good and the contributions made by Board members who participated very significant.

This is a first draft of a budget. The budget process is going to basically have two milestones in front of us here. The first draft of the 2003 budget, and I'll talk about one of the problems in a minute, which is we don't have a 2002 budget -- but next month this will come back to us with any changes that we may discuss here today or that may come up over the course of the next month for approval by this Board. That will then essentially become a recommendation that is put forward which will help inform the Governor in development of her House One Budget Proposal which will come out in January, and then of course the legislative process begins from there. So this is really the beginning of a pretty long process, which as we discovered in this year as in previous years can sometimes stretch on for a year or more. Having said that, some of these things may change. There's opportunity for us to add things, subtract, et cetera.

A couple of more notes by way of background here. The administration has set out some guidelines for the development, or rules may be a stronger word, for the development of budgets among the agencies. For us, we are in the actually favorable position of having a directive to stay within the overall level of growth in the state budget for FY 2003. That had initially been pegged at somewhere around 3 percent. It may not be that much as we get into it. In any event, we are allowed to have some growth, which is the good news. The less good news is that there are certain items in the budget which sort of grow almost by themselves. That's not entirely true, of course, with everything, but they do have a certain mechanism which drives increases that occur year in and year out, which means that in order for us to fully fund those, we have to look elsewhere in the budget to actually cut programs in order to stay within the overall limit. You will see as we go through this that is what we've attempted to do, and those are some of the at least initial choices we tried to make.

As all of this indicates, there's a certain amount of uncertainty right now in the process. As I said, we don't know what the overall level of growth in the budget is going to be. So we don't know if it is 3 percent, 2.7 percent, 2.8 percent, that is unknown, and that translates into real money when you're talking about a $4,000,000,000 budget. Similarly, we don't know what the baseline is. The 2002 budget hasn't been created yet. What you have before you is called FY 2002 provisional budget, is the lower of either the house or senate proposals for 2002. When the conference committee makes its final report and a budget is adopted, these numbers may

change. Nevertheless, at least for our purposes now, we're using them as a baseline, but, again, the baseline might be different. As I indicated, there are mechanisms that produce numbers going forward, and if we fully fund them, that constrains our choices, but those mechanisms are not entirely fixed either. So, for example, a foundation formula which drives Chapter 70 has a number of variables in them which are dependent on other external factors which we don't control. So an example would be the overall inflation rate is figured into that, and if that moves up or down from where we believe it is right now, that can have an impact on our bottom line which again results in us having to make some other choices.

A couple of other big-ticket items that are moving through inertia. There's something on the first page here at 7061-0012. It's called special education residential schools, and then in quotes "circuit breaker." As I think you all are aware, there was a special education reform passed a couple of years ago. Part of that change in reform of special education was to put in place a mechanism for smoothing out some of the spikes in costs the districts have to bear as a result of students coming in with very expensive special education costs or having something happen to them during the course of the year, and also just in general capping the liability of the districts for excessive expenses around special education. This is the so-called circuit breaker component, and that's about $60 million. So that's a big chunk of brand new spending that was not in the budget last year.

And then there's school building assistance, and for school building assistance we have approved as of just actually a few months ago building projects that will receive first payments in FY 2002, that amounts to about $52 million. That's in addition to obviously about 300 or so million dollars that we have been investing in school buildings or did in the past year. So that's another $50,000,000. When you then throw in the Chapter 70 amount which is somewhere in the mid 80s, you see that there's a lot of growth built in here, and therefore a lot of growth that we have to compensate for in order to hold the bottom line. Again, the two main points here is there's a lot of growth built into the budget, and, second, that there's still a lot of uncertainty with exactly what we're dealing with, and therefore the kind of choices we make need to be at least for now considered to be provisional.

Let me go through this budget and identify the main items that reflect positive and negative growth and those areas where we did make some new decisions from a policy or a budgeting standpoint. Chapter 70, which is the first line item here -- I'm not going to go through ever line, but I'll start from the top and work my way down -- goes from a provisional budget figure of $3,168,000,000 to $3,300,000,000, and that, again, is just driven by essentially certain assumptions built within the formula, and we can talk more about that if you want. There are ways to manipulate the formula, to suggest changes in the way the formula operates, so it's not an entirely fixed number. On the other hand, it's certainly within the ballpark.

The third line item, educational services in institutional settings, you'll see that there is about a $5 million increase there, and what we have done is we have moved some money out of the state wards line item into the institutional settings line item to supplement the funds that are available to students in DYS programs, educational programs, to improve the quality of services, to raise salaries of teachers, and to just in general ensure that students within DYS, especially those with special needs, are well served. In the state wards line item, just skipping for a second, since I mentioned it, that we took the remaining funds there and folded them into

the special education residential schools account, and we'll come to that in a second, but the state wards line item goes to zero. It doesn't mean the funds have gone to zero. The funds have been allocated elsewhere, although I think we have taken some savings out of the state wards account, and we can talk about that more later if you'd like.

Again, going down from institutional schools to construction first payments, and there are two line items here, deseg and nondeseg, and we have tried to achieve some pretty significant savings here. The provisional budget includes essentially an authorization for this year of over $50 million in first payments for new construction. The current budget also includes $54 million in authorizations for new projects to be approved during the course of FY 2002, and what we're suggesting here is that instead of approving the full authorization of $54 million that rather we approve $20 million in projects in order to ensure that our first payments for those projects in FY 2003 are within a reasonable limit, and that would fund, as the note says, 2 of the projects off the deseg list and 17 off the nondeseg list.

Going down further, 7061-0012, that's the special education residential schools. We talked about that. We folded in some of the money from state wards, we folded in funds from the abandon children account, and we have taken into account the new circuit breaker liability. Class size reduction which is currently, at least within the '02 budget, a provisional number, $18 million. We recommend going down to $12 million, which is what was in the original House One Proposal that sort of got all this going, which we think is sufficient to meet the needs of the program.

Charter school reimbursement, a few lines down. These are funds that are paid to districts for students who essentially transfer from district schools to charter schools, and the administration and the Board of Education have recommended changes in this reimbursement mechanism for many years, and what we are recommending here is that we provide a reimbursement rate of 33 percent in the first year, going to zero in the second year and beyond, which would reduce the amount from $35 million to $17 million, essentially cutting it in half.

Going down to assessment and accountability, Department auditing and monitoring, there's two and a half million dollars here which actually should be compared to the next line which shows $3.8 million. Without going into too much of the gory detail here, there's a new Office of Educational Quality and Accountability which has been transferring funds to the Department to support its school accountability office, including the charter school accountability work, that amounts to about $2.1 million in the current fiscal year. The suggestion here is to increase that by $400,000 reflecting the increased demand and requirement for more work in the accountability area, but also to make it a separate line item so that these funds don't have to be transferred from this new office. There would also be an additional appropriation that will need to be made to this new office, but that would be outside the Department of Education's budget.

Office of Academic Affairs, we're recommending $250,000. We've recommended something similar to this repeatedly, have not gotten it, but we're hoping we'll get it this year. Student assessment, obviously this is primarily related to MCAS, going from $23.7 million to $27.5 million, which reflects the fact that we're doing more testing and there's still more developmental work that needs to be done. MCAS low scoring support, this is the remediation

account. A couple of things here. One is we're increasing the amount from $40 million to $45 million, which would include among other things incorporating the Governor's Extra Help Guarantee in the 2003 budget. We also add in the after-school accounts which we attempted to do I think at least in part last year. This does not mean that the after-school accounts go away or become MCAS remediation accounts. This is just intended to give us somewhat more flexibility in the allocation of resources as well as simplifying our overall budgeting process.

Certificate of occupational proficiency, this is a reasonably small issue dollar wise but a big issue policy wise. We're recommending $600,000 in order to support the development of certificates of occupational proficiency and the standards that go along with them.

Under the categorical grant programs, and this is fourth down. Actually, there are two that are related, magnet education and equal education. This is Chapter 636. These are funds which relate to desegregation programs, and what we've suggested here, and this is similar to what we've tried to do in the past, is that originally the Chapter 636 funds were intended to provide infusion of cash into low income, largely urban districts that were participating in the desegregation efforts twenty years ago and even longer. Those funds have continued to be in use, really for two purposes. I don't want to oversimplify, but two basic purposes. One is academic enrichment programs or cultural programs, and two is to support the infrastructure of parent information centers. Through the development of the Chapter 70 accounts and the foundation formula, I think there has been a very conscious effort to redirect resources to those districts that had been getting the infusion of funding through Chapter 636, and therefore there's a certain redundancy built into the program. However, maintaining the infrastructure for the parent information centers and the school choice remains an important obligation of the state. So what we're suggesting is the magnet education account of $4.8 million be retained to fund the parent information centers, and that we reduce or we cut the equal education component of this.

Jumping down a few lines, kindergarten development grants. This, it turns out, is a big item. And as with any of these, it's not necessarily an easy choice to make, but this is a $27 million item which we are suggesting go to zero in the next fiscal year. And you will notice you have available to you a description of all the various line items that are before you in the budget, and the description here says, "This account funds kindergarten development grants to continue quality enhancement of existing full-day kindergarten classrooms and to encourage the transition of half-day classrooms into full-day kindergarten classrooms." Two things. One is obviously improving the quality of kindergarten as well as improving the quality of any grade level is certainly something that we support and encourage, but having it as a separate line item, a separate revenue stream funding specifically grants to kindergarten improvements while important under normal times may not be as important under the times of fiscal constraint, if not crisis, that we're operating under. The second is to encourage the transition of half-day to full-day classrooms. Chapter 70 or the foundation formula itself is designed to do just that. So that schools that operate full-day kindergartens are reimbursed or are provided with resources that match that full-day investment, and therefore to some extent I think this line item is redundant of the investment that's already being made through Chapter 70.

There are two other new programs, home-based parenting and early intervention tutorial literacy, $6 million in total, which the recommendation here is to cut to zero. Again, it's not

necessarily a reflection on the goodness or badness of the programs as it is a reflection of the fact that we have some hard choices to make. Adult learning centers, this is adult basic education, and this is recommended to go from essentially $30 million to $35 million and reflects an overall recognition that there is a very large literacy gap among the adult community and that there are very long waiting lists that have not been addressed that we need to begin to make a dent in.

Finally on the last page, school finance program, $750,000. This is here essentially to support the additional work that we need to take on to operate the school building assistance program which now requires the Department to do a lot more due diligence and a lot more evaluation of the projects that come before us. That is a very quick rundown of the major changes. There are smaller changes that have been made here that we can talk about, but I would now sort of open it up to any questions or comments either that committee members have or that Board members might have.

DR. THERNSTROM: So if you look -- for instance, I'm just arbitrarily picking a program that's gone to zero. On your home-based parenting, for instance, which has had $3 million. Now, I assume that $3 million has, however, not been entirely spent at this point, that program is ongoing, is that correct? Are you basing your judgment in part on any kind of evaluation of the efficacy of such or the lack of an evaluation?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, in this case, I don't know if any funds have been released. I would guess probably some of them have.

MR. DeLORENZO: Most, if not all have been awarded.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: They've been awarded. Have the funds actually been released at this point?

MR. DeLORENZO: We're working even though there is no budget. The cash is being awarded to the agencies, grants are being made, and payments are being made.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But these are first time grants, so obviously we don't know in terms of efficacy or other criteria whether this is a good investment.

DR. THERNSTROM: But, in effect, we continue to fund them because the $3 million is There?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For 2002, which is the current year. The question for us is 2003.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So the direct answer to your question is, if you zero it out, there won't be any money being spent after July 1st. It will be spent between now and June 30th, and then it will end. It will become a one-year program, that's correct.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, there won't be any new money.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Correct, but it isn't like we're stopping it without advanced warning.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, and it isn't like they will necessarily have gone through the $3 million?

MR. DeLORENZO: They will have to spend the state money by June 30th.

DR. THERNSTROM: They will have to spend it of course. Yes, I'm sorry.

MR. BAKER: The legislature could still zero this too.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: : In 2003, that is quite possible.

MR. BAKER: In 2002, right now.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I mean 2002. That is possible that it would result in some scrambling, I suppose, but that would probably occur in the Department. But, yes, that's important to remember, that the 2002 numbers, while a good guess, things are changing, and it could end up being lower. Actually, in looking at the sheet, this was funded at $2 million in 2000, $0 in 2001, and may be funded again in 2002.

MR. THOMAS: Mr. Chairman, could you give me a couple more bars on the equal education line and the rationale for the elimination? It's a hard call.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, A) it's a hard call. B) It is one that we have actually tried to make several times in at least the last two years. I'm not sure if it goes back beyond that. But, again, I think this is a vestige of the days when state resources were not allocated on a need basis, and therefore resulted in a lot of urban districts not getting the kind of resources that they deserved given the challenges they were faced with. Chapter 70, and the foundation formula in particular, have been redesigned obviously over the last eight or nine years to specifically take that into account, and so there have been a lot of additional resources that have poured into urban districts, and while there are certainly cases to be made that they can use more, the view was that this vehicle in particular was not the best means of providing urban districts with additional resources.

MR. THOMAS: So the thinking of the committee is that if Chapter 70 is working properly, that it would accommodate the needs that this money addresses?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's correct.

MR. THOMAS: Were there any points of opposition?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There wasn't a whole lot of contention on this particular issue. Again, it has come before the Board, again, three times, and we've taken the same position on it. There is contention among others to be sure, and we'll probably start hearing from them next month. This is up for discussion. We're going to have a vote on this in at our November meeting.

There are changes that will inevitably occur between now and then as whatever information we start to get about the 2002 budget becomes clearer, as other runs of the foundation formula change the numbers, as some other items come into clearer focus. Nevertheless, this is a starting point for our conversations for your consideration, and you ought to be in communication with the Commissioner, myself, other members of the budget committee or whomever if you've got ideas for things we ought to do differently than they've been presented here today.

MR. BAKER: The one thing I would say has somebody who has been through this drill before, there's no way we'll get out of this process without doing some things we don't want to do, no way. We should just assume that right now.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Tony and I had that conversation this morning. First of all, it's unfortunate we face very difficult times to be sure, but the one thing I have to tell you is the process that the Board has followed and the way people have stepped to the plate is really something. This had been a concern of mine for a long time which is that we start the budget process basically at the beginning of the year, and we've always wanted to be able to work with the administration and with really knowledge and the public so that we're making recommendations that are logical, et cetera, and it just has never worked. This year it's worked, and I want to thank Jim Peyser. I think he's been the key, and he has stepped forward. These are not easy times. And I remind educators that we are very fortunate thus far in the way we've been treated. This is a very difficult time for the Commonwealth, really unprecedented. We knew a recession was coming, but no one ever anticipated this kind of problem, a $1.1 billion deficit and growing perhaps. So these are very difficult times. We're doing the best we can. Everybody is making a Herculean effort to protect education, public safety, and health services, and I hope people understand just how well we've been treated. Even though there will be complaints about this line item and that, it may get worse before it gets better. So I want to thank Jim first of all for stepping forward. The subcommittee did a tremendous job. Tony and Jeff reported to me it was a tremendous meeting of focusing on issues. And I want to thank Heather Spence who's here in the audience from administration finance who's worked with us.

We're doing our best, and there are going to be some tough decisions. I think the fact that we've added in certain places is a reflection of the right thing to do. There are certain areas that we need to make progress. As tough as it's going to be, I think there's just a lot of kudos to, particularly to you, Jim, for stepping forward and presenting what's a very reasonable package given the realities of what we deal with. We're just going to have to see what happens. And Charlie's admonition is right, not only on FY '02 but FY '03. So, tough times, but certainly this Board has stepped forward and done a great job.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I also want to thank Jeff and Tony. Tony has been working around the clock, and it's been tremendous. Thank you, Tony.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I agree. Thank you both.

RECOMMENDED STARDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY - Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item is recommended standards for instructional technology, and these are standards that we've seen before and are now coming back for a final consideration.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We're going to be very brief. Connie Louie, who is coming forward with Sandra Stotsky, obviously is our point person with schools and school districts. She's the epitome of a state employee. You ask any district, they know Connie, and conversely she knows most of the tech directors in all of our cities and towns. I don't think we need to add much. I think these standards are challenging but attainable, as are all our standards and assessment, and I wanted to thank you, and I think Connie primarily just wants to present in a visual way how these standards come to life.

MS. LOUIE: Before I start, Sandy would like to give a history of how these standards have been developed.

MS. STOTSKY: Just for the information for those who aren't familiar with where these standards came from, I just wanted to review in exactly 25 seconds the fact that these standards were appendices in original standards documents that we had from '95, '96, and '97. There was an appendix in each one of them. And these were recommended or optional standards because the regulations simply say the Board may choose to develop these. So they were pulled out of all of these original standards documents, and Connie and her staff have pulled them together as a separate set of recommended instructional technology standards, so that's where they originated from.

MS. LOUIE: After the May meeting, we posted the draft on the Internet and got input and comment from schools and the public, and we went around to do workshops with schools and the summer institutes to get input from the teachers. Almost all the teachers agreed that students learn best their standards by incorporating into the regular curriculum, and all of them liked the three examples that we gave in the document. So now I'd like to share with you more integrated learning scenarios that we have gathered in the past few years and see how teachers are learning those standards, and our operation staff is helping us to show you on the monitors. So you don't have to move, stay and enjoy your coffee and look at the scenarios by our teachers.

Those are just some of the examples that we have gathered through our lighthouse grant project a few years ago, and we plan to use federal money to continue these kind of lighthouse projects to share with teachers how they can use technologies to teach technologies and also teach curriculum.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you very much. The only thing I'd add, I guess, is that I think the work you've done, both what we've just seen there as well as what's in the standards around the development of the learning scenarios, is very important work, again just stealing the Commissioner's lingo here, trying to bring the frameworks to life. Also, I'd just, sort of harking back to the Achieve report, they indicated that's a place where we need to do more

work in the other parts of the framework as well. I think we may have learned some lessons here about how to do that better, how to present it in a way that the teachers can access and use more quickly than perhaps just on the printed page. So, anyway, I think there's a lot that you've done here not just in the standards but also in the communication of them that might be very helpful not only for these standards but for the others as well. So, good work. Thank you. Are there other questions or comments that any members might have concerning the standards? Is there a motion to approve them?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with Chapter 69, Section 1D of the General Laws, adopt the revised Recommended PreK-12 Instructional Technology Standards and direct the Commissioner to distribute copies to the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities for their information, and public schools on other interested parties throughout the commonwealth for use in improving curriculum and instruction.**

Further, that the Board extend its appreciation to the Department and to the many individuals and groups statewide that helped to develop the Recommended PreK-12 Instructional Technology Standards.

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thanks, Connie.

STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP GRANT - Discussion

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item concerns the Commonwealth School Leadership Project.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you. Ann Duffy is coming forward. Just to remind members, we were one of 15 states that was successful in competing for a DeWitt-Wallace grant sponsored by a number of national organizations, including the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Governors Association, your NASBE, et cetera, and we have a number of groups internally. Senator Antonioni and the Governor are leading the advisory committee. We had the state associations, superintendents' association, elementary principals, school committees, and Future Management Systems is our consultant, and we have representatives here from that. So we wanted to give you a quick update on what we're trying to accomplish, and it will be brief, but I think it's important for you to know. Obviously this is a huge area of concern -- where are we going to get our future superintendents and principals, how are we going to train them, et cetera, so.

MS. DUFFY: This is actually a project that's been underway for about a year initiated by the addition of $10 million to the teacher quality endowment, so we have a little bit of operating money internally, and the addition of the grant puts us in a position to really bring all the players to the table and focus on some of the larger policy issues that

are at stake. The primary work that we're looking to do both internal in the Department and across the Commonwealth is to address some of the infrastructure issues, what is the actual job that administrators have in schools and what's the delivery system to ensure that they get the professional development they need when they need it.

Specifically, the Board has already taken a number of actions that put us in a position to do this. The new licensure regulations require mentoring and induction for all beginning teachers, teachers and administrators, so we need to be sure that we can provide that service. The new preparation program standards under the licensure regulations sets new expectations for the quality of preparation and the degree of preparation for folks before they enter, and so we have a lot of work to do to bring current programs in line with those standards and provide technical assistance to new programs that are coming online. And finally, the work we've done in teacher quality has really set a standard for what's possible with administrators and school leaders. How can we recruit folks from other professions into positions, how can we help schools integrate those candidates into new positions, and most importantly what incentives can we put in place to draw the best possible candidates into these positions?

In the overview that you have before you, you can see some of the very specific projects and goals that we've set for ourselves this year. We will be working directly with 20 school districts as well as the associations, as David mentioned, to be sure that we have systems in place to address needs as well as identify needs of our current administrators. The most important philosophy that we're coming to this project with is a philosophy of district-based succession planning, helping districts figure out what leadership they need, when they need it, and how are they going to get it. Help identifying internal leadership positions, identifying different kinds of leadership positions, and ensuring that they have the resources to keep the best leaders for the long-term for their school districts.

As the Commissioner mentioned, there is a steering committee that will be meeting in the next six weeks to take a look at some of the larger policies issues which I imagine will be back at you in the future. So this is an update for you to make sure we're on track. This is one of the key priority areas for the Board over the coming year, so I want to be sure we're doing it the right way.

DR. GILL: Ann, how are you working with the higher education institutions, please?

MS. DUFFY: Thank you. Two things, very tangibly. Bill Dandridge is serving on the steering committee from Lesley University and we will be actually coming back to you to identify a public college or university representative. The very tangible work that we're doing is around the issue of preparation and partnership with districts. The administrator preparation programs which exist across the Commonwealth have a lot of great things that are happening that we need to begin to bring together and highlight and ensure that those preparation programs are actually in line and able to meet the new standards that the Board has set, and so we've begun a series of meetings with the deans of education around that issue, and we've begun meetings with a number of innovative pilot programs that have been funded by the Department through Goals 2000 money for the past couple of years, and the key for us in that is making sure we have a good evaluation system in place to inform the development of new programs, so those two areas.

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT - Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item is the approval of some grants. If I'm not mistaken, there are about 36 of them totaling about a million and a half dollars. Anything in particular to note on this, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: No, not really, except that has been said we're looking very careful at that those grants that have not been disseminated as yet this year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me just ask you that question, is there any sort of hold on the approval of additional grants? Let's start with the process for making sure the pipeline doesn't somehow get out ahead of the budget --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, that's what we've done. We've held them at this point. Obviously there's are certain programs, like the academic support services that has been released a certain amount of money, but we now recognize that with all that's going on we need to look very carefully and even at FY '02. So we're being very careful about any just dissemination of money at this point.

MR. THOMAS: Does this include the dissemination grants?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes, we're treating them all in a block.

MR. THOMAS: I'd like to for the record recuse myself from voting in that I'm on a board that is the potential recipient.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

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

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

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you. With that, the grants are approved unanimously with one recusal. With that, I think we've completed the business portion of the agenda. I will note, as I'm sure you already have, that there are some materials here, including the Achieve report, and a summary of some initial findings concerning the middle school math initiative which are worth reading. Our next meeting, as I indicated at the outset, will be somewhere else, yet to be determined. Is it fair to say that --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This is the one that's central, right?

MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes. Central Massachusetts, November 27th.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So somewhere in Central Massachusetts. Do we have a sense for when we might actually settle on a place?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Within a couple of weeks. We might want to take a little gander at the MCAS scores.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes. There will be plenty of good news stories, and hopefully we can choose a school to go to that will be a particularly good one. Anyway, unless there is any other business that somebody would like to raise, we are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.