Minutes of the Regular Meeting

**of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**September 10, 2008**

**9:15 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.**

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**350 Main Street**

**Malden, Massachusetts**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**Andrew “AJ” Fajnzylber**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline

**Thomas E. Fortmann**, Lexington

**Beverly Holmes**, Springfield

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

**Paul Reville**, Secretary of Education, Worcester

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Sandra L. Stotsky**, Brookline

Chair Maura Banta called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

# Comments from the Chair

Chair Maura Banta welcomed Board members to the September meeting, which serves as the Board’s annual meeting. She noted that this was her first meeting as chair, and said she was very excited about the body of work before the Board. Chair Banta said the Board’s August 11, 2008 retreat allowed members to get to know one another better, while also allowing for a thoughtful discussion of the Readiness agenda and the Department’s goals and priorities.

Chair Banta said the annual meeting of the Board is the time that it elects a vice chair, and invited members to nominate themselves or another member. Board member Ruth Kaplan nominated Harneen Chernow as vice chair, and her motion was seconded. Ms. Kaplan said that she has been impressed with Ms. Chernow’s ability to synthesize information, to be fair minded, to act as a mentor, and to lead. Hearing no other nominations, the chair called for a vote.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect Harneen Chernow as vice chair during the 2008-2009 session.**

The vote was unanimous.

Chair Banta announced her appointment of Board members Tom Fortmann, Gerald Chertavian, and Jeff Howard to the budget committee. The budget committee, which also includes the chair and the commissioner, is charged with developing recommendations to the full Board for a maintenance budget and a more aspirational budget for the Department for FY2010.

The chair congratulated Commissioner Chester on his appointment to an advisory group of the National Governors’ Association and Achieve to work on benchmarking K-12 standards. The chair also said she attended and was very impressed with the public forum of the 21st Century Skills Task Force, and thanked Board members Chertavian (who serves as the task force chairman), Chernow, Fortmann, and AJ Fajnzylber for their contributions to the process.

Chair Banta reminded members that following today’s regular meeting, the Board will host a luncheon to honor former Board chair and member Christopher Anderson.

# Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester welcomed Chair Banta to her first meeting, and congratulated Board member Chernow on her election as vice chair. The Commissioner said he was pleased to have been able to attend a very positive opening day for teachers in the Randolph Public Schools. He said he offered comments to the faculty on the challenges and opportunities the district and community face, and noted that the Department would continue to be involved in Randolph as it implements its turnaround plan.

The commissioner announced that Massachusetts is one of only six states to be named to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) honor roll of asthma and allergy policies for schools. The commissioner recognized the work of Associate Commissioner John Bynoe, Nutrition, Health, and Safety Services Administrator Katie Millett, and the entire unit staff for their work that led to this award.

Commissioner Chester said that the Board will meet on the evening prior to its next regular meeting in October to continue its discussion of the system of accountability and assistance. The commissioner said that the finishing touches are being made to the Board’s annual report, and that members would get a copy shortly.

The commissioner noted that in April 2007 the Board amended the educator licensure regulations to strengthen preparation and licensing of elementary and special education teachers to teach mathematics. These changes are reflected in the Massachusetts Tests of Educator Licensure (MTEL) by means of a revised general curriculum test with a separately scored mathematics subtest. The test contractor recently posted a practice general curriculum mathematics subtest. Commissioner Chester said he would bring more information to the Board after the new MTEL test becomes operational in March 2009.

The commissioner reported that the Department is developing standards of professional practice for school and district leaders as part of a review and strengthening of professional standards for administrators. The commissioner also said the Wallace Foundation would be holding a national forum on leadership in Boston on November 6-7, and that Board members might be interested to attend.

Commissioner Chester reviewed the Other Items for Information section of the Board packet. Under Tab 12, the Commissioner noted that the process that will result in the award of a new MCAS testing contract is underway. The commissioner said that thanks to feedback the Department received from the field this summer, the proposal will emphasize timelier reporting of MCAS results, a reduction in the amount of testing time, and results that are tracked to the progress of students from year to year. The commissioner said these areas would be highlighted in the proposal along with the inclusion of classroom-embedded assessments.

The commissioner noted the information on the latest round of SAT results, provided under Tab 14. Commissioner Chester said at a time when SAT results nationally were static, Massachusetts saw a strong increase across the board. He said the results were a tribute to the work of educators across the Commonwealth, but also noted that the results provide sobering information on gaps in achievement based on race/ethnicity.

# Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta asked Board members and 21st Century Skills Task Force chairman Chertavian to say a few words about the task force’s progress. Mr. Chertavian said the task force has made good progress toward its goal of putting together a series of recommendations into a white paper to present to the Board in November. He said the task force has assembled twenty individuals, who are working in four subgroups: Standards and Workforce Development; Assessment and Accountability; Curriculum Development, Instruction, and Learning Environments; and Teacher Preparation and Professional Development. Mr. Chertavian thanked Commissioner Chester, Secretary Paul Reville, and Heidi Guarino for their time, input, and support.

# Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Reville congratulated Chair Banta on assuming the chair, and expressed his and the Governor’s deep thanks to her for her service and commitment. The Secretary congratulated Ms. Chernow on her election as Vice Chair. Secretary Reville said he has been working hard at building the Executive Office of Education, and introduced two new members of his staff in attendance: J.D. LaRock, policy director, and Nick Martinelli, general counsel. He added that Bill Dandridge will join the EOE staff as a senior policy advisor. The Secretary said he has been on a number of visits to schools. Secretary Reville provided an update on the work to implement the Governor’s Readiness education action agenda. He listed several items that were high on the priority list, including Zero to 3, Universal Pre-K, Readiness Schools, Expanded Learning Time, Readiness Centers, dual enrollment, college credit transfer, free community college, and regional consolidation and collaboration.

Chair Banta congratulated Secretary Reville on his new staff members and thanked him for describing the priorities of the Executive Office of Education.

Board member Ruth Kaplan asked the Secretary for an update on the group formed to study financing. The secretary said the Readiness Finance Commission held its first meeting last Monday. He said the commission’s focus will be on cost savings and what revenue mechanisms will be necessary to provide adequate support for schools to achieve the vision of the Readiness project.

Chair Banta welcomed Board member Beverly Holmes to her inaugural meeting.

# Comments from the Public

* John Arnold, a parent and small business owner, addressed the Board on school libraries.

# Approval of the Minutes

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the June 25, 2008 regular meeting and the August 11, 2008 special meeting.**

The vote was unanimous.

# Process and Timelines for FY2010 Budget

Commissioner Chester provided Board members with an anticipated calendar of the state budget cycle. Secretary Reville said this is a new process for everyone and he plans to present a unified budget for education to the Governor. He said it is the role of the Secretary to review the budgets proposed by each agency before he prepares a unified education budget for the Governor, and to stay in close touch with the commissioners of early education and care, elementary and secondary education, and higher education throughout the budget process.

Secretary Reville said he would inform members of the budget hearing dates when they are available. Associate Commissioner for Administration and Finance Tony DeLorenzo responded to questions about spending plans. Secretary Reville noted that the Governor may have to make “9C cuts” in this year’s budget.

Board member Jeff Howard asked about the process for developing priorities for the expansion budget. Commissioner Chester said he will discuss priorities with the Board’s budget committee, and then will present recommendations to the full Board.

# MCAS Performance Appeals

The Board voted to amend the MCAS Performance Appeals Regulations, [603 CMR 30.05](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr30.html?section=05), to make available a performance appeal for eligible students with respect to the high school Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) MCAS tests. The performance appeals process does not change the graduation requirement in STE, nor does it change the performance criteria that students must meet.

Commissioner Chester thanked Board members Jeff Howard, Ruth Kaplan, and AJ Fajnzylber, who served on a working group this summer to review the current eligibility requirements for performance appeals in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, and then discuss how those requirements might be adapted to incorporate STE into the appeals process. The working group recommended that students should be able to file an appeal in STE after taking one test and not passing. Students must also meet two additional eligibility requirements in order to file an MCAS performance appeal in STE: (1) they must meet the same 95 percent attendance requirement that applies to ELA and Mathematics; and (2) they must be enrolled in a science course during the year in which an appeal in STE is filed. The Board agreed that for this year only, superintendents may file appeals for students in STE who failed the test but who are not currently enrolled in a science course, since those students did not have notice of the additional course-taking requirement before scheduling their courses.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus said that an appeal is not a waiver, but an alternate route to demonstrate that a student has met the standard. He said there are two steps to the appeals process. First, students must meet the eligibility criteria for an appeal, and second, students must demonstrate whether they have met the standard or not. The deputy commissioner said the process used to determine whether a student has met the standard in STE is the same process used for MCAS appeals in ELA and mathematics.

General Counsel Rhoda Schneider said the Board has the authority to adopt regulations, and the standard route is to take an initial vote and put the amendments out for public comment and then come back to take a final vote. General Counsel Schneider said that emergency regulations may also be adopted in cases where the public will benefit from the Board taking action earlier. Emergency regulations expire in three months unless they go through public comment and the Board takes a final vote on them.

Vice Chair Chernow said she is supportive of the Commissioner’s recommendation that the emergency regulations be adopted. She asked whether appeals are filed automatically if students meet the eligibility criteria, and how many appeals are granted and denied. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said that most students meet the Competency Determination standard through the MCAS testing process, and that fewer than one percent of students use the appeals process. He said that anyone can initiate an appeal, but appeals must be filed by superintendents.

Board member Fortmann said he too supports this recommendation and the 95 percent attendance requirement. He asked how many appeals have been denied. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said that in the first year of appeals, about half of those submitted were granted. He said now roughly 70-80 percent are granted, which reflects superintendents’ familiarity with the standards for granting an appeal.

Secretary Reville said this is a modification to the eligibility requirement rather than a modification to the standard, and that students must prove that they have the competency in the subject matter of the appeal.

Board member Kaplan said the working group, on which she served, had a very productive discussion about the appeals process. Ms. Kaplan recommended that students who did not pass an STE test and who are not currently enrolled in a science course should be exempted from the requirement to enroll in a science course during the year of the appeal, since they were unaware of this requirement. Commissioner Chester agreed.

Board member AJ Fajnzylber noted that the current regulations require three test attempts for ELA and mathematics, while an appeal in science would require one test attempt before an appeal could be filed. He suggested a future discussion around the number of test attempts that students must complete in ELA and mathematics to be eligible to appeal in those subjects.

Commissioner Chester said there is growing evidence that the Commonwealth’s assessment system has paid huge dividends. The commissioner cautioned against backing away from the commitment to ensure that a high school diploma has real meaning. The commissioner said ELA and mathematics are cumulative and rely on a body of knowledge developed over time, while the science and technology/engineering MCAS tests are based on a one-year course. Secretary Reville agreed that the Board should hold to the current eligibility requirements for MCAS appeals in ELA and mathematics.

Vice Chair Chernow noted that she serves on the assessment subcommittee of the 21st Century Skills Task Force and suggested that the Board may want to engage in a longer discussion on assessment and MCAS in the future.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, §§ 1B and 1D, hereby amend the Regulations on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00 (section 30.05), as presented by the Commissioner. The amendments concern procedures for MCAS performance appeals for Science and Technology/Engineering.**

**Further, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the Board finds that the immediate adoption of these regulations is necessary for the preservation of the public welfare, in order to implement the new provisions starting in September 2008 for the benefit of eligible students, and that observance of the requirements of prior notice and public comment would be contrary to the public interest. The Board directs the Commissioner to provide notice and an opportunity for public comment on the emergency regulations, in accordance with the requirements of G.L. c. 30A, § 3, within the next three months.**

The vote was unanimous.

The Department will invite public comment on the amendments through October 31 and then bring them back to the Board at the November meeting for a final vote.

# Advisory Council Appointments and Approvals

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established advisory councils to advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters related to improving public education and student achievement. The advisory councils are made up of volunteers who work with the agency to improve public education by providing advice and comment in specific program areas such as Adult Basic Education, Arts Education, Community Service Learning, Educational Personnel, Educational Technology, English Language Learners/Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Global Education, Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services, Life Skills Management, Mathematics-Science Education, Parent and Community Education and Involvement, Racial Imbalance, Special Education, and Technology-Engineering Education.

Commissioner Chester presented to Board members a list of proposed appointments and reappointments to the various advisory councils. The Board will vote on the appointments at its October meeting. The commissioner noted that a meeting of all advisory councils would take place on November 3, 2008 at Holy Cross College. The commissioner also encouraged Board members to forward their recommendations of any additional individuals to consider for membership on one of the advisory councils.

Mr. Fajnzylber suggested that a student be added to the vocational technical advisory council.

Ms. Holmes asked when and where meetings will be held. Commissioner Chester said that meetings are scheduled according to each council, and the Department will distribute those schedules to Board members.

Dr. Mohler-Faria asked whether candidates were interviewed. The commissioner said there were no direct interviews, but rather a paper review to look for a balance across the complete membership. Ms. Kaplan asked whether the Board would hear from some of these advisory councils beyond receiving their annual reports. Chair Banta said as policy matters come up on the Board’s agenda, we could seek advice from the relevant council(s).

Mr. Chertavian asked how and whether the advisory councils are working well with the Department. Commissioner Chester said this is uneven from one advisory council to another, and we need to be more strategic to tap into the expertise of the advisory councils. Board member Howard suggested that the councils be charged to advise on addressing the achievement gaps in student performance. Dr. Fortmann added that he would like to hear from the math and science council relating to its report on professional development.

# Charter Schools

The commissioner presented to the Board charter amendments related to a request from Phoenix Charter Academy (region served and location of facility), an extended loan term requested by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, and an extended loan term and an amendment related to management contract requested by SABIS International Charter School. Under the charter school statute, a charter school may incur temporary debt in anticipation of receipt of funds, but it requires approval of the Board if it wishes to agree to repayment terms that exceed the duration of the school’s charter. The Commonwealth has no liability for any portion of these loans.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General laws chapter 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to Phoenix Charter Academy (region and location of facility) as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89(j)(6), approve the request of the Board of Trustees of the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School to enter into proposed loan agreements that extend beyond the term of the school’s current charter and are not to exceed forty years. The Board’s approval is explicitly conditioned upon the inclusion of the language that follows in all of the loan agreements, as executed by the schools and their lenders.**

**The [parties] explicitly acknowledge and agree that the Commonwealth, including but not limited to the Board and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, has no liability for any portion of the loans and provides no representations or guarantees with respect to these loans. Furthermore, the [parties] explicitly acknowledge and agree that the Board’s approval has no impact on any action the Board may choose to take in the future with respect to probation, revocation, or renewal of the school’s charter.**

The vote was unanimous.

Vice Chair Chernow raised a concern with regard to the motion to change the management contract for SABIS International Charter School, and questioned why a public school is making a profit. Associate Commissioner of School Finance Jeff Wulfson said we expect charter schools to have some operating surplus to pay for facilities and capital improvements and carry over into the next year. This surplus has been part of the compensation for the school’s educational management. Mr. Wulfson said the school would like to retain more of the surplus to help finance acquisition and expansion, rather than pay it to the educational management organization.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89(j)(6), approve the request of the Board of Trustees of the SABIS International Charter School to enter into proposed loan agreements that extend beyond the term of the school’s current charter and are not to exceed thirty years. The Board’s approval is explicitly conditioned upon the inclusion of the language that follows in the loan agreements as executed by the schools and their lenders.**

**The [parties] explicitly acknowledge and agree that the Commonwealth, including but not limited to the Board and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, has no liability for any portion of the loans and provides no representations or guarantees with respect to these loans. Furthermore, the [parties] explicitly acknowledge and agree that the Board’s approval has no impact on any action the Board may choose to take in the future with respect to probation, revocation, or renewal of the school’s charter.**

The vote was unanimous.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00, approve the request of the Board of Trustees of the SABIS International Charter School to amend the management contract between SABIS International Charter School and Springfield Education Management, LLC, as voted on by the Board of Trustees of the SABIS International Charter School on March 19, 2008 and as presented by the Commissioner. Such approval also operates to amend the charter granted to SABIS International Charter School.**

The vote was 8:0:2. Dr. Howard and Ms. Chernow abstained.

Chair Banta said that the Board will consider whether these types of charter school matters should be brought to the Board, or whether this should be delegated to the commissioner. Dr. Fortmann said that the approval of the extended loan terms should be nearly automatic, and he was happy to delegate that to the commissioner. Vice Chair Chernow said she assumes that charter renewals and revocations would remain with the Board. Secretary Reville said he supports the idea of delegating authority to the commissioner and staff in non-policy matters. Chair Banta said she has asked the commissioner to bring a recommendation to the next Board meeting.

# District and School Reviews

Commissioner Chester officially welcomed Karla Brooks Baehr as Deputy Commissioner, and said he was very pleased to have her join the Department’s staff earlier this summer. The commissioner provided Board members with an overview of the legislation that Governor Patrick recently signed into law to move the functions of the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) and its board, the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) to the Department. The commissioner said this legislation will enable the Department to create a more coordinated and effective process for reviewing and assisting school districts. Commissioner Chester said a major shift will be that the Department will look at districts as the entry point, rather than schools.

Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the legislation separates the functions of accountability and assistance, but places them under one senior administrator to promote collaboration and communication. The deputy commissioner also noted the creation of a 15-member advisory council on school and district accountability and assistance. She said the Board’s role includes appointment of advisory council members, receipt of findings and recommendations from the advisory council at least twice per year, establishment of the standards for school and district audits, and review of school and district reports and action on any recommendations from the commissioner.

Secretary Reville said Dr. Baehr is ideally suited to help the Board in this work. The secretary said we have an obligation to be active in the remedy of underperformance, strengthening districts to have the capacity to work with individual schools.

Dr. Mohler-Faria said this is a good move for the Department and for accountability, and presents an opportunity to analyze common characteristics. Dr. Howard said this is a big move, and noted that when he was a member of EMAC, the workload of reviewing individual reports was huge. Dr. Howard asked about the role of the advisory council; who recommends underperforming status; and whether this is where we will address reducing performance gaps.

Dr. Howard suggested there could be a longer conversation about this. Chair Banta said that the Board will continue its discussion of the school and district accountability system at a special meeting on the evening of October 20th. Commissioner Chester said the Board will get more in depth on this topic at that time. Chair Banta thanked Dr. Baehr and said she could think of no one better to head this function.

# Board Mission Statement; Revised Department Goals and Priorities

Chair Banta presented the Board’s mission statement, which was based on a discussion by members at the August 11th retreat and subsequent suggested changes. Ms. Kaplan expressed a concern about having a mission statement, noting that state statutes express the Board’s powers, duties, and mission. Vice Chair Chernow said she was not comfortable with the phrase, “rights and responsibilities of American citizens” because it creates the impression of exclusion, and that instead we should talk about civic engagement. Dr. Fortmann said there was nothing exclusionary about the use of the phrase “understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens.”

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education vote to adopt the following mission statement: “The mission of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is to strengthen the Commonwealth’s public education system so that every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, compete in the global economy, and understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens.”**

The vote was 8:2. Ms. Chernow and Ms. Kaplan voted in opposition.

Commissioner Chester presented the Department’s working goals and priorities. The commissioner distributed a chart of the newly restructured Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to Board members. The commissioner reviewed his reorganization of the Department and discussed the changes in the context of four major goals: educator development, curriculum and instruction, accountability redesign, and supports for students and families.

Ms. Kaplan commended the commissioner for the reorganization materials. She asked why special education was not placed under the new Curriculum and Instruction center. The commissioner said that he had to create a balance to make each unit manageable, and that the work of the special education unit had to be tied to the Curriculum and Instruction center. Ms. Kaplan suggested that the commissioner talk to stakeholders about this reorganization. She asked about recruitment of individuals to the new leadership positions. The commissioner said that in addition to the advertising process, word of mouth and networking would be used as strategies to attract candidates.

Mr. Chertavian said the new organizational chart shows a clear focus. He asked how knowledge would be shared across the functions. Commissioner Chester said this is a real challenge for any large organization, and that it represents a work in progress. The commissioner said he would rely on his two deputies to help him to drive the work.

Secretary Reville said the Board hired the commissioner to work with us to establish a vision, to set goals and priorities, and to build an organization that could deliver on them. He commended the commissioner for his plan.

# Update on National Mathematics Advisory Panel

Chair Banta said that this agenda item would be moved to a future meeting since Board member Sandra Stotsky was unable to attend the meeting.

# Report on State Student Advisory Council Leadership Conference

Board Member AJ Fajnzylber, who serves as the chair of the State Student Advisory Council, gave a brief report on the council’s summer leadership conference. Mr. Fajnzylber said the group spent time on basic leadership skills and on a discussion of the Readiness plan. He said working groups for the coming year might include groups on Readiness, new approaches to school and learning (expanded learning time, 21st Century skills, global competition), school environment (student support, teen pregnancy, dropout, jobs), and teacher and district readiness (students would like to be a part of their teachers’ assessments).

Mr. Fajnzylber said he hopes to present a mid-year update on the council’s work to the Board in the winter.

Chair Banta said she was impressed that the council was not just focusing on students but on teachers as well. In response to a question from Vice Chair Chernow, Mr. Fajnzylber said the council members represent urban and other districts. Ms. Kaplan suggested that members of the Student Advisory Council be invited to speak at a future Board meeting to establish more of a connection with the Board.

# Report on Grants

Commissioner Chester noted that the Board traditionally votes each June to authorize the commissioner to approve grants between the June regular meeting and the next regular Board meeting. The commissioner presented information to the Board on the 272 grants he approved totaling $19,736,062 under 30 different state and federal competitive grant programs. The Board also voted to authorize the commissioner to approve grants between the September 10, 2008 regular meeting and the regular meeting of the Board on October 21, 2008, in order to meet award deadlines applicable to certain funds.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving grants between September 10, 2008 and the regular meeting of the Board on October 21, 2008; provided that the Commissioner shall report to the Board on any grants that have been so approved.**

The vote was unanimous.

Chair Banta asked the commissioner to bring a recommendation to extend the authority of the commissioner to approve grants more generally, with monthly reports to the Board. The chair said this kind of work does not require the direct involvement of the Board. Dr. Fortmann said that he agreed with the idea of delegating grant approvals to the commissioner, and asked whether there should be a dollar threshold.

# New Business

Ms. Kaplan discussed a letter from the Mass. PTA president in opposition to Question #1, a measure to repeal the state’s income tax. She suggested the Board should consider taking a similar stance, and asked that the issue be placed on the next Board agenda.

# Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is scheduled for October 21, 2008 in Holyoke at a site to be determined.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m., subject to the call of the chairman.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board