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Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

Minutes

Monday, December 14, 1998

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members Of The Board Of Education Present: Dr. John Silber, Chairman, Brookline
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice Chairperson, Worcester
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Dr. Stanley Z. Koplik, Boston
Mr. James A. Peyser, Dorchester
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Ms. Rebecca Urbach, Chairperson, Student Advisory Council, Falmouth
Dr. David P. Driscoll,
Commissioner of Education, ad interim

Also Present:
Maryellen Coughlin
Registered Professional Reporter

[At the request of the Chairman, these minutes are verbatim.]

Comments From The Chairman

The Chairman: First, I have met with Jim Carlin concerning the proposal from the Board of Higher Education to the Board of Education in this booklet, " Creating Tomorrow: Preparing for the Next Generation of Teachers." It calls for cooperation between the two Boards. I have asked all members of this Board to submit to me any suggestions they may have with regard to revisions of that document. I'm in the process of incorporating those, and then I will meet with Jim Carlin to see if we can agree on a document that meets the concerns of both Boards so that we can act together. I have no doubt that we will be able to reach agreement on that very shortly. I hope that we can have it put to bed before Christmas so that the document approved by both Boards can be made available. So please let me have any comments that you may have in mind.

Next, with regard to the Commissioner search, we should receive today the reports from the search firm. The analyses he has made and the background information there may be all that's needed. I will pass those out to the members of the preliminary screening committee who will then review them. If they want further additional information, I will ask the search firm to provide it, and then we will have a meeting scheduled sometime for the week following, at which we will review the candidates in a format at a public meeting which will later be announced by the Commissioner. It will follow the public laws. The candidates, probably a list of around ten, will be discussed not by name, but by number, to arrive at a list of finalists who will then be invited for interviews by the committee and by the full Board, by any members of the Board that wish to attend, in a public session, so that we can then reach a final decision.

With regard to the other comments I wish to make, I would like to say how deeply grateful I am, as Chairman of the Board of Education, and I believe I speak for the Board, by the coverage that we have received from the press with regard to the MCAS tests. The Globe and the Herald have given extensive coverage to this process and have been generous in their reporting scores and performances district by district. The Globe has indicated the ten highest and the ten lowest so that the public gets some clear idea about the spectrum of performance that we might have on this test. All of the coverage, including the Worcester Telegram and the Quincy Patriot Ledger and many other regional newspapers, has likewise been very thoughtful, objective and noninflammatory in the discussion of these materials. I think they've substantially advanced the cause of educational reform in the way in which it's been covered. I think that also is true for the television media, that it likewise handled these materials in a way that seems to me quite admirable, and I want to express publicly my appreciation for the contribution that they have made to educational reform.

There is no question that I think the public is now aware of the crisis in education, and it is a genuine crisis. We've known for a long time where we stand in terms of international achievement. At the 4th grade in mathematics, the United States stands 12th in the nations, behind places like Singapore, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Ireland, Hungary, Australia. When it comes to the 8th grade in mathematics, we stand 28th and even below average, behind the countries I've mentioned before and including Thailand and Sweden, Belgium, Canada and so forth, 28th down from the top. In science at the 8th grade, we rank 17th among these world nations, enough to say that we've fallen way behind. Other states that have been giving the test, such as Texas, have been commenting on our testing and saying, you know, you can't expect a hundred percent passage immediately. If you have a test with reasonable standards, you will never expect a hundred percent passage, that's not in the cards if the test is a meaningful test. But we also note, and here I refer to an article in Education Week, that some of these states in giving their test, if they don't like the results, seem to water down the test, and that appears to be the case in Texas which has had increasingly rising scores in which they take great pride. Sandra Stotsky of Harvard University has reviewed the tests, the subsequent series of tests given in Texas, and noted the way in which the test has been lowered in its expectations which naturally should translate into higher scores. I think that the public of Massachusetts need not expect any such watering down of the examinations that this board approves. When we set a benchmark, we will try to maintain that benchmark. And if it appears to be too low, we may raise it in the future, but I don't see the likelihood of our lowering our standards.

I also note, as a part of the crisis in higher education, that the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents in their November bulletin wrote, " The major problem with the MCAS is the interpretation of level two, " needs improvement." Most of the media lumped this category with level one, " failing," to report very high percentages of students not meeting standards." The media haven't made a mistake in this. The media have got it precisely right. " Needs improvement" means exactly what it says, that students are not performing at an adequately high level. They have not achieved proficiency. It is the objective of this Board to see to it that our children in Massachusetts reach the proficient and the advanced level. We don't expect it overnight. We don't expect it immediately or in terms of several years, but certainly that is the message. It would be a real mistake, it seems to me, for school superintendents to believe that all we're going to worry about is the number of persons who fail the test. We're going to be concerned about those students who also need improvement. When one examines the test and sees what kinds of mistakes can be made and still score a student within " needs improvement," they will recognize how far short of adequacy that standard is.

A further example of the crisis in education is found in the efforts toward denial that have appeared in the press or in magazines or newspapers about persons who are educators, such as a dean of a school of education who has written with regard to the teacher certification test that knowing someone's score on a test does not really tell you very much about that person's competency to teach. It certainly doesn't tell you that the person is competent to teach when you find out that they can pass the teacher certification test. But as we have said many times ad nauseam, the failure to pass the test and to demonstrate minimum literacy and minimum performance in the subject matter clearly indicates a person's incompetence to teach. It is a negative test. It is not a positive test. It doesn't demonstrate competency, but it can easily reveal the lack of competency.

We also have denial in this form. Again I quote from a journal article by a dean of a school of education, " Students who took the test were read a passage from the Federalist Papers and had to take dictation to test spelling, etc. Now, this passage is 200 years old. It is not common English." You know, we expect students to read Shakespeare and that's over 300 years old. But let's just look at the passage that's supposed to be 200 years old and not using English of a contemporary sort, using English that is not in common usage. I will just read you a passage. " No one is allowed to be a judge in his own cause because his interest would certainly bias his judgment and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity." Can one find anything arcane or obsolete in that language? Is that language thought to be subtle? We've had statements made that there were 130 subclauses in one of the sentences. There are not 130 clauses in the entire passage. " With equal, no, with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time." This is not only not archaic English, it's not even complicated English. This is very simple language written by well-educated people for common consumption. The Federalist Papers were written so that every average American who was literate at that time, and most of them were, could understand it.

A further example of the crisis in the schools is what I have seen as I have now visited something close to two score of schools. As I have visited the elementary schools, I have seen that 90 percent of the children hold their pencils or their pens like this (indicating), with minimal ability to control the writing. Instead of holding them like this where you have maximum finger dexterity (indicating), they hold them here (indicating), as if the child were suffering from an acute case of arthritis. The failure to teach people how to hold their instrument in kindergarten or the first grade is a sign of the decline in the quality of education in this state, and it's time to do something about it.

When I have looked for writing by students, I can't find writing. I can find printing, usually bad. On rare occasions you can find cursive writing being done. But in both cases, the printing is bad and so is the writing when it's in cursive, with very rare exceptions, such as one or two percent. When I have spoken about this to school principals and superintendents, I have been told, often with pride, " We do not teach handwriting." And one added, " Thank God because I wouldn't pass it myself." That's further evidence of the crisis in education.

Fourth, as I have gone by these schools, I have read the work that is posted on the walls, and a new standard has been developed, never criticize the student's work, never mark the mistakes, don't bother to publish work that is perfect or exemplary, just post on the walls anything that the student does. Presumably that develops their self-esteem. Some of the work that I have observed recently was in a 4th grade class. Posted on the bulletin board at the school was the following statement, " When ice cools, molecules slow down and melt." There's a profound grasp of science contained in that. What conceivably does the student have in mind when the student believes that as ice cools molecules melt? And did somebody teach them that molecules can melt? Another one, " Hitler wanted more land for Germany and Japan and fought for Japan as if it could not do the work." Is that what they teach in history at that school? Another was on the subject of Lincoln's Gettysburg address. Each child was asked to rewrite it in their own words. One said, " Lady's and Gentlemen," L-A-D-Y's, " we're here at a berial ground," B-E-R-I-A-L. Now, when you've gone through the language and you don't expect people to spell correctly, you just expect them to have their own sound system and do the best they can, this is what you get. When I called this to the attention of the superintendent, his response was, " Well, of course there are mistakes. These children have to learn." My response to that is, how are children going to learn when their mistakes are not pointed out? We have to have teachers who know what the mistakes are and know how to correct them. And after the students correct their papers, then of course they can proudly post them.

These are problems that we're going to have to look into if we want to see an improvement in these scores. There are so many things going wrong that there is no reason to despair. When we find that things are going wrong, it is easy to improve them, and that's one of the things we have to have in mind. And there is a great deal that we have been doing to improve things.

The MCAS gave us an effective measuring line. These are diagnostic tests. They are not designed to humiliate any school district or to humiliate any child or any teacher or any principal or any superintendent. They are designed to inform the general public and the parents and the teachers and the superintendents and the school committees of just where they stand so that they have the opportunity to improve. And that's exactly the same purpose of the teacher certification test, and

it's the same purpose of the test that we have given in literacy at the third grade. It's to help people understand where we are so that we can add urgency to the educational reform movement.

We have to recognize in interpreting these scores how different they will be depending upon the school districts involved. It would be totally unfair to compare our urban schools where you have a high rate of poverty and a high percentage of children who speak a foreign language to the same standards that can easily be met by school districts in which there is no poverty and in which there is very little transiency and in which most of the children speak English as their native language. We have school districts, urban school districts, which deviate substantially in this regard from the state average. In the state as a whole, only 28 percent of the students qualify for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. American Indians constitute two-tenths of one percent, Asians 4.1 percent, blacks 8.5 percent and Hispanics 9.7 percent, whites approximately 77.5 percent. That's the average for the state. Statewide only 12.6 percent of the students are not native speakers of English. In our urban schools, we have districts in which the following are the statistics, 78 percent on the free-lunch program, which measures their poverty level. American Indians one-tenth of one percent, Asians 7.7 percent, blacks 7.9 percent, Hispanics 64.7 percent and 17.5 percent white, as opposed to a state average of 77.5 white.

When you see these differences, you see the poverty and you see the percentage of people who have English as a foreign language to learn in the school, we realize the problem we face. Now, there are other districts, the districts that have done the best on this test, in which this would be a typical profile: Asian one percent, Indian tenth of one percent, black eight-tenths of one percent, Hispanic six-tenths of one percent, white 97 percent, way above the state average. And on a lunch program, zero. Not a single child who faces poverty that qualifies them for a free lunch or a reduced lunch. When you have those socioeconomic and cultural differences between systems, any monolithic system of judgment or assessment of the school districts is going to result in a terrible distortion, and it will be totally unfair.

We have to address each school system in terms of the problems it faces. Each must be judged according to the hardships it has to overcome, and we will have to set diverse standards depending upon those factors. In some school districts we've had very happy results already. In one school district, at grade 4, 50 percent were advanced or proficient in English, 71 percent in mathematics, 72 percent in science and technology. At the 8th grade, 84 percent advanced or proficient in English, 72 percent advanced or proficient in mathematics and 56 percent in science and technology. At the 10th grade in that same district, 67 percent advanced or proficient in English, 33 percent failing or needs improvement; 60 percent advanced or proficient in mathematics, 40 percent failing, needs improvement; 45 percent advanced or proficient in science and technology and 55 percent failing or needs improvement. Considering how well that district did at the 4th grade and the 8th grade, we see they have a lot of work that they must do at the high school level.

I believe it will be reasonable for us to propose and set standards of performance for these districts within the next five years. This is something that we will examine as a Board. But for the state average, I believe we can look forward to the time when, perhaps in five years, 10 percent of our students will be scoring at the advanced level, 65 percent at the proficient level, 15 percent at needs improvement and 10 percent at failing. I think we can reach that objective. And if we do, and if we haven't lowered our standards, we will certainly have one of the finest school systems in the nation and, as a matter of fact, in the world. At that point we will be meeting the objectives of the Education Reform Act.

With regard to schools that are particularly favored and that have the profile that I mentioned with no one in poverty and nearly all the students speaking English as their first language, I think we can expect 25 percent advanced, 55 percent proficient, perhaps 12 percent needs improvement and only 5 to 8 percent in the failing category. And in the poor districts, the districts in which we have severe poverty, transience and a large number of students speaking foreign languages, perhaps we can reach the point where there are 5 percent in advanced, 55 percent in proficient and 40 percent that need improvement or are failing. If we can achieve this kind of movement in all of our school programs, we will have brought education reform to a very fine conclusion. I am very optimistic on our ability to do so, but it would be foolish for us to think that it can be done in less than five to ten years. As I have said many times, and this is as this Board has indicated, education reform is the work of a generation. It's not the work of a day or a month or a year. It will take a good deal of time. But I think the media have presented this issue

fairly. They have not tried to frighten anybody. The state of Massachusetts is on notice, the parents are on notice that there are so many things they can do.

One of the things that needs to be done is to recognize now that school committees must negotiate contracts that allow flexibility with regard to teachers' schedules so teachers can be at school in the afternoons when children who have no one at home to help them with homework can be at the schools for study halls. It will be a time when the teachers can do some of their own grading of papers and do some of their own planning of tomorrow's schedule, but they can oversee study halls for children so that they do have a place to do their homework. This could be a requirement for the students who do not do their homework. One of the saddest things that I heard in the past year was statements made by headmasters and principals that children were not doing their homework, and we shake our heads and don't know what to do about it. In fact there are some obvious things to be done about it. It's what used to be done in schools. When a child didn't do the homework, the child stayed after school; that's the easiest, simplest way to make sure that homework is done. And we're going to have to reintroduce some flexibility into our students' schedule so that this can be done, so that children have the alternative of acquiring a good education by the kind of oversight by adults that they so desperately need. If we put our mind to it, there are plenty of solutions to the problems we face. And I am quite confident that having been alerted to the problem, having been alerted clearly to the crisis, we'll get the job done. Thank you.

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, you and I totally agree on the no watering down of standards, although I think you and I would both agree that both the curriculum frameworks and the tests are works in progress. We will be examining them very closely for their validity. But I hope in your distinction between urban and non-urban districts you're not saying that we will water down the standards for the urban kids. That would suggest if you live in Boston, you live in Lowell, you live in Lawrence, well, we can't expect as much from you, of course. We can't expect that you will meet uniformly high standards. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I would rather water down the standards than have double standards. I don't think that is the message we want to deliver as a Board.

One other comment. The search process for the Commissioner that you outlined seems to me a little spare. Maybe I don't understand it correctly, but will we just have one public meeting here in Malden? I think we need to see the candidates with constituent groups and so forth, and I would like to discuss that process further.

The Chairman: I think that one thing we can say about the search process, it is the responsibility of the Board. It's not the responsibility of the public to make that appointment. I do not want the Haydu solution to the problem, where you have a Board of Education that is composed of four superintendents and four teachers and one Commissioner. We have a job to do. It's a leadership job. This Board has the responsibility of selecting the person. And the way in which you select leaders is not by finding out who can please the constituencies the most, but who has the insight and the talent to lead the program.

Dr. Thernstrom: No, I'm not suggesting that the buck doesn't stop on our desk. It does. We learn something about candidates in seeing them in the settings in which they are going to have to function. But I had the other question on the double standards as well.

The Chairman: You don't have a double standard when you find out that some students don't do as well as others. If you're running a football team, you have standards. You suit up in the uniform, and you see how fast you can run the hundred yard dash. Some students run the hundred yard dash in under 10 seconds, and they are eligible to consider serving on the team. Others can't, and they're ruled out immediately on the basis of their lack of speed. It's the same standard, but some make it and some don't. We are not going to have the same percentage of students meeting high standards at the urban districts that we have in the most favored districts, but that doesn't mean the standards are different. The standards will be absolutely uniform. It will be the percentage of students who meet those standards that will vary from one school district to another, and that is inevitable. If we don't want that, then we better take it up with God.

Dr. Thernstrom: That clarifies it. I don't want the bar set at different places in terms of --

The Chairman: No one is talking about doing that. One is talking about a reasonable expectation in terms of passing the test, and it's not going to be reasonable to say that a school district that has 25 percent transience, that has 75 percent of its students coming to school speaking a foreign language and has 70 to 80 percent of its children in poverty is going to have the same performance as a school district in which nearly all of the children are children of very well-educated parents, who were reared in homes in which English was spoken, who have never suffered the ravages of poverty, who have had all sorts of advantages that these other kids have not had. In those districts, a much higher percentage will pass the test. That unfortunately is in the nature of things. And the only way you can avoid that is by having double standards. If you don't have double standards, you're going to have differential rates of success on the examination.

Dr. Thernstrom: I'm totally confused by this, but I think we need to discuss it at some other time.

Comments From The Commissioner

Comm. Driscoll: Before I talk about the MCAS results, there is one item that I'd like to bring to the public's attention: For, I believe, the fourth year in a row we have provided grants to districts under what is known as the foundation reserve account, which is an account set up a few years ago to recognize that school districts may face unusual circumstances during the year and have particular financial needs. This year we had only $4,000,000 to distribute, and we had $20,000,000 worth of requests. So unfortunately there were many more districts that did not receive money, as compared to those that did. I'd like to compliment our staff, particularly Jeff Wulfson, who did a terrific job trying to satisfy the needs given the overwhelming number of requests. The information is out there, and all districts have been notified.

Just a few comments, if I may, on the MCAS results. Sometimes you know something works when it doesn't make the media. One of the concerns a few months ago that I kept hearing from school districts and from parents, for that matter, is what are we doing to prepare people. And I think, since we haven't heard that complaint since the results were announced, it's fair to say that the preparation that was provided was more than adequate. We distributed hard copies of every framework to every single teacher -- which meant, by the way, elementary teachers received four of them -- to every one of the 60,000 teachers in this Commonwealth. Trucks arrived in Worcester, in Springfield, in Fall River, New Bedford. Every teacher in Massachusetts got a hard copy of the frameworks in English language arts, mathematics and science. We developed bridge documents to help translate from the frameworks to an assessment program. We provided state grants for study groups to focus on the learning standards of the frameworks, and more than a thousand study groups were set up all across this Commonwealth as people implemented our frameworks.

We provided 1.4 million copies of " Starting Now," a document developed by Mass. Insight for parents. There were also 300,000 of those little test-yourself booklets. And by the way, the point wasn't to see whether people could answer them correctly; we did give the answer. The point was to help people understand the standards that we expect from students. 81,000 were given out in the toll booths on the Mass. Turnpike. 18,000 were distributed to every employee of Bell Atlantic. Other companies also took the initiative to distribute them, including Talbot's and Stop & Shop and others. Most importantly for schools and school districts, we ran a couple of dozen workshops this fall. Alan Safran and Jeff Nellhaus and his staff did a terrific job getting districts ready for the MCAS program. This Board has seen copies of a number of letters that have come in praising the work. We were able to address more than 3300 administrators throughout the Commonwealth in the workshops, so I do think the preparation was terrific.

What hasn't really been talked about and caused me one of the few sleepless nights that I've had -- I sleep pretty well -- is the scoring, printing and distribution of these millions and millions of pages. I lost sleep on the Friday after Thanksgiving when Xerox Corporation ran all the 4th grade results and they all were smudged. It was over that weekend that we had to back off from the Monday date and rely on Wednesday and Friday. Lo and behold, we did meet that deadline. All of the materials went out.

There have been very few glitches. I think you saw an errata sheet for the Newton Public Schools, and fortunately it wasn't a major issue, but it was something we wanted to correct. We also had a

couple of districts that didn't receive all of the materials and we had to run around. But by and large, 99.9 percent of all of this went out without a hitch. It's a tremendous tribute to all of those that have been involved, and it's something we shouldn't just overlook, because it's the first time we have undertaken anything like this in this Commonwealth. I keep doing this, but I'm going to keep doing it, praise our small handful of staff, led by Jeff Nellhaus and Kit Viator, who have done a tremendous job.

As for the results, I think the Chairman said it very well. I put the charts up over here (indicating). We've talked about it. On the right-hand side, something the Chairman was able to point out at our press conference at the Morse School, you can see very graphically how the results change in the various areas. When you look at the high levels of failure in mathematics, for example, you can see the amount of work we have to do in those areas. I agree with the Chairman, that 75 percent advanced and proficient, and single digits in failure will be the goal five years from now. I'll talk a little bit about that in a moment.

This is tremendous information that we've been able to provide for schools and school districts, and for ourselves, for that matter. I'm very heartened that schools and school districts did a tremendous job, not only throughout the whole testing program -- they grumbled a lot but they did it -- but also in the way they've handled this and distributed the materials and set up public meetings and task forces and so forth. Now, that's very heartening to me because I truly believe we're going to be able to approach those goals in five years. Not every school -- we know the ones that have a long way to go. But we're looking for great improvement even there. And by and large, I think many schools can meet our goals.

I used this one example, and it's a good example because it shows the gap between the standards that we should be able to reasonably expect of our students and where they are performing today. We were at the Morse School in Cambridge, and they scored better than the state average right across the board. They also have a high percentage of low income students, much higher than Cambridge itself let alone the state. But if we look at this example on the left-hand side, which is an 8th grade math question, it talks about a population of Boston of 574,000, and a state-wide population of 6,000,000, and students are asked to answer on a multiple-choice basis what percentage Boston would be of the entire state, 574,000 to 6,000,000. The answers that were given, 10, 20, 30, 40 percent, to me make the problem that much simpler. It is, from my perspective, a question that we should expect most of our students to be able to handle easily at the 8th grade level. And yet 72 percent of the students across Massachusetts got this question wrong.

That's an indication of the work we have to do just in basic mathematics. As the Chairman pointed out, in mathematics at the 8th grade level, we have a long way to go. Incidentally, we divided the math test into two parts, one part where they can use a calculator and one part where they can't, so that they know how to use a calculator as a tool but not as a crutch. On this particular question they were not allowed to use a calculator. But again, I think 574,000 to 6,000,000 as a percentage, that's a pretty simple question.

So what we're seeing throughout the Commonwealth is very heartening. I believe people are taking it in the right spirit and see it as a challenge. As we've said, we're looking two years from now and then again five years from now. I agree that it might be a generation for everyone. But nevertheless, we're looking for significant improvement in the next two to five years.

The Chairman: Mr. Commissioner, one thing. I think those that want to say that there's something seriously wrong with the test need to reflect on the fact that some students have gotten almost perfect scores. One student, last name is Monteiro, scored 280, which is the highest score, on the English part and 276 on the mathematics and something close to that on the science. If there were anything very seriously wrong with the test, that level of achievement would have been impossible. And he's by no means the only student who's done that. Some students have really done well on this test.

Comm. Driscoll: Just to reemphasize what the Chairman has said, if you look at mathematics at the 8th grade level, we know there are only 31 percent at the proficient and advanced level, and so it would seem that there's a large jump to go from 31 percent to 75 percent. Let me refer you to some schools in Cambridge. There are six schools that scored well above the state average in

Cambridge, two at 41 percent, which is ten points above the state average, one at 51 percent, one at 52 percent, one at 58 percent and the top at 63 percent. So already, I would submit, six schools in Cambridge have shown remarkable initial success -- and understand we have alignment issues and everything else -- when compared to the state average. That's why some people think 75 percent is a tremendous goal. Again, it may be for some schools, but I think it's reachable right across the board, particularly as we roll out this program and people focus on the standards.

Let me talk about where we go from here. Number one is obviously a thoughtful and thorough analysis of these results, and we're hearing that across the state as schools and districts are tearing apart the results. They are doing exactly what we want, focusing on the learning standards, focusing on where the gaps are, looking at their curriculum, looking at their instructional methods and teaching and learning right across the board. That is going to pay a great deal of dividends. Second is the use of grant money, both federal and state, most especially the $20,000,000 that's been provided by the Legislature and Governor this year specifically focused on those students who do not do well on the MCAS. You have some grants before you today in the first round that includes after-school programs and Saturday programs and tutoring programs, as Jim Peyser developed and this Board approved. There are other grants too that we are asking people to focus on. We now ask school districts to present their district improvement plan matched up to the school improvement plans that all school councils are developing, to see to it that there is that alignment as well.

This winter and spring we are going to be running workshops throughout the Commonwealth sharing with teachers and administrators the actual student work from these tests. This Board remembers the three teachers who came before us to talk about their experience in the scoring and what a tremendous professional development experience that was -- understanding what the rubrics were, what advanced work looked like, and so forth. That's the kind of experience we want to now share with teachers across the Commonwealth. We'll have actual work from the MCAS at all levels so they can see what does it mean to have an advanced long composition or proficient long composition, and so on. I think that's going to be tremendous. Fourth, and this Board is going to be dealing with it in January again, is school and district accountability. That's the third leg of the stool of education reform: higher standards for students, higher standards for educators, and higher standards for schools and school districts. We will have an evaluation program by which we're going to evaluate schools and school districts, and certainly the MCAS results will be a crucial part of that.

Finally, what we have been talking about is: staying with it. The Education Reform Act came about, as you know, primarily as the result of the Mass. Business Alliance for Education, but also with the support of parents, teachers, business groups and community groups, and the thing we have to do is keep that partnership going. I'm pleased to say a couple of weeks before we announced the results, we had an event in Boston where the major corporations came together, and their message, even before the results were announced, was to stick with it. When we announced the state-wide results, the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, the Chairman of the Board of Education all had the same message: we're going to stick with it. And to me, that's the most heartening part of all of this. People finally have it right, that education is important, not just because they have children in the public schools or grandchildren. The adult population throughout the country and in Massachusetts, as shown in the polls, finally understand that we are dependent upon this next generation. We have a obligation to the next generation, and I don't see us backing off. I don't hear anyone saying that we ought to lower the standards. In fact, as I go around, I'm pleased to say I have people coming up to me saying, thank you, this is a good thing, and this is something we can now work towards. So I agree with the Chairman, it's a terrific start, and I think we're going to have great results in the future.

Dr. Thernstrom: Dave, I'm delighted to hear that. I assume what you mean is that DOE will be thoroughly analyzing this data as well as obviously the districts themselves. I think we need to have the data broken down along a variety of lines. This is an enormous source, a rich source, of information. You just said that some schools within the urban districts, the Morse School, for instance, have outperformed many suburban districts. Doesn't that suggest to you, and, Mr. Chairman, I would hope to you, that we can set the same standards for urban and non-urban schools alike. These schools should obviously be models for school improvement. The Morse School, of course, is one that has adopted E.D. Hirsch's core curriculum, and I would hope that other schools, urban schools and others as well, would be looking in that direction. It seems to me that your description is in itself an argument for uniform standards, and we can expect the

schools to meet them.

Comm. Driscoll: I certainly agree that we need to have the same set of standards for urban and suburban students. I agree with that for vocational and regular education. It should be one standard, no question about it.

The Chairman: But, now, what do you mean? Do you mean one standard in terms of whether it's advanced or proficient or it needs improvement or failing, or one standard that you have to meet otherwise you're declared a deficient school and we take you over? The Morse School had 31 percent failing in mathematics at the 4th grade level, 39 percent needing improvement. That's a long way to go. I think if you want to say that all schools are going to be performing like the suburban schools, we're going to put into receivership about 40 percent of the schools in Massachusetts.

Dr. Schaefer: Okay. Now I'm understanding what you were talking about. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, it was very unclear before. What you're saying is that what you want to see in all the districts is improvement over time, and just because a district had not achieved 75 percent in the proficient and advanced category, that doesn't mean that the Board of Education is going to be taking them over, is that right? You made it sound as though there were going to be different standards for graduation, that's what we're all shaking our heads about. The former is what you meant, and now we understand what you're talking about.

Dr. Thernstrom: Were you not talking about different standards in terms of setting the ultimate bar for graduation?

The Chairman: No, I'm not talking about that all. I'm talking about whether you take over a school district, whether you regard a school district as deficient or whether it's doing a good job. I think the English system that they described for this Board in detail was the right one. They talk about value added. You take a standard appropriate to the cohort. You have to judge the school systems within the cohort in which they stand. And those districts that have a very high percentage of children coming to school speaking a foreign language and not knowing English, when they have a high transiency rate, when they have a very high poverty rate are simply not going to be able to perform at the level of a stable community in the suburbs that has no problems of poverty, no problems of language or anything else. We have to ask how much do they do for those children, how much do they improve them, to what extent are they improving overall over a five-year period. But I think if you want to put an absolute standard on it and say we're going to judge Lawrence on the same basis that we judge Newton, you'll never get that school system out of receivership.

Dr. Delattre: If I may, I take the Chairman's remarks not to be about standards at all but rather about expectations.

Ms. Crutchfield: And about conditions.

Dr. Delattre: What we want is for everyone to be working toward the best school system, providing the greatest educational opportunity they can and bringing as many students as possible to achievement at the advanced and proficient level. But anybody who says, well, here we have the facts of life about the differences in school systems, and we see MCAS, and five years from now we expect every school system to be --

Dr. Thernstrom: Nobody was saying that.

Dr. Delattre: Yes. And so I urge you that there has been a confusion and that we put it behind us. I have.

Dr. Thernstrom: There clearly has been some confusion here.

Dr. Delattre: If I may. As you know, I think that the overwhelmingly most important feature of MCAS is its diagnostic utility, and I understand that we're hoping to get the data discs to the

districts. I think the date was no earlier than the 18th, is that right? Are we still hoping for December? Because my own view is that the real capacity of school systems to improve the educational opportunities, the curriculum, the instruction, to work in cooperation with parents turns on that individualized data and its proper disaggregation and application to the needs of individual students. And the full blessing of that, it seems to me, is yet to be seen. I hope the media will cover that utility as effectively as they've covered what they've done now with respect to MCAS.

Comm. Driscoll: I wouldn't count on that, but the work can go on without the media. Let me just comment a little bit about the Morse School. The Morse School is not presented as the ideal school that has ideal numbers or whatever. It clearly is a school that faces the urban challenges that we've talked about. And yet, with those urban challenges, with a 40 percent low income rate, with the kind of transiency that the Chairman talks about -- in fact, of their 8th grade students who were tested, 20 or 25 percent of them were brand new to that school that year. They're also, by the way, in a makeshift school. They are in a former parochial school, St. Mary's of Cambridge, and they're moving into a brand new school in two weeks. But there are some results there that one wouldn't expect. The question is, why?

One of the things they talk about is that they did adopt the core knowledge curriculum four or five years ago. It was brought by the parents to the principal's attention, and the principal agreed with the parents, and that's how they adopted E.D. Hirsch's model. Also, two years ago, in the summer, the entire staff came together, and they worked to align the curriculum frameworks of the state with the Cambridge standards with the core knowledge standards. They have the typical elements, it seems to me, of an effective school, if you read all the research. They have a good principal. They have a clear focus on student achievement. They have an orderly but not suppressive atmosphere. There is good discipline there, but you can sense that excitement and the rapport among all of the staff. And they have great community support, the cafeteria workers, the police, parents, community people and so on. So they have all the elements.

People say to me, " Well, that's easy, why doesn't every school do that?" And the answer is, because it's not easy. It's very hard. I tell people, it's very easy to draw up what it takes to raise children. You just ought to try it some day. It's very difficult, hard work with a lot of human elements. And the challenges the urban schools face include what the kids go to after school ends, the 16 or 18 hours that they're not in school and all of the issues that they face without the support systems, be it family, language, whatever it happens to be. Contrast that to the suburban schools. Talk about after-school programs! It's like a transportation company, although it isn't; there are all these vans parked outside the schools. The kids come out, they hop in the vans, and their parents take them off to gymnastics or ballet or soccer or whatever it happens to be. So there are tremendous worlds of difference. But what is heartening to me is when people come together and are focusing on education as never before. We're seeing community-based organizations, after-school programs, and other programs to support children outside of school hours to help bridge that gap.

The Chairman: You can also see the value of the analysis that the Commissioner has been talking about by comparing the Morse School's results with the results of the district. The Morse School outperformed the district in such a substantial way that the Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge has to ask, what is the Morse School doing right and what are the other schools evidently not doing right so that this differential appears? Take mathematics at the 8th grade, 46 percent in the district are failing, only 23 percent are failing in the Morse School; only 21 percent in the district are proficient, 32 percent are proficient in the Morse School, and you can see that differential in science and technology and in English Language Arts also. That kind of differential gives very good information to the school superintendent. He then can say, I've got to find out what this school is doing, because they're certainly doing better than the others. It's an enormous help.

Comm. Driscoll: My last comment would go back to the Chairman's first comment. This is a terrific thing because of the focus on these results, and because it is going to shake up apathy. It is going to focus people on what should be our business: how do we improve student achievement. And finally, since our next meeting of the Board isn't until late January, I want to wish everybody, particularly today, happy Hanukkah and happy holidays in the future.

Dr. Schaefer: I just want to give an example of how complicated it's going to be to figure out

what's right and what's wrong. In Worcester, the highest performing school uses heterogenous grouping and cooperative learning, and it outperformed the others -- it was on a par with a number of suburban districts. One of the lowest performing schools also uses heterogenous grouping and cooperative learning. So who knows what the district is going to do with that.

The Chairman: That's going to be good, to find out what the difference is when it superficially appears to be the same.

Statements From The Public

State Representative-Elect Jarrett Barrios of Cambridge addressed the Board on the issue of Bilingual Education.

Mr. Barrios: Mr. Commissioner, Mr. Chair, Members of the Board, thank you for having me here today. I want to say a special thank you to Dr. Thernstrom whose son I went to college with, and it's really nice to see you again. I haven't seen you since 1998 when we graduated.

Last week you announced the MCAS scores at the Morse School, and you chose the Morse for many of the reasons you suggested, the core curriculum, the fact that it outperformed a number of other schools with a similar demographic. One of those demographics is the fact that there are a number of students who don't speak English as a first language at the Morse School. However, the bilingual education program at the Morse is not a one-year sink-or-swim program. It is a transitional bilingual education program or, I should say, specifically, a modified transitional bilingual educational program, one which has met with great success.

In Cambridge, there are a variety of such programs, a number of which I would say are mentioned on the Commissioner's Attachment A in his memorandum. We have two-way bilingual immersion in Cambridge. We have a variety of programs. I say this for a couple of reasons. I think where we perhaps agree on bilingual education is that the primary goal must be to teach children English, beautiful English. I think we also agree that many of the students in our educational system right now are not learning good English, so it's not surprising when they don't perform well on an MCAS test. But when we look at the Morse School, we find a school that performs well -- and I'm sure the Board's aware, but the public may not be aware, bilingual education students' scores are figured in with everybody else's scores. So the Morse's performance includes the performance of its bilingual students who benefited from the good programs of Cambridge's bilingual education system.

While we agree that English must be the priority for these programs, I would encourage you not to shoot from the hip in your modifications of bilingual education. When I say don't shoot from the hip, I mean don't adopt willy-nilly a one-year sink-or-swim program without assessing what works and what doesn't work in the current programs. I think it's difficult to make a decision. Please don't be hasty. This is a serious issue, especially in our urban school districts where so many of our students don't speak English as a first language. Bilingual education must be part of your serious consideration in the big picture. And when you look at bilingual education, and you look for an answer -- as Dr. Silber has said, this is the problem for a generation. We're not going to solve it overnight. Be thoughtful in your approaches to bilingual education, and please don't come to the Legislature and ask us to play Russian roulette. I think that rather you'd like to come with a thoughtful plan. Please, when you do consider it, assess the myriad of programs, and there are many out there, which have been very successful in teaching children who are not native English speakers good English. Just look at the Morse School. Thank you very much.

Dr. Delattre: I'm very grateful to you for coming today. Do I understand that we agree that the conflation in the law of the distinction between bilingual education and transitional bilingual education is a bad thing, and that a thoughtful approach to bilingual education would eliminate that conflation?

Mr. Barrios: Dr. Delattre, I'm just a state rep. I'm not a doctor. So if you could maybe clarify your question for me.

Dr. Delattre: The law requires bilingual education and refers to it explicitly as transitional

bilingual education.

Mr. Barrios: That's correct.

Dr. Delattre: It seems to me that if it did not refer to it as transitional bilingual education but offered as legal the variety of programs, including immersion, transitional, two-way and the like, we could have much better bilingual programs in the state with the intention of advancing the understanding and learning of English and the study of foreign languages or native languages in this state. And that treating bilingual education in law as if it were the same thing as transitional bilingual education militates against the very kinds of success that the Morse School has.

Mr. Barrios: I think, sir, if we could take politics out of education that might be the case.

Dr. Delattre: I'm talking about the law. I'm not talking about politics.

Mr. Barrios: Well, the law, sir, is set by politics. And where there are communities in Massachusetts which are majority minority school districts but where there are no minority members on the school boards which are setting these policies -- that is to say if you were to get rid of the law, the statute, I think that would present grave concerns to parents, to teachers of bilingual students and to those who just care about those children learning good English.

Dr. Delattre: I'm not talking about getting rid of the law. I'm asking whether you think it would be a good idea to refer to bilingual education as embracing a number of kinds of programs, rather than referring to it in the law simply as transitional bilingual education. I'm asking you a question about the language of the law.

Mr. Barrios: Sir, as I said before, not being an educator, my view on this is, transitional bilingual education, as I've experienced it in my community, and I'm speaking from my experience, is one which encompasses more than what this Board talks about as traditional transitional bilingual education. We have two-way immersion. We have these programs. Maybe we just have a disconnect on what we've experienced with bilingual education. Thank you, Doctor.

The Chairman: I think it's worth observing that it was the majority of Hispanic people who took the initiative in California to remove the requirement of bilingual education. The study done by the Public Agenda showed that 75 percent of foreign-born parents preferred their children to be taught in English as quickly as possible, even if it means that they fall behind in other subject areas. 66 percent of Hispanic parents had that desire. 68 percent of the African-American parents voted that way. And of parents overall, 67 percent favored teaching them English as quickly as possible. I would suggest that anybody who wants to discuss bilingual education in this state should consider the problem of having competent bilingual teachers. There's no problem at all in having teachers who are competent in certain native languages. There's no difficulty in finding persons who are competent in English. It is very difficult to find an adequate number who are competent in both, and that is what is required by the transitional bilingual program.

In my experience, I don't believe more than about 80 percent of the persons teaching bilingual education in Massachusetts are competent in the English language, and it's no surprise that therefore they spend a very high percentage of their time teaching in the foreign language, which explains the very poor results that we have seen in many areas of the state. We don't need to be told not to shoot from the hip, because this is an area in which there has been a very great deal of empirical study, over a number of years. And we have Hispanic leaders in our Boston schools, for example, who have complained about the linguistic ghetto that has followed from this disastrous method of teaching English.

We need flexibility, it seems to me, and I wish that the Legislature would consider what's happening to the children and not simply what is being told them by a few activists in their community. The overall response in the Hispanic community has been to teach them English as quickly as possible, even if it means that they fall behind in the subject matter areas. That happens to be data of which this Board is fully aware, and that's why we made our recommendations last year for the reform of bilingual education, and that's why I suspect we'll do it again.

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, the point about the Morse School is they are teaching the kids English. That's what the MCAS results show. I think that's what our guest was trying to say.

The Chairman: It's quite possible that in one school they have found highly competent bilingual teachers. That doesn't solve the problem of finding competent bilingual teachers all over this state.

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, I agree with that.

The Chairman: We have to have a solution not only for Cambridge or for one school; we have to have a solution for all the schools.

Steven Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association addressed the Board.

Mr. Gorrie: Good morning. Chairman Silber and Commissioner Driscoll and Members of the Board, thank you for allowing me to have a couple of minutes to speak to you. I'm not coming this morning with a specific issue but a few general comments with an eye toward the future. Over the next several months, you will consider a number of proposals with respect to improving student performance and assuring teacher quality, and we hope that you will give careful consideration to proposals that the MTA, the largest teacher organization in the state, will be forwarding to you. The MTA has a compelling interest in both improving student performance and in assuring the highest quality of professional practice among our members.

The release of the first set of MCAS scores certainly was a wake-up call to all of us. We do agree with the Commissioner's analysis. We also did regional briefings around the state concerning MCAS scores and their release, extremely well-attended briefings. And our staff has worked closely with the Department of Education staff on the issue of how to help educators fully understand and use MCAS data to improve student performance, and we have designed and will widely implement a new professional development program for our members beginning in January that will help them to do just that. But we also fully understand that a professional development program on how to use MCAS results will not by itself improve student performance over the long run, at least not without a thoughtful, long-range strategy that recognizes the need to find new and better methods to assure that we have the highest quality teachers working at every one of our public schools.

Toward that end, we will be presenting you and other policy makers with specific, concrete proposals that will provide practical and supportable solutions to the following needs: Improving how we prepare teachers; establishing a system of entry-level standards and assessments for beginning teachers in which both the profession and the public can have full confidence; building a sensible set of options for school districts to follow with respect to the induction, supervision and mentoring of newly hired, and especially, beginning teachers; assuring a proper balance between school district needs and the professional autonomy of educators with respect to continuing certification and professional development; examining and changing the administrative structure of our schools to permit principals and other administrators to spend more time as instructional leaders, coaches and consultants to teachers through an ongoing process of supervision; finding out how to make our present performance evaluation system work as it is designed to work and how to insure public confidence in it; and assuring that truly incompetent teachers are dismissed with both due process and dispatch.

Our proposals will not only indicate what we as a profession and the largest labor union in Massachusetts believe and are prepared to do and why, but will also define the state and local capacities, resources and support necessary to enable them to succeed. We know that we have a lot of work to do in the coming months and years to help our students enter the 21st century with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. We know that we cannot do it alone, or in a climate where teachers are seen as the problem rather than as an important and valued resource in solving problems. I look forward to discussing our proposals with you and the staff over the next few months, and stand ready to work with you as we seek to implement them.

Dr. Thernstrom: I have talked in the past about the possibility of the random testing of a

sample of veteran teachers who would remain anonymous, for diagnostic purposes only, to help us develop the professional development program. Is the MTA is still opposed to that? And if so, why?

Mr. Gorrie: We are still opposed to that because we do not feel that kind of a test is a true evaluation of a teacher's performance.

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, we would not be evaluating individual teachers. We would simply be trying to figure out what the picture looks like with respect to, let's say, high school history teachers and their mastery of the subject. These teachers would never be identified. It would again be only for professional development purposes so that we know what we're doing. It's diagnostic information. These teachers would never be identified.

Mr. Gorrie: It still is our assertion that we can better establish their performance and their knowledge of these subject areas through more concrete means in observation rather than just a simple paper and pencil test.

Dr. Delattre: You are determined that knowledge of subject matter and literacy as they can be identified in a test are irrelevant to the improvement of education in Massachusetts.

Mr. Gorrie: I don't think that's what we said at all.

Dr. Delattre: Then why won't you assent to the use of tests as one means? We don't claim they are the only means.

Mr. Gorrie: Because it's much more relevant to have that established through performance observations where you can assess the teacher's performance as well as literacy and subject matter knowledge in a much more authentic system as prescribed by the law, and which can be developed, and have been developed throughout the Commonwealth.

Dr. Thernstrom: But you've got no problem with testing incoming teachers, candidates for certification. I mean, what is the distinction in your mind that says that test is valid, tells you something, not everything obviously, but it's not valid for us to use such a test to ask what does the picture look like so that we can know how to intervene better.

Mr. Gorrie: Again, once the person is in the classroom, we believe that is not the most authentic way to assess a teacher's performance.

Dr. Delattre: And you're going to send historians into the classroom to see?

Dr. Koplik: Steve, let me ask you this question. If in the evaluation of a teacher it was determined in that evaluation that there was an apparent problem, either in communication, literacy or content mastery, and the suggestion then would be to then administer the teacher exam, how would you feel about that?

Mr. Gorrie: If it's established that that is indeed the problem, I don't believe the test would be necessary. A program of professional development in order to improve would be prescribed, as opposed to them just taking the test.

Mr. Peyser: And let me ask you a related question on test data. To what extent would you agree that student performance data would be of use in evaluating teacher performance?

Mr. Gorrie: I think it should inform instruction. I think it should inform the curriculum. I think the observations that would ensue through an evaluation program would indicate the teacher's competence, not just simply the tests.

Mr. Peyser: Again, I didn't say just simply at all. I mean, is it your position that the data should be irrelevant to evaluation of a teacher's performance?

Mr. Gorrie: It should be used to inform how that teacher instructs and what that teacher has to do with the curriculum.

Mr. Peyser: But not whether the teacher is performing well or poorly?

Mr. Gorrie: Not at this juncture, no.

Dr. Schaefer: What about over time? Using it over time.

Mr. Gorrie: I think over time if a teacher's performance continued to be not as it should be, that would have already been established through the observation process.

Dr. Schaefer: Student performance.

Mr. Gorrie: I don't even think you would need that at that point, because it would have already been established through performance, and observation from the evaluator.

The Chairman: Well, suppose professional courtesy was such that in the peer review they didn't notice the deficiency in the teacher's performance. But over time, the students who went through that teacher's class performed substantially lower than those who went through other teachers' classes, at that point would you think that the performance of those students was relevant?

Mr. Gorrie: A well-trained administrator I think would take all of those factors into consideration and would not just be pointed at the one indicator.

The Chairman: Is it going to be the position of the union now that they will give up their use of management rights, which of course they have no right to under the NLRA, but which they have succeeded in assuming through negotiations at the table throughout Massachusetts, and indeed throughout the nation? Are they going to be prepared now to give up those management rights? I'll give you one example. So that the principal can appoint the best qualified teacher without regard to seniority, without regard to staying within or going outside the system.

Mr. Gorrie: I think you'll find in most systems that the issue of seniority doesn't govern that choice anyway.

The Chairman: It does in Boston. You have to have 65 percent of the teachers agree to going outside the system in order to appoint a more competent teacher. If the teachers don't agree in that school to allow the principal to go outside, he's not allowed under the contract to do so.

Mr. Gorrie: I think you will find under our proposal that we will be bringing over the next two or three months, that some of those issues may be addressed in a different way.

The Chairman: And what are you going to do with regard to the dismissal of an incompetent teacher, because the highly elaborate procedure that was introduced in the Education Reform Act makes it more difficult to terminate an incompetent teacher now than it was when tenure was still on the books. Are you going to talk seriously about it? Because most of the delay, most of the absence of dispatch in the removal of an incompetent teacher is the direct result of the labor contracts that have been negotiated by the teachers' union.

Mr. Gorrie: Well, what is present under the current law is certainly a much more expeditious process than it was in previous times. We too want the best people in the classroom. We are not in the business of protecting incompetent teachers, we do not want to be, and we would see that they are dismissed as long as their due process is not violated.

The Chairman: Why then would you be opposed to testing a teacher to find out whether the

teacher knew the subject matter, if you're not trying to protect incompetence?

Mr. Gorrie: Because we feel that is not a true picture of their performance. A rigorous evaluation system as described by the law is.

The Chairman: Well, why isn't that a perfectly reasonable part of a rigorous evaluation system? It's not the only part, absolutely not the only part. But why isn't it a highly relevant part, to just ask one question, do they know the subject matter? We don't find that offensive with regard to doctors. Every five years they've got to take their examinations to demonstrate that they're up-to-date on their subject matter and competent. We don't mind testing in this field. Why should we mind something that's even more important, in my opinion, than medical doctors, namely, the persons who are developing the minds and the character of our children?

Mr. Gorrie: Again, any competent administrator who is evaluating and supervising a teacher can tell whether the teacher is competent in the subject area.

The Chairman: That's a highly subjective matter, and you've got all the variations between the judgment and the quality of the superintendents to contend with, whereas it would be very easy to have a standard examination that would assess their quality in mathematics or their quality in history or their quality in the English language, and we would have a great deal of objectivity introduced there. I think as long as you want to say we will avoid testing at all costs, you don't make a very credible witness with regard to trying to improve the quality of the teaching corps.

Mr. Gorrie: I think that over the next few months, if you look at our program, that view may change.

1. Approval Of The Minutes

On a motion duly made an seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the November 9, 1998 Special Meeting and the November 10, 1998 Regular Meeting, as amended.

The vote was unanimous.

2. Bilingual Education - Discussion

Comm. Driscoll: I'd like to make a couple of brief general statements about two proposals that I put before the Board this month, one on bilingual education and the other on an alternative route to standard certification. It was my decision that in order to try and move forward, there are a number of major issues that this Board needs to address. We need to talk about a certificate of occupational proficiency. We need to talk about certification regulations. We need to talk about school and district accountability. So it was my attempt to try and move forward on these issues by offering a proposal and then having the Board react to it.

I understand that in perhaps both cases there are people on the Board who would want to go higher and wider. In the area of bilingual education, this Board has already voted to request the Governor to pursue again statutory change in bilingual education. And on the issue of alternative certification leading to standard, I know there are Board members who feel that we don't even need the kind of complicated process, from their perspective, that I have put before you today. Again, my intent is to get these issues before this Board to have a discussion and at least move the ball forward. With respect to bilingual education, many of us remember the public hearings that we held on bilingual education, last year I believe it was, on just the regulations. This was not a statutory change, but a regulatory change. We saw hundreds and hundreds of people come forward to all of those public hearings. It seems to me that the kind of experience we have had in the past has led us to realize that the statutory change just hasn't been a legislative option. It may be this year, and I certainly support the Board in that regard.

In the meantime, I think in this debate we've lost focus. This becomes a debate over camps. It becomes a debate where people become mutually exclusive. To me, the debate should be focused

on what's right for individual kids. I have no interest in talking about statutory changes, changes from 20 in a district to 20 in a school. That's the wrong debate to me. I don't care if there's two kids. The issue is that school districts need to address the needs of students. It doesn't take very long to analyze the MCAS results to recognize that the large majority of kids in these programs are not succeeding.

What I want to do is provide the tools at the local level in order to provide those programs that are needed for the children they know best. The Morse School is an example, but they're constrained by the law as well. They can't run ESL programs or instruction immersion programs under the current law. That's why I'm looking for a way. I'm trying to move this debate to where it's going to help children and not be a debate, as it has been in other states, and in this state, over trust. There are people in the bilingual community who feel the only way that they can guarantee that their students are going to be serviced -- and they had to battle back in 1971 to get a law -- is to have this kind of a law to require people at the local level to respond. I say it's time to focus on what districts need as tools in order to help students achieve.

The Chairman: With regard to the Morse School, if you want to ask how well is their system of bilingual education doing, let's remember that 75 percent of the children in grade 4 have failed or need improvement in the English language. That is not a record of accomplishment that lends credence to the notion that the system of teaching bilingual education is a success. It rather is a mark of distinctive failure. And when the child gets to the 8th grade in the Morse School, we still have 50 percent of them either failing or needing improvement. So if that is the recommendation for the transitional bilingual education program, I think it is a clear demonstration that it is a grotesque failure.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, I didn't mention the Morse School, so --

The Chairman: I'm sorry. The record will show you did.

Comm. Driscoll: Look, what I talked about was the fact that they're restricted. They too are restricted. Even though they talked about various options, they too are restricted by the current law. That was my point.

The Chairman: That's right. And my point is that by being restricted by the current law, they're failing. 75 percent are not doing an adequate job in the 4th grade, and 50 percent are not doing an adequate job in the 8th grade. And it seems to me that is very substantial evidence in support of the notion it is time to change that Transitional Bilingual Educational Act. I think it would be a great mistake if this Board were to back down from seeking legislative changes, because we've got ample evidence nationally and in this state demonstrating the failure of that program.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, again, I simply want to make clear my point. This Board can obviously do what it will. My point is that my job, as I see it, is to try and provide options that will move the ball forward. I have grave reservations, given the current conditions, that the statute will change. Therefore, we're going to lose another year and another year and another year where children's needs are not being properly addressed. The Board can easily reject it, but I'm suggesting a different tactic. There are some things we can do, as I suggest under " Recommendations," assessment and developing an English proficiency test. But I also recommend that we look at waivers of the current statute giving flexibility at the local level.

Dr. Delattre: Dave, the members of the Board care about the children and youths of this state and more broadly as much as you do. It is not as if we believed that individual students were not our greatest concern. The work we do on law and policy has to do with the interests and well-being of students and their educational opportunities and achievement. So that distinction is one that I won't grant for openers.

Now, we've taken a position with respect to the law. I don't want to do anything as a Board that gives legislators or anyone else a place to stand to say, well, we really don't need to change the law because all the pressure is off. There is a waiver proposal as an alternative. I don't want to take the pressure off, and I don't want to mix the message about the imperative to change the law in the ways that we've recommended. That said, I very much fear that the waiver proposal, given

the way it's cast, succeeds only in subjecting local districts to the same kind of fruitless debate that you yourself have described at the state level. And where a proposal says that there has to be massive constituency support, and that's the first criterion for the waiver, when you know as well as we do how factionalism works in districts, the best you could possibly hope for is some episodic opportunity for children in some districts, nothing like addressing the needs of the children statewide. So on two counts, a matter of policy with respect to legislative change, and as a matter of effectiveness in practice, I don't want to go this way.

Comm. Driscoll: First of all, I certainly wasn't trying to suggest that I alone own the care and concern of children and the Board doesn't. What I said was that the debate that's been held in the past has been, in my judgment, on the wrong point. It has been really around trust, and it has been about the bilingual community feeling that they worked very hard to get a law and not willing to see anything else but that law remaining on the books. Secondly, with respect to my recommendations that the waiver provisions contain the support of the parents, of the community, we have had a great deal of experience in that regard with our current waiver process. And as the Chairman himself pointed out, 75 percent of the parents would like to see changes. We have had communities come to us with a great majority of the parents wanting alternatives in English as a Second Language, etc., and under the law we have not been able to support them. And with respect to watering down, if you will, or providing an out for the Legislature, that's not really what I intend to do. But again, I think it's my responsibility to put some recommendations before this Board, to at least have the discussion, which we really haven't had. For example, I think the idea of moving it to 20 students in a school rather than 20 students in a district does fall right back into that method whereby I think we need to look at the individual needs of students. But I would say, even if this Board is not willing to look at an alternative to going full speed ahead for a change in the law, I hope there would be some interest in the assessment aspects of my recommendation.

Dr. Schaefer: There are districts like Cambridge that are using other means, ESL and two-way immersion, but they come under the law. How are they doing that? I know that Worcester is doing it too.

Comm. Driscoll: I think this goes back to my point. It's been 28 or 27 years since the law was passed. With the regulation changes, or proposed changes in the law, we see people that come forward by the bus load. I agree with Ed's point about how it tends to become factionalized because of people who want to do that. But there are examples of schools that have provided English as a Second Language programs for those kids that need those. But if a parent insists on a transitional bilingual educational program, they can have one under the law.

Dr. Schaefer: So, in other words, the districts are providing the TBE if the parents are asking for it, but the districts can provide other means of teaching English as a second language?

Comm. Driscoll: If the parents want a TBE program, it's required under the law if there are 20 students of that language in the district.

Mr. Peyser: My understanding of the law is that they must have such a program. Now, there may be additional programs, but that doesn't preclude the district's responsibility for having a TBE program whenever there are 20 or more students in the district.

Comm. Driscoll: That's what I meant to say, so I guess I said it wrong.

Mr. Peyser: It is a requirement that the district have those programs. It's not necessarily a requirement that TBE be the exclusive program. The other thing I'll say, though, and this may sound like a criticism of the Department -- in fact it's high praise -- that the Department hasn't been so persnickety, shall we say, in requiring full compliance to the letter of the law. I think the law is more prescriptive than the reality is. But the law, nonetheless, is an extremely prescriptive document which does require TBE in every district that meets the minimum standard.

Dr. Thernstrom: Jim, I'm still confused. So the districts are required to have TBE programs, you're saying, but in fact some of them don't have TBE programs. They do something else.

Mr. Peyser: Well, they can do things in addition to TBE. But as a practical matter, there are certain language groups which qualify under the bilingual law in Massachusetts, for which there is either not qualified faculty to teach the program or not sufficient materials or no interest on the part of parents, where in fact the schools may be running a program which is called " Transitional Bilingual Education" but it's in fact being run entirely in the English language. Actually, at the conference at BU recently when we talked about the Quincy case, I think one of the real mistakes made by the Quincy superintendent was their mistake in coming forward explicitly and asking for a waiver rather than just doing it.

Ms. Crutchfield: Wait. Are we clear on the question that we've just been discussing? David, a question that I have for you is, is it your contention that what we need are parallel approaches to addressing the issue of bilingual education? I don't hear you saying that we should not continue to move toward changes in legislation and to support that. But in the interim, knowing that's going to take a bit of work, there are some issues we need to address that we can't simply sit and wait for in terms of change of legislation. Is that the question you're putting before us?

Comm. Driscoll: Yes.

The Chairman: Well, but the trouble is that what you propose requires legislation.

Comm. Driscoll: Not all of it. That's why --

The Chairman: But a large part of it does. The critical part of it does require legislation. And if we're going to go with the waiver, it seems to me we're going to undermine any opportunity to make the kind of changes that are really necessary. When you have 20 students in a district, and you've got 12 grades, not counting kindergarten, you've got really 13 grades that you've got to consider, and you have 20 students in a district where you're required to have bilingual education, the only way to do it efficiently is to put people anywhere from 5 years of age to 18 years of age into the same classroom so that you can have 20 students to be taught in that foreign language. There are absurdities built into that law that need carefully to be considered and exposed. It would seem to me a great mistake for us to settle for a waiver program when we really need a systematic addressing of the deformities in the educational budget, deformities in the educational practice and deformities in educational achievement that follow from a misguided piece of legislation that we recognized last year needed thorough revision. The fact that we didn't win it last year is something of an anomaly because we had a preliminary agreement between the Administration, the Senate and the House on that bill, and we had a preliminary agreement with regard to special education. The agreement didn't stick. But I think if we worked at it again, we may very well be able to make it stick. But for us to simply have a palliative, a little Band-Aid on this problem, would be a great mistake.

Comm. Driscoll: I'm not aware of any agreement on bilingual education. It was on special education. If the majority of the Board agrees not to pursue waivers, that's fine, but there are still two other issues that I put before you on which I would like at least some sense of the Board: increasing the participation in the Grade 3 reading test and also the development of an English proficiency test. These don't have to wait for statutory changes. Before I talked about the waiver, which obviously was a lightning rod, I did suggest increased participation in our Grade 3 reading test and development of an English proficiency test. If the Board thinks both of those are reasonable ideas, we will pursue them.

Dr. Delattre: Might we have until January?

Comm. Driscoll: Sure. This is for discussion purposes only. I meant to say that, in putting this forward, it's clearly for discussion only. There wasn't any attempt to try and force the Board to vote. What I really wanted to accomplish was a discussion.

Dr. Delattre: What I'm asking is whether we might discuss those two points in January? I admit to having focused on other portions of this section.

Ms. Crutchfield: David, it might be useful if you sent this back with the Board package in January with those proposals and any additional information you might have about those two

aspects of your proposals.

Dr. Schaefer: Do you just want to briefly summarize those so that we can think about them?

Comm. Driscoll: Currently if third graders are not being recommended for regular education, they're not being tested. I'm recommending that we test them. We would not count them, so it doesn't affect the district score, but we would at least test these kids. That's really an administrative issue in a sense, although I certainly would want the Board's approval. I would like to move forward with that. The second issue is developing a English proficiency test. I certainly can bring it back to the Board, giving the Board a chance to either respond to me personally or ask for more information, and then I can put it forward as a vote in January.

Dr. Delattre: I didn't mean for a vote in January. I meant for a discussion in January and a vote in February.

Dr. Schaefer: It seems to me that there would be some value to the English proficiency test in the sense that it might begin to give us a sense of what programs are actually working to teach these kids English.

The Chairman: I don't see why this is such a complicated issue that we can't think about it between now and January and decide in January.

Dr. Thernstrom: I'm in agreement with the Chairman.

The Chairman: This is not an issue so complex that it exceeds the capacity --

Dr. Delattre: Well, maybe not for you. All of you get it. I don't get it.

The Chairman: Let's put it on for a vote in January, unless there is some strong objection besides Dr. Delattre.

3. Early Literacy - Grade 2 Reading Test- Discussion and Vote

The Chairman: I spoke with the Governor with regard to supplementing our testing budget so that we can give that test on reading proficiency in the second grade, in addition to the third grade, so that we have the opportunity of moving earlier. He said he would put it into House One. I asked for $700,000 because I thought we need additional funds so that we can run other kinds of tests on reading to validate the Iowa-type test that we've given at the third grade. We've given the Iowa test at the third grade, and we've also used a different form of testing where the child actually sits there and reads and the person listens to the child reading to validate that other test. I would hope that we could do that in the second grade as well. The Governor said he'd put it into House One. But as the Commissioner pointed out to me, that won't do us any good for this spring. Mr. Commissioner.

Comm. Driscoll: The motion is before you on the yellow sheet, although we'd like to change it to $700,000. We'd like to request a supplementary budget request so that it would be done this winter and we could in fact institute Grade 2 testing this spring.

Dr. Schaefer: I'd like to raise one question about this. Since the Iowa test is not on the same level of difficulty as the MCAS, if we give that test in Grades 2 and 3 and kids do well, what message are we then sending when they take the Grade 4 MCAS and there's a sharp drop-off in scores?

The Chairman: I don't think there is any evidence that it is less difficult than the MCAS. It's a different kind of test. But one thing we can do is change that test, if we want to. I think it would be a good idea to have some open-ended questions on it as well, just the way we do on the MCAS.

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's a data question, and I would really like to see an

analysis of the data. That is, we need to know the degree to which the third grade results from the Iowa are aligned with the fourth grade results. I'm very reluctant to continue using that particular test until we know the answer to that question. We may need to have a test that is in fact better aligned.

Comm. Driscoll: Two things. First of all, we have to go out to bid, so we really can't talk about the Iowas per se. We can talk about the Iowas in Grade 3 because that's the company that was awarded the contract. We have to put it out to bid, so we don't know who it might be. Secondly, with respect to the correlation, we're doing the correlation between the third grade Iowa and the fourth grade MCAS. But there's one major difference, and it would be true of any national test, I believe, and that is that it's nationally normed. That means it's sort of bell curved in the categories, and that's where I think the confusion lies. When we compare ourselves nationally, our kids do better than they're going to do on a test that we develop ourselves in which we set the standard and you either meet the standard or you don't. It isn't that you get closer to the standard than your peers or you're above 50 percent, or whatever it happens to be. So that's one problem I think you're addressing -- there are children who appear to do okay on the Iowa, because it's norm referenced. And then they get hit with the MCAS and they're down a category.

Dr. Thernstrom: Yes, but that may suggest that we should not be using a norm referenced test in second and third grades. It's not giving us the information we need to have in order to intervene.

The Chairman: But it's giving us very important information on where we stand with regard to the nation, and that seems to me very helpful.

Dr. Thernstrom: If we had gone with norm referenced tests in Grades 4, 8 and 10, we would have had some important information also. But the question is, can we do better than that in our second and third grade tests so that they are better aligned with the standards we are demanding of our fourth graders?

The Chairman: We don't have to decide that question today because we have to get the money or we can't even send out for a proposal. All we're talking about today is not what test we're going to give --

Dr. Thernstrom: We are also talking about the analysis of the data that we need, the correlations that we do need to think intelligently about this question.

The Chairman: No, we don't need any correlation in order to know that we need to test the second grade. Which test we need at the second grade, we need that data. All we're voting on today is whether we want the money so we can give the test to the second grade.

Dr. Thernstrom: All right. I just want to get this process going of these correlations.

The Chairman: And all I want to do is get the money.

Comm. Driscoll: So what I'm hearing is people are ready to go for the money today, but they're requesting us on very short order to do the kind of statistical analysis that needs to be done, and we will do that.

Dr. Schaefer: I think if we are going to stick with a norm referenced test, then we really need to make clear to the public what the difference is between the two, and why there may be some discrepancies in results from one grade to the other.

Dr. Delattre: Certainly one point to be made in accord with that is that this is not a matter of asking for money for the expansion of MCAS to the second grade. This is not about MCAS at all. It's about a reading or literacy test of a different kind, for youngsters in the second grade, to be put out for bid.

Dr. Thernstrom: I have another question as well. Why aren't we testing in math? Those are the two basic skills, both literacy and math.

The Chairman: English is certainly the more important because if somebody can read they can learn mathematics on their own. If they can't read, they can't do mathematics. If we can't test everything at every year, at least English would seem to be the one that takes primacy. I suppose that's the only reason for focusing on it. It's not that the other is not a good idea. The other thing is, we know that in terms of developing phonemic awareness the earlier it's done the better. And you don't have that rapid deterioration in the capacity to learn mathematics that you have with the capacity to learn languages. There's a lot of evidence on that. The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development will give it to you in spades. Anyhow, we're not voting against a mathematics test in first, second or third grade. All we're doing is trying to see whether we're going to ask for money to give a reading test in the second grade.

Dr. Thernstrom: But all this is pertinent to how much money we ask for. Maybe we should up our request.

The Chairman: The more we get it up, the less chance we have of getting it.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it wasVOTED: that the Board of Education authorize the Commissioner to submit to the Governor a supplemental budget request for FY 1999 in the amount of $700,000, to administer a grade 2 statewide reading assessment.

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Crutchfield. The vote was unanimous.

4. Teacher Quality
Alternative Routes to Standard Certification - Discussion

Comm. Driscoll: It's been on the books since 1994 that we have the ability to develop an equivalent to what currently is the only path to standard certification, which is a master's degree. What I have put forward is a three-step process, three components, which can be completed in three years but within a five-year period. Hopefully as time goes on, for those who don't necessarily need to go through all these steps, they can go right to the performance assessment in a shorter period of time.

A couple thousand new teachers come into the field every year. As you know, that will likely increase rather than decrease over time. So what I propose is three components, the first being an induction year, the second being advanced content studies, and then the third year a clinical internship and then a performance assessment. You have the materials before you. I'm not going to go through that much more other than to say, as we look at the teachers who come into the field and unfortunately don't remain, and we talk to them, one of the things, besides the usual working conditions and salary that concern them, a big issue is isolation, and the fact that there is no mechanism for them to deal with another adult and talk through these first couple of years of teaching. As with the bilingual education proposals, I am putting this before you for discussion and hopefully to move the ball forward. It's been five years, approximately, and nothing has occurred with respect to an equivalent to a standard certification which today is a master's degree.

Dr. Schaefer: I was hoping that we could have an alternative certification that would be less than three to five years. If we think the mentoring year is important, that's while the person is teaching, but I was hoping that we could do the rest in a summer, or at most two.

Ms. Crutchfield: I'm wondering here what could be collapsed.

Mr. Peyser: I would echo that. Also, I think the Commissioner has put forward some recommendations regarding the induction program for nonstandard teachers, the Teach for Massachusetts Program, that sort of thing. It does in fact, I think, contemplate a fairly intense but brief period of preparation, course work, education-related course work, classroom

management and that sort of thing. I would hope that we could try to build on that model to try to collapse the time period.

The other thing I'd say is specifically with regard to the performance assessment at the end which is related to this INTASC or Interstate New Teacher Assessment Support Consortium. My understanding is that it is an offspring of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and it's essentially built on the same model but locally administered. I'd remind the Board that I believe at our last session we explicitly endorsed legislative amendments which would excise references to NBPTS in the legislation around certification, and I think we need to make sure that we're not sort of talking out of both sides of our mouths here. This may require further discussion and exploration on the part of the Board on what these acronyms mean. But to the extent that we do not endorse NBPTS, I think, by the same token, we cannot endorse INTASC. I would put those two issues on the table as well.

Comm. Driscoll: I think there's some development that needs to take place with INTASC, and they're not the same thing. One of the reasons that I'm talking about a performance assessment three years from now is I think it's going to take us that kind of time to really understand that there is that kind of valid assessment. Attempts to make it shorter are fine with me. In fact, I'd like to see four or five options. The fact is teachers are still going to want to get a master's degree. It may be simply because school districts pay more for a master's degree, which causes a lot of people to want to continue to get a master's degree. This option allows the teacher in year two to do that kind of course work or whatever. So I don't mean to suggest something that's by any means mutually exclusive. It is, again, trying to fill a void. We're sitting here in December of 1998, four years after the law was amended, five years after the law was passed, and the only way a teacher can get standard certification is to enroll in a master's degree program, and get the master's degree within five years.

All I'm proposing, and I'm not that sensitive so I don't mind criticism, is a way of getting to standard certification. It involves processes that I think have some advantages, like mentoring, which I think is a good thing, like the clinical experience, like performance assessment, and an analysis of one's abilities, and then filling that gap, particularly in the area of content, which also could, like the clinical experience, go towards a master's degree. I'm the last one that worries about having the state get in people's way. I know there are the Larry Birds who jump into teaching right away and do a terrific job. I'd like to think I was one. But nevertheless, as we look across the board at the importance of the quality of teaching, and we talk about the issue of subject mastery and the relationship between that and student achievement and so forth, I think a process like this is worth putting on the table. If it gets shortened or rejected completely, fine, but I think it has some advantages.

Dr. Schaefer: Has the staff done a state by state look at what's happened?

Comm. Driscoll: Yes. If you want to hear a little bit about that, why don't Mieka and Celine and Carol come on up for a second. I know we're running a little bit out of time, but we have a number of people who have been working on teacher quality, and that has included a great deal of discussion with other states. In fact, we just communicated with the Commissioner of Kentucky, which has a whole series of programs very similar to the Chapter 260. Let me introduce Mieka Freund, Celine Toomey, and I think everyone knows Carol Gilbert. So, Celine, you are on.

Ms. Toomey: Very briefly, I did want to address the issue of making this a shorter process. This is something that could certainly be done in two years. You have the full induction year the first year. In your next two summers or during the year, you could also be doing that advanced content studies piece. So it's not overly prescriptive in saying you must go through it in a three-year to five-year sequence. There is a possibility for someone who's extremely competent and motivated to go through this in a shorter period of time, so that's important to note.

We did bring a little data on what other states are doing. At this time, 18 states have 100 percent participation in a beginning teacher support program. So every single new teacher in 18 states goes through a program like that. And every other state in the country has something and is trying to move forward in getting more and more teachers in an induction program, whether it be to address issues of retention or issues of becoming more competent in classroom management.

All of those things are said to be supported with this first year of induction. At this time, 13 states are either requiring or piloting performance assessments by doing videotaping and things such as what is presented with the INTASC model. 27 states are moving in the direction of performance assessment and have reported that this is something that they're investigating further. They believe that to truly assess a teacher is to assess them in their classroom and see what they're doing in their classroom. So although it's very important to test their competence coming into the classroom, it's important then to follow that up with a test in the classroom by being videotaped or something of the like.

Dr. Delattre: Notice, by the way, that this is a different issue from the issue of alternative provisional certification. We might very well be able to design tracks into provisional certification that involve a semester in the summer where a person becomes provisionally certified, which is what a new college graduate or recent college graduate who passes the state certification test becomes, provisionally certified. It's the move from provisional to standard certification that's being addressed here, and it's clearly true that you need something other than the master's degree, and in fact you need several tracks from provisional to standard.

For my own part, I don't much care what other states are doing partly because there are 13 relying on INTASC. And if you want to know what INTASC is about, their stuff is nothing but jargon. It's useless, worse than that. " The teacher understands how children learn, develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development." Under that heading, " The teacher accesses," I guess it's suppose to be assesses. " The teacher accesses students' thinking and experiences as a basis for instructional activities by, for example, encouraging, discussing, listening and responding to group interaction." Nothing about subject matter, nothing about individual students, nothing about knowing what you're doing. " And eliciting samples of student thinking orally and in writing." Presumably I holler at the students and send them a letter to elicit their thinking. This is hopeless. These people are incompetent to assess anything or to be involved in the reform of education. The quicker you can get them out of this, the better. Then if you can abbreviate along the lines described here, abbreviate the track to standard and enlarge the number of tracks to provisional, you could really have something here for the benefit of education reform and children in the state.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, again, and it may be the same response on the National Board, and that is they appear to be the only show in town, so --

Dr. Delattre: We are the only show in town.

Comm. Driscoll: That's fine. If this Board wants to establish its own -- and we've done that in testing, both educator certification testing and student testing -- I don't have a problem with that either. The reason for dealing with other states is that, frankly, they are ahead of us, at least in terms of their focusing on this issue and working on it, and I'm talking about the Departments, not the Board.

The Chairman: They're not ahead of us when they start relying on places like INTASC. That means they're behind us because they don't even have a clue about what education really involves.

Dr. Delattre: You really want education reform in this state to be driven by INTASC? INTASC claims itself to be driven by one basic premise. Its basic premise is that an effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical understanding to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. Is that really where we want to go, given what MCAS and the rest are teaching us and what anybody with any sense already knows?

Comm. Driscoll: I will simply say again that as a Department I feel that we need to make progress in these areas. It's been on the books for four years. I don't claim to be an expert in INTASC by any stretch of the imagination. But I do know that there are programs throughout this country that do provide this kind of training, and it is helpful, from what I can gather. A beginning teacher needs support, in my judgment. This is a very difficult job, and I don't care how much student teaching or whatever you do. Teaching, to do it right, is very hard, and there are clearly two aspects to it. By the way, I might mention that I was the one who began the content institutes in the PALMS project, so I certainly agree with subject matter mastery. But to completely ignore the fact that there's another side to instruction, to teaching, which is being able

to interact with and motivate children is, I think, denying the reality.

So I'm not about to get into this black hats and white hats thing. I don't know if INTASC is good, bad or indifferent. We haven't had time to really analyze it. All I know is a number of states use it, a number of people are using it, and they feel that it increases their ability to motivate children. I'll leave it at that. I don't care whether INTASC is our model. We don't have to worry about it for three years.

The Chairman: Do you know a single first rate private school that uses it? One thing we do know is that social promotion has caused many dedicated teachers to leave the classroom. We know that violence and disruption in the classroom has caused many people to depart. We know that peer hostility to a teacher who decides to work a little harder, to stay at school after hours and try to do something special to motivate children, causes problems. We also know that we have a potential cohort of people who have retired from the military who've been very successful in the schools without elaborate preparation. We have very well educated persons who have served as housewives and mothers until the youngest child is six who are potentially available. We have layoffs from industry of persons who are highly qualified in science and mathematics and who have been advanced through their professional development well beyond any master's degree, and these are people whom we need to turn to in trying to improve the quality of our teacher corps and bring new people into the schools. We're not going to recruit any of them if the way they get there is through a one-, two- or three-year program. There's got to be some other alternative available to these people that will get them in.

Nobody is talking about not giving support to young teachers, the beginning teachers. We are not talking about not having a mentoring program or anything like that. But we have to think about this in a realistic way on what it takes to recruit persons from other fields into teaching, to make teaching more attractive than going off -- if you've got to go off and study for two or three years, you might as well study for the law and add to the burden of lawyers in this country. They've got many alternatives if they have to do that. We have to make this simple for persons who are qualified, and then we have to have other requirements for persons who are of less ability.

One thing I just want to categorically deny, because the evidence supports it: there are many people who step into the classroom effectively without ever having seen the inside of a school of education, and the private schools know this, and the private schools exploit that talent very effectively. The public schools could do this if we didn't put too many obstacles in their way. We don't have to retain any teacher who's not competent unless the teachers' union requires it, and we certainly will not hurt by introducing alternatives that bring really new talent into the place. But one of the things we need to do is to put an end to the obstacles in the school to the retention of teachers. Social promotion is one of the most demoralizing obstacles to serious teaching that goes on. In terms of the letters that I've received from persons who have quit teaching after a short while, social promotion and the hostility of fellow teachers who didn't like the idea that they worked harder than the rest of the teacher corps are among the two most frequent, and the third is violence and disruption in the schools. So it seems to me we need to go back to the drawing board and come up with a different approach and one that is not so conventional, looking over our shoulder to find out what other conventional places are doing, but see how we can meet this critical problem in a rather imaginative and nonconventional way.

Ms. Toomey: Dr. Silber, in response to your inquiry about independent schools, I actually was a teacher in an independent school in New England prior to coming to this job here. I was required, in my first year of teaching, to go through an induction period, and in my second year of teaching, as part of my evaluation, to go through a videotaped performance assessment. So, clearly, independent schools are relying on this model. In a conference that I attended with several other new teachers in independent schools, we also were videotaped and judged on our performance assessment.

The Chairman: Nobody is talking about not videotaping or testing teachers, but you don't have to make them go through a lot of courses, and you don't have them mentored all the time. You know, many teachers are put off by a mentor who's less competent than they are. We hire people at universities all the time, and we wouldn't dare tell a young Ph.D. who had never been in a class but who had a rare gift for teaching that he had to listen to what old Professor " X" says if he wants to make it. But obviously, you sit in on the classes every now and then, you find out whether they're getting the job done or aren't getting the job done, and you have student

evaluations to find out how they're doing. I'm not saying we shouldn't be testing teachers that we bring in. But the idea that you've got to go through prolonged training programs and obstacle courses, and the idea of requiring a person who's been satisfying the mathematical and scientific demands of Raytheon for several years in the designing of missiles, for example, and require those people to take a master's degree before they can have a permanent certificate to teach mathematics or science in Massachusetts, would be madness. That's the way you repel talent. That's not the way you attract talent.

Dr. Schaefer: Mr. Chairman, perhaps if we could agree on some pieces of this we could give some guidance to the Department about what we're looking for. If we're all in agreement that there should be some kind of mentoring program, then let's say that we are and that could be an element of it. If we think that performance assessment has some validity, that would be an element of it. I would be in favor of content seminars during the summer, or perhaps they could even be during the year. I think that what you're getting at is that you're suggesting that the teachers don't need to take the kind of courses that one finds in the ed. school that deal with pedagogy if in fact they're being mentored by a teacher, that one learns from observation and so on. Maybe those could be the elements that we would agree on, or if people have other suggestions, fine, but I think that we need to give some guidance.

Comm. Driscoll: I thank you for that because it's ironic to me that what I'm trying to do is develop the dialogue, and I don't really worry too much about where it ends up, except what I do know is we shouldn't stay where we are, because of all of the objections that people are making. I have to smile, because whether they're the military or whatever, teachers have to go through a master's degree program now. It's the only way. So color this not effective, if you want, but all of the criticisms of this, if it knocks it completely out of the box, then you're back to a master's degree. It seems to me that this is at least better. I never suggested it should be the only way, and I myself would love to see shorter ways, less than three years. Given my current concerns about INTASC, and it's not the same as others, I just don't think we know that much about it. We need to look at ways that we can make it better. I don't think we're going to be ready for any kind of a state-wide performance assessment within three years, and that's why I suggest three years as a beginning. But I would hope that we begin the dialogue because we've got people coming out of schools this spring, and the only route they have is this master's degree within five years. I hope that over the next couple of months we can find ways to tweak this or suggest alternatives, but hopefully we'll establish some equivalent ways of getting to standard.

Dr. Delattre: I think you're exactly right about alternatives to the master's degree, and I think you're exactly right about the emphasis you placed on content in the institutes. I agree with that entirely. When you say you don't know if INTASC is good, bad or different, if you don't know if it's good, bad or indifferent, don't put it in here. It seems to me that where you've got people who can earn a master's degree in, say, a year to 15 months, depending on what their schedule will permit, that you ought to be able to find ways of assessing performance and so on for moving from provisional to standard certification. This is not about provisional or access to the field. You ought to be able to take ways of performance assessment and the like, videotaping, or the putting together a package. It doesn't take more than two years. It doesn't take substantially more than the acquisition of a master's degree by part-time. If I were you, I would give serious thought to the possibility of submission of a substantial paper and three videotapes by a teacher to a qualified panel put together by this Board or by the Department and this Board. There are lots of ways to go, and I don't think that a two-year cap is in any way inordinate.

Comm. Driscoll: Let me just ask this question: Is there anything wrong with both?

Dr. Delattre: With both what?

Comm. Driscoll: With both a two year and a three year and a four and a half year or a year and a half? Again, my hope is to put things forward, and develop a dialogue. What I'm hearing very clearly is members of this Board feel strongly that three years is too long, and I understand that. I would love to try and develop alternatives that are shorter because I don't have objection to that myself. But the question is, what if someone wants to go through a program such as this?

Dr. Delattre: Dave, as long as you have one that doesn't take more than two years, I don't care if you've got 3 years to 50. But if you don't have anything that is reasonably short, then people are

going to opt for the master's degree instead, and then we're going to have the same kind of moves through education courses and the like, from provisional to standard, that are not getting us where we need to go.

Dr. Thernstrom: I agree, Dave, three years is too long. We need something reasonably short. I also agree with the Chairman, and I think we're all agreed, we need to open the doors of teaching to talent that's not now gravitating towards the schools, but we don't want an obstacle course here. But two thoughts. One, the private schools do educate a very different student population in general, so it's really hard to say, it seems to me, well, if they do it, the public schools can too. And two, one of the problems I have with educational reform in general is that there is so little in the way of rigorous evaluation that goes on for existing programs. I don't know, for instance, of any kind of real tracking of what has happened to the teachers who've gone from the military, let's say, into the schools or from layoffs from industries into the schools. And if you do have some nice data on exactly what we know in the way of success or failure of such programs, I would very much like to see it.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, I thank you, and you've brought up another area of tremendous need, and that is that we in this state are not able to track the teachers the way we should. We don't have the computer capabilities. This issue about whether people are teaching in their area of certification, other states are much better at tracking that than we are. As for certification data, the best thing we do is go to the Teachers' Retirement Board because we know if they're paying " X" number of dollars in, then there are probably teachers in the system. That the's how bad it is. Naturally our first order of business is the student information system which is so vital with the MCAS. But right after that has to be this issue of teacher data. We don't have good data here, other than this kind of anecdotal information. So I agree with that, and we're building that system.

Dr. Thernstrom: I am totally hostile to anectodal information.

Dr. Schaefer: Was there any agreement on the Board about those elements for coming back with a program?

Comm. Driscoll: I heard agreement.

5. Charter Schools - Update On FY'99 Application Process - Discussion

Mr. Hamilton: The first bit of business in regard to the memo in your packet is that a charter school application was mistakenly left off the list presented to you. There are two applications from Lowell, the Lowell Charter School that's listed here and another one, the Lowell Community Charter School. So there are nine Commonwealth finalists who submitted applications on Friday and one Horace Mann applicant finalist who also submitted an application on Friday.

We received fewer applications this year than last. In a historical pattern, we receive fewer applications when there are fewer charters available. It is obviously a more competitive process than it was even last year. And one of the lessons we learned last year was that applications tend not to improve from the prospectus stage to the finalist stage as much as we might hope. So if an application didn't cut it at the prospectus stage, we held the line. This year a third of the applicants moved to the finalist stage. Last year it was closer to half of the applicants moved to the finalist stage. This will allow us, I think, to have a higher quality, more rigorous review of the final applications to which I would like to invite your participation. We'll be sending each of you a full 50-page copy of each of the ten charter school applications. Last year several of you complained that you hadn't seen the applications, so this year we're going to give them to you. Beware what you ask for. You can recycle them or you can read them. I just am going to send them to you no matter what. If you have questions about them or questions that you would like us --

Dr. Thernstrom: Can we ask you not to?

Mr. Hamilton: If you want to hand me a note after this meeting indicating you don't want the

copies, then we'll save them. In any event, we will be interviewing applicants in the middle part of January based on our review of their application. If you have questions in your review of the applications that you'd like us to pose to the applicant groups, I'd be happy to pose those questions on your behalf.

A few other differences this year than last year, we are planning to have recommendations for you by the 26th of January, at your next Board meeting. You will not vote on the award of charters at that meeting, but at a meeting in February as prescribed by law. I don't know yet -- we talked internally about whether it would be at the next regularly scheduled meeting in February, which I think is going to be late February, or whether it would be at a special meeting in earlier February. To me, the key question about that, in addition to your schedules, is that the more time we leave between the time the recommendations are made and the time that you vote, the more political pressures you may feel, from legislators calling you, perhaps others trying to weigh in, angry parents and applicants trying to persuade you otherwise. So while we want to give you time to consider the recommendations, I think we should at least be mindful that the more time you leave between the recommendations and vote, the more politicized the process may become. Any questions on the application process?

We also included in this memo just a reminder about the charter renewal process. I think you'll be seeing your first recommendations on the renewal of charters at the regular scheduled meeting in February. We already have received applications for the renewal of several charters, and we have hired a firm called School Works that is designing a protocol and will conduct three- to four-day site visits to a charter school applying for renewal of its charter. We will take their application and the site-visit report, which is intended to both corroborate and augment that renewal application, and make a recommendation based on all the information we have. In many cases I don't think these recommendations are going to be difficult for us to make or for you to vote on because the records of the schools will be such that it's easy to say that their charter ought to be renewed. There are, however, going to be some cases where it's a tough call. And in some cases, it won't be a tough call about whether a charter ought to be renewed or not, but it may require a remarkable strength of will for you to in fact revoke a charter if, for instance, a school has a bad academic record but is popular with parents. They'll certainly be streaming in here to tell you how much they like their school and how they don't want you to close it down, but in fact their record warrants that we revoke their charter.

So I raise this merely as a reminder and really to affirm that we are committed, as a Department, to fulfilling the promise of a charter school model, that it is an exchange of greater freedom for more accountability. This isn't a case where we decide whether the state needs to intervene or try to take over a school. We're not in the business of propping up charter schools that can't operate well. We're in the business of revoking a charter if the school has not done well enough in four to five years, and I ask that you work with us to hold to that high standard.

Ms. Crutchfield: How many charter schools are coming up for renewal?

Mr. Hamilton: Fourteen. The first 14 charter schools that started in 1995 must apply for renewal between now and the 1st of August. We expect that perhaps 10 of those 14 will apply for renewal between now and spring, and then we'll be able to conduct renewal inspections to 10 of those schools by the end of the year. Obviously the easiest cases will come first, and the more difficult cases will come last. Schools that know that they have a less than excellent record want more time to either create better data or to make changes.

The Chairman: They're going to create the data?

Mr. Hamilton: Well, by having students take tests, that sort of thing.

The Chairman: I'd rather have important data.

Mr. Hamilton: However you'd like to say it. We'll have more data on them. In some cases it may not change our judgment, but they have until August to submit the final application.

Mr. Peyser: Can you tell us whether the same criteria were applied to the Commonwealth

charter applications as were applied to the Horace Mann charters?

Mr. Hamilton: By and large, yes, the criteria are the same. In fact, this year we had the benefit of several Horace Mann Charter School leaders helping us review the applications. We had 4 Horace Mann applications this year, that's down from 13 last year. This single application is the only one that met that criteria. It's an international baccalaureate proposal from Springfield. Last year many of the Horace Mann applications seemed to result from a mistaken thought that the Horace Mann Charter School initiative was like a blue-ribbon-award program, where if they had a terrific program going they could apply for charter status and get federal money and be recognized as having an excellent program. Our standard is they have to be proposing to do something, either expand a good program or create one with the autonomy that is a part of the Horace Mann model. This year's smaller number of applications I think means that people recognize that it's not an awards program.

Also, I think there's great ambiguity in the law with regard to Horace Mann Charter Schools. We spent the better part of the summer, Rhoda Schneider and I and lawyers from many school districts, trying to figure out who controls a Horace Mann Charter School, a district or the school itself. It is rife with ambiguities, and I think lots of districts understand that it's not clear. Another trend we're seeing with Horace Mann, is that districts are willing to submit an application for a program that serves out-of-school youth. They're not quite as willing, it seems, to propose a program for dealing with the traditional students, but maybe that will change with time.

Dr. Schaefer: Are we going to make some recommendations to correct the ambiguities?

Mr. Hamilton: You already did, at your last meeting. Thanks to Jim Peyser's recommendations, we drafted legislation and sent it to the Governor to help clarify a number of these problems. I know that the existing Horace Mann Charter Schools have already formed a league of their own and are lobbying the Legislature to solve some of those problems as well.

Mr. Peyser: One last quick question. On this Springfield Horace Mann Charter School, does it have, at this moment, the sign-off of the local school district and the local teachers' union?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes. For a while that was in question. I know the school committee was struggling whether to approve this or not, but on Friday we received their signed certification statement, from both the superintendent and the union representative.

6. Update On Lawrence

Dr. Schaefer: First of all, I want to remind the Board of the role of the Board's Lawrence oversight committee. This is from the memorandum of agreement: " The Commissioner and the Board shall evaluate the district's progress toward making improvements in its government and management and in the adequacy of the educational programs and services provided to district students." On December 8th, Jim Peyser and I on behalf of the Board's Lawrence oversight committee met with the Superintendent in Lawrence. The others present at the meeting were Dave Driscoll, Rhoda Schneider, the Superintendent's assistant and one member of the Lawrence School Committee. The Superintendent gave us, at that meeting, copies of her first quarterly report, and what you have in the Board book is a three-page highlight of the full report. The full report is 24 pages, and it's available at the Department if you're interested in seeing the whole thing.

Jim and I asked the Superintendent to use baseline data from the time of her start in Lawrence and to set specific targets for improvement that we could measure over time. We asked her to focus in future progress reports on a few key priority areas and what action steps she intends to take in those areas. We suggested to her what the critical issues were that were central to school improvement in Lawrence. We talked about financial management, a school-facilities plan, a leadership team that she needs to hire, the analysis and use of the MCAS results, English language acquisition, professional development, and the steps that are being taken to get reaccreditation for the high school.

In terms of our next steps, the oversight committee will schedule future meetings with the superintendent, and those will take place about ten days after she issues the quarterly report. We also intend to meet with the Lawrence School Committee as part of the committee's evaluation of governance, management and educational progress in Lawrence. And, of course, as you all know, the Department through the Commissioner and Juliane Dow and others will be working with the Superintendent and the School Committee on an ongoing basis and providing technical assistance in evaluating progress there. I want to thank Jim for coming and David and Rhoda for all her assistance. Hopefully the next meeting, when we do go back, will be a meeting of the full committee which also includes Bill and Pat.

7. Approval Of Grants - Vote

The Chairman: Please note with regard to these items, when it's " funds allocated," that's all the money there is to spend. And when it's " funds requested," that just means how many applications we had for how much money. So if you see one where there's a million dollars allocated but funds requested are two and a half million dollars, don't get excited about the two and a half million dollars. They don't exist. We just have to divide the money allocated with the applicants according to the best judgment.

Comm. Driscoll: Mr. Chairman, in a separate mailing, I've added the academic support services grants, the first two million dollars of that, as well as a revised grant list for the essential skills program.

Dr. Delattre: One word. I will of course vote for the motion, but I'd like to say how dismaying it seems to me that we're approving grants for Advanced Placement and the offering of Advanced Placement courses where they are not offered and the total amount being awarded by the state is $40,000.

Comm. Driscoll: Absolutely right.

The Chairman: That really doesn't even scratch the surface of the problem.

Mr. Irwin: That's always been a bone of contention. That was more than one word too, Ed, by the way, but we've always requested more money, and it just doesn't come through.

The Chairman: And part of the problem there, as you can see, is the funds requested is $109,000. You come over here to technology and we've asked for three million dollars to get $660,000, and that's not the way to improve the school system.

Dr. Thernstrom: Maybe the solution is for us to ask for three million instead of a hundred thousand dollars. Maybe we'd get a little more money.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it wasVOTED: that the Board of Education approve the grants as presented by the Commissioner.

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Crutchfield. The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it wasVOTED: that the Board of Education approve the School Building Assistance grants (final approved costs) as presented by the Commissioner.

The motion was made by Dr. Delattre and seconded by Ms. Crutchfield. The vote was unanimous.

Other Business -- Program Approval -- Discussion

Comm. Driscoll: We have that issue of program approval, relating to certification programs and the percent of students or graduates who pass the certification test. Just a couple of issues, and Board members may want to engage in more discussion. As we try and put some

recommendations forward, I think a clarification is needed. The Governor and the Board of Higher Education talk about an 80 percent passing rate for institutions with respect to the educator test. The first question, and I think most important, that's been raised by a number of institutions, is about the base that we use. We know there are students who are really not affiliated with an institution, so that's easy because the institution simply indicates that they are not affiliated, even though they claim they were.

Dr. Thernstrom:. We want to know what students are in fact not affiliated who claim that they are.

Comm. Driscoll: When someone puts down an institution and has never been there a day in their life.

Ms. Crutchfield: In terms of an undergraduate degree?

Comm. Driscoll: Right. Or they thought they wanted to go there but never went there, or they plan to go there some day. In other words, it's very clear that there's no affiliation between that student and the institution, and that happens. That's the clear one.

The next issue is a student who does have an association with an institution, but the institutions have raised whether they should be held responsible for those students who they would not recommend take the test under any circumstances -- maybe a student who's performed very poorly. Institutions would indicate those students before they know the scores, so it isn't that they say we'll take all the ones who passed and we'll claim they were recommended. The question is whether in our 80 percent we would include all students who have some affiliation with an institution, or whether we're going to allow institutions to make a distinction between those students they would recommend as being ready to take the educator test and those that aren't.

Dr. Delattre: Let me be absolutely clear that when I pointed out that Boston University would notify you of students we approved and who had passed our own literacy tests, I never meant to raise the question of who should be counted in the 80 percent, and I do not want to be lumped together with those who say, well, the 80 percent ought to come out of those who are recommended by the school. I do not subscribe to that view. I do not consider notifying the state of approval to have anything to do with the cohort who are to be counted toward the 80 percent. So I want to make sure that my position is completely divorced from that position.

Ms. Gilbert: May I clarify this a little bit? Because we have provisional certification, a person may complete a bachelor's degree and then seek certification. And in order to do that, they must pass the certification test. But if we're going to be closing down programs, these are people who have never even entered a program, so these kinds of distinctions will enable us to figure out which programs to hold accountable for the preparation of that person versus those who may have just gone to that institution, may be sophomores and for whatever reasons want to take that test. This would be another way of not allowing programs to disown people but to at least identify those who've even entered their doors.

The Chairman: Why couldn't we solve that problem -- I'm sorry. Why don't you go ahead.

Ms. Urbach: I was just wondering, if the school has the opportunity to say that they wouldn't recommend a student, will they be required to prove why they didn't? Because doesn't that just leave the door open for all schools to say, you know, we don't recommend anybody or, we only recommend the top three in our class, and then they never run the risk of a penalty.

Ms. Gilbert: One other complexity is that some schools would like to be able to add value, if you will, by helping people in their program. So if they use the test for diagnostic purposes when someone is toward the beginning of their program, then they can figure out what kinds of course work and training to provide them with so that they will be ready by the time they enter student teaching, and by the time they graduate. It's a question of would the Board like to allow schools to use the results for diagnostic purposes as well as this critical decision-making purpose of closing the program. If so, that would entail some kind of cumulative pass rate. It just adds some levels of complexity that we would like to explore.

Comm. Driscoll: My question is much simpler, and I appreciate all that, but I want to make sure that this Board is clear on the rules of the game. It may be that this Board feels that if a student is part of an institution, then that institution owns them. I just want that clarified, because it's important if we at a future date talk about a percentage. This has not been brought by any member of this Board, but rather by a number of people in institutions across the state. So I want to make sure this Board is comfortable with whatever definition we use.

The Chairman: Well, is there some reason why we don't want to restrict this test to those who are recommended for graduation by institutions? If the only people we were counting are those who have been recommended for graduation, that puts the stamp of the university on them. And if we count the percentage that pass under that provision, would that solve the problem?

Dr. Thernstrom: I'm lost on this whole topic, and maybe it's because I haven't paid sufficient attention to it. Maybe this is a dumb remark, but I don't understand why we're talking about closing down programs here. Let the market work. If kids want to go to a school where there's nobody passing the test, fine, let them pay their tuition, and waste their money.

Dr. Delattre: We're not talking about closing down programs. This doesn't have to do with the closing down of programs. It has to do with state approval of programs.

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, it's the same thing.

Dr. Delattre: No. They are very different things. In the market, people can choose to attend institutions that are not approved to do all the preparatory work for provisional certification. They can go to those institutions. They can graduate. They can get a practicum somewhere else. This is not about closing programs, let alone closing institutions. The question is, if you are going to have an 80 percent pass rate, factored over various years and so on, as a condition for state approval, the question is inescapable: 80 percent of whom?

Dr. Thernstrom: No, I was going back to square one on the 80 percent.

Dr. Delattre: But it's not about closing or opening. You can handle a fair portion of the confusions and ambiguities, in my judgment, in what's been written up so far in the appeals in New York State by saying, yes, the 80 percent is to be drawn from those who take the test and have been recommended for graduation. Currently or within a time certain, you're not going to want to be in the position where the institution is responsible for everybody who takes the test that graduated 15 or 20 years ago. You have to have some kind of a ceiling on how long ago they graduated. You also have to have some provision for how many times you will count a person in the 80 percent. Suppose that a person takes the test in April and fails, takes the test again in July and fails, takes the test again in October and fails, does this count three times against the institution, does it count twice against the institution, or does it count once against the institution? This is tricky ground, and you're not going to settle it in an hour of discussion today. But it seems to me exactly right that the place to start is with students recommended for graduation either currently or within the past two or three years.

I would urge Carol that you and the Department, talk with NES. I've mentioned before that NES has a history of developing practice tests for teacher-education programs. Rather than using the actual state test for diagnostic examinations, practice tests are made for programs in teacher education to use for diagnostic purposes locally. That preserves the security of the state tests, limits the expense of constant re-creation of the state tests, and yet gives a fair and level playing field for practice. So if I may, my own suggestion is that you're going to need more time with this before you can put to the Board a proposal that addresses each of these kinds of issues.

Comm. Driscoll: Can I just ask, using your example, say a student took it in April and failed, took it in July and failed and took it in October and passed, isn't that student considered a pass, ultimately?

Dr. Delattre: I won't answer the question. But you are right, it's an important question. I don't think it's obvious that this student just counts as a pass. It's not obvious at all.

Dr. Koplik: These and similar questions prompted the recommendation in the " Creating Tomorrow" report for the joint commission between the two boards, because the Board of Higher Education wrestled with these same debates. David alluded earlier to the lack of a database on teacher education. We found that as David and I were going back and forth and the staff was going back and forth to find some important data. That issue was brought up previously. The 80 percent is an issue. Program approval, certification and so on is an issue. I think that the formation of that joint group does two things: It brings together necessary conversation between Higher Education and K through 12, and then it also brings together a focus group to wrestle with these issues. They don't have authority to make any law or regulation, but they can come back to the respective boards with a series of recommendations after they have gone through all the deliberation and consideration. I think this discussion reinforces the need for that kind of a commission to be put together.

Dr. Schaefer: So you're suggesting that the Board of Education not come up with a recommendation until this group meets together, does its work and then comes back.

Dr. Koplik: Yes. I had imagined that group would wrestle with it. Membership from the Board of Education, membership from Higher Education, let them wrestle with it.

Dr. Thernstrom: Absolutely. These questions are too complicated for us to run through them.

Mr. Peyser: I have two more questions for the task force to consider. One has to do with the timing of the certification exam, relative to hiring decisions, and putting that in the context of being recommended for graduation and whether that creates kind of a timing crunch that may be difficult to overcome. The other is the very large number of candidates taking the test who are described as unaffiliated. I mean, obviously the people from out of state or who have been out of school for a while are in that category, but it would be interesting, at least for me, to understand exactly who those people are and why they're unaffiliated and whether there's some unintended consequences associated with establishing the standard. We may find ourselves with 30 students who are affiliated with an institution and 2000 who are not affiliated with any institution.

Ms. Schaefer: Did you have information on that?

Ms. Toomey: No. But I fell into that category of someone who was unaffiliated. If your undergraduate school didn't offer teacher certification, you may have gone to several different institutions to do your course work in education.

Comm. Driscoll: I will simply say, from my perspective, this has been helpful to me because part of the delay on some of these major issues we've talked about, may have to do with the kind of communication I'm sending to Board members. So I'm thinking about some things I ought to do in between meetings that would help.

Dr. Schaefer: Is there an agreement on this 80 percent issue that this Board will not come up with a recommendation until we've heard back from that joint group?

The Chairman: The sentiment is that we punt. I think it's a mistake, but it is a very popular point of view. I think it's got the overwhelming majority of this Board.

Dr. Schaefer: That we're punting for now?

The Chairman: Right. Eventually we'll get around to it, I'm sure. Decision delayed.

Dr. Schaefer: One other thing. You sent us this supplemental information including the legislation that was filed by Representative Lane. Were we to be involved in any way? Was some analysis of this going to be done?

Comm. Driscoll: No. I just wanted to make sure, since it involved a number of issues, that you

got a copy of it as it was sent to me. He's filed it as legislation. It touches on a number of major issues.

Dr. Schaefer: Right. Well, what I'm asking is, is the Board going to take a stand on any of the things that are in here, because there are some important things that we I think may agree or disagree with. I just want to know what the status of it is.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, the issues will be raised legislatively, and we'll need to bring those to the Board as they're being heard. This is so comprehensive, you may want to discuss it further. It's up to you. I can certainly put it on an agenda to talk about. There's a lot of issues there.

In closing, just so Massachusetts doesn't think they're the only state dealing with testing and that K to 12 students aren't the only students who feel this pressure of assessment, may I tell you a small story? At Duke University there were four sophomores taking organic chemistry. They did so well on all their quizzes, midterms and labs, they each had an A so far for the semester. These four friends were so confident that the weekend before finals they decided to go up to the University of Virginia and party with some of their friends up there. They had a great time. However, after all the partying, they slept all day Sunday and didn't make it back to Duke until early Monday morning. Rather than taking the final then, they decided to find their professor after the final and explain to him why they missed it. They explained that they had gone up to UVA for the weekend with the plan to come back to study, but unfortunately they had a flat tire on the way back, didn't have a spare and couldn't get help for a long time. As a result, they missed the final. The professor thought it over and then agreed they could make up the final the following day. They were elated and relieved. They studied that night and went in the next day at the time the professor had told them. He placed them in separate rooms and handed each of them a test booklet and told them to begin. Each looked at the first problem worth five points. It was something simple about free radical formation. " Great," they all said at the same time, each in his own separate room, " this is going to be easy." Each finished the problem and then turned the page. On the second page was written, " For 95 points, which tire?"

On a motion duly made and seconded, it wasVOTED: that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting at 12:25 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

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

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll
Secretary to the Board

Board of Education/Regular Meeting Minutes
December 14, 1998