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Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

Minutes

Tuesday, November 10, 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
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
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

Members Absent
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington

Also Present:
Maryellen Coughlin
Registered Professional Reporter

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

Comments From The Chairman

The Chairman: The meeting will come to order. We're very pleased, first of all, to be in Worcester. Roberta, would you like to introduce local dignitaries?

Dr. Schaefer: Thank you, Dr. Silber. And of course I would like to thank the board and the department for coming to Worcester. And I would like to introduce the Superintendent of Worcester Public Schools, Dr. James Garvey, who has been superintendent for the five and a half years since the Education Reform Act was passed. And recently the school system was awarded the Governor's Award for Excellence in Education, that was just a couple of weeks ago, for all the progress that the school system has made. And I would also like to introduce Deborah Springpeace, who is the principal of the Seven Hills Charter School. This is the third year that the school has been running. And George Tetler, who is the chairman of the board of trustees of the Seven Hills Charter School. Also, one of its founders. George has had a history of founding things in the city.

He had the foresight to be one of the founders and the first president of the Worcester Municipal Research Bureau, of which I'm the executive director, and he is one of the people responsible for hiring me. So George has a very good history of founding organizations within the city. And with

that, I would like to turn it over to Dr. Garvey.

Dr. Garvey: Thank you very much, Dr. Schaefer. As the Superintendent of Worcester Public Schools, I want to welcome the board to our fair city. I want to assure you that public education is alive and well in the City of Worcester and in the Worcester Public Schools. And as Dr. Schaefer mentioned, the Governor on October 29th presented us with the Governor's first annual Excellence in Education Award to the public schools in Massachusetts. So we're very proud of that fact, and we're very proud of the accomplishments we have made over the last five and a half years under education reform. None of this would have been possible without the continuing support of the board of education, and we thank you for that. We had last spring the department of revenue in the Worcester Public Schools for three and a half months, six full-time auditors, and they presented a very favorable report on the Worcester Public Schools, and I think that's one of the deciding factors for the Governor coming to Worcester on October 29th and giving us this excellence award. Under the best practices in the report, we were noted for the work we have done with student achievement in using the test scores for diagnostic work with our young people. And at this time, with your indulgence, I would like to call on the deputy superintendent, just for a few minutes, to outline for you and pass out to you some material on how we're using testing as a diagnostic tool in this school system, and we've been acknowledged for the work we've done in that regard. Dr. Caradonio, please.

The Chairman: Superintendent, while you're passing out this material, I had the opportunity of reading your auditor's report which was sent, I think, to all members of the board. It was an excellent report. It was more detailed and quite objective. It was a great supplement to the evaluation that was made by that state oversight committee. It was an excellent report. You also mentioned your welcome to this fair city. I was in this city many times back in 1990 when I was running for governor, and it's hard for me to believe my eyes when I see the transformation that's taken place in Worcester in the last eight years. This city is really on a tremendous rebound. It's a real renaissance in Worcester, and it is so good to see it. Also, it is such a delight to see these lovely children. And I've already had a chance to mention to Mrs. Springpeace, in walking along the walls and looking at the examples of student work -- I had a chance to read most of those writing samples that were outside a second grade classroom -- that is the finest example of writing that I have seen in any visitation of a school that I have made in Massachusetts. It's better writing at the second grade than I have seen in 50 or 60 schools that I've visited, and I just want to congratulate you.

Dr. Caradonio: Good morning. I wanted to give you a very quick overview, especially on the eve of the MCAS test, that diagnostic testing is indeed alive and well in Worcester Public Schools, and it does and it will work given time and resources to teachers, and I think this stands as a testimonial, and I want to give my thanks to the hundreds of Worcester Public School teachers, curriculum support staff and principals who over the last four and a half years have been using diagnostic testing. In the packet the first thing we wanted to just call your attention to is the guiding principles that we use on our testing program. And number one is that our business is to increase student achievement, not test scores. We believe that there are many ways to measure students' achievements. That assessment is 'inside' the curriculum and instruction process. That we must follow ethical guidelines and procedures in using standardized tests. That we must above all use testing data to diagnose and help. We must train our principals and teachers. And parental awareness and support is essential.

If you boil down our diagnostic approach, our goal was to answer teachers' three questions. Teachers want to know: Whom do I teach; what do I teach them; and how do I teach them. On page number three, you have a sample of the item analysis that comes from the Iowa grade three test. We, as a school district, purchased this for all our teachers, and the grade four teachers and grade three teachers will use this. And as you see, it gives much the same information in a different format that you are providing teachers now through the MCAS program. It will tell you the items. It will tell you the percent correct. And then it gives you a very clear idea of what children got what items correct. And even if children didn't finish the test on this, you'll see a lot of zeros. This is, again, fictitious data. So that teachers can read down and see how a student did, and teachers can read across and see where the class had difficulties. And then what our teachers do is that we -- we went to the publisher or instructional materials, and they have what they call acorrelation guide, and they correlate the items in the Iowa test with the instructional materials. So on Page 4, for example, if students had a problem in inferring traits, feelings or motivations of characters, then teachers know inside their instructional materials this is where to go to teach that for children. So in many ways we become like doctors and nurses, you diagnose, and then

you have a prescription, and then you retest and you reteach.

The second thing that we've done is the whole issue of a cohort analysis. Most of testing in this country is a grade to grade analysis. You compare Grade 3 of '97 with Grade 3 of '98. So you have different students; you have the same test; you have the same version of the test; you have it given the same time of year, usually in April, Grade 3 Iowa; but you give it in different school years. What we started to do is called cohort analysis, where we take the same students; we take the same tests, there are compound versions; we test the students in the fall and then in the spring; and we test them within the same school year. It greatly alleviates the mobility problem because you're only testing the same kids and seeing the progress that they made and the value added of your instruction. So I provided for you a sample of a report we did on our first cohort analysis of which we had a sample of 459 match students. That means these were the students in Grade 3 that were tested on an Iowa, I believe it was called Form M, and then we tested them later on Form K. And you will find that in this report that 60 percent of the schools made significant difference -- improvement in vocabulary. 60 percent of the schools on Page 7 made a significant improvement in reading comprehension. On Page 8, 60 percent of the schools tested made a significant difference in progress in total reading. And 80 percent of the schools improved on spelling. Chart F on Page 10 gives you a snapshot picture of how all these ten schools did. And what you can see, out of -- there were 40 possible places where you could go up or down. In 65 percent of them or 26 examples or incidences, there were statistically significant gains, for 65 percent. There was only one statistically significant loss in all the schools. And we also used this to diagnose the schools. You will notice, for example, schools B, C, H, I and J all have significant increases, and School F is getting more attention from the deputy superintendent and the superintendent than they might have wished to have.

The last part of our little sampler, Pages 12 on, will actually show you how many students made significant gains between the fall and the spring testing. So on Page 12, 59 percent of the students made gains in vocabulary, 61 percent in reading, 61 percent in total reading and 65 percent made positive gains in spelling. The last thing I wanted to present to you was some of our data that we do on mobility. And charts on Page 18 -- Chart 18 is the 1997 data for the Iowa test, and you can clearly see that the students who took the test who have been in our schools since Grade 1 significantly -- statistically significantly out performed the students who are only in our schools for one grade or Grade 3. Well, as we know with the MCAS, one year of data does not a pattern make, so that we did it the second year. We just finished this, and I wanted to share it with you. And lo and behold, you see the same pattern, that the kids who were in the Worcester Public Schools since Grade K to 1 clearly out scored the kids who were in Grade 3 and also in Grade 2, and there is that report.

So, again, I really want to thank the Board. I believe that, for the item-analysis report, Worcester has been a laboratory. We worked very closely with Jeff Nellhaus and Advanced Systems. We are ecstatic with the reports that are going to be provided. We see that MCAS achievement more and more relies on other variables, mobility, as well as student attendance in schools. It is absolutely critical that we look at this; we challenge parents to send their children to school, and we have high standards for attendance, and our school board has increased attendance requirements in our schools, and it's been very helpful. And the last thing is, better diagnosis, I believe, would be more testing. And if you looked at Connecticut and you looked at Texas, I believe -- and I was just in Texas, Dr. Silber and I both grew up there -- I believe that the success they have had in their accountability program is to test every year, and so people get, again like doctors and nurses, get to see a prescriptive pattern of kids. Right now for our kids it's a long way from the fourth grade to the eighth grade, and we would welcome spreading out the testing, or we would welcome doing more aligned diagnostic testing. So thank you very much, and we are excited about receiving the MCAS results, and we look forward to working with all our kids and all our parents to move forward to the 21st century. Thank you.

Dr. Thernstrom: I have a quick question. I'm thrilled by these results, of course. When you say that School F got -- had gotten perhaps more attention than it in fact wants, what form has that attention taken? What are you doing with schools that are not in fact -- when student achievement is in fact not going up?

Dr. Caradonio: Each of our schools has a school-improvement plan which we take very, very seriously. In addition, they have an MCAS-preparation plan which is an expansion of their improvement plan. In several of our schools which have high mobility, high rates of poverty, we

talked with the faculty, we talked with the principals, and they decided that they wished to use Success For All, which is a program at Johns Hopkins University. It requires an 80 percent acceptance by the faculty. I'm proud to say that Worcester has six schools fully involved in Success For All, and that one of our schools is a national demonstration site for a project which is now in over 800 schools across the United States. So we have taken a very long range approach in terms of working with Success For All, which is a very intensive early literacy program. We also have at that school reading recovery which works with 20 percent of the students who are in the bottom of Grade 1 to remediate their reading and hopefully keep them out of special ed. and provide them, with the intensive remediation that they need. Curriculum alignment in that school, we pay a lot of attention to that. And then the social services. The other wonderful thing about the Success For All model is it brings in the whole issue of attendance and involving the parents. So there are people whose job is just to work with attendance. If the kid doesn't come to school, they go visit the parents, they bring them in. So it's a real wrap-around model of working on the whole child. That started in that school about a year ago, and we haven't started to see again in normally the results we see, but the groundwork is really laid to make sure that the literacy in that school at the early grades is very solid as students move forward. Our biggest problem in that school, I believe one year it had a 63-percent mobility rate.

Dr. Schaefer: Those ten schools that you did the cohort analysis in -- were they all doing poorly?

Dr. Caradonio: Yes. And I would like to add that after we did this one year, we came back to the principals -- this is unbelievable. I had 17 more principals want to do testing. So this year we did 27 schools, and we have 41 elementary schools. So the other principals really saw this and -- and when testing makes sense to school people, they love it, and so our next report to the school committee will be on 27 schools, not ten.

Chairman Silber: If it weren't for the mobility factor, couldn't you reduce the cost and the confusion of the cohort testing by simply taking the grades that they made by the second-grade examination and then comparing those to the grades they had in the third-grade examination, April to April? Wouldn't that be just as good and a more direct way of doing it?

Mr. Caradonio: It would. This approach, though, allows the teacher to do something with that child during the year.

The Chairman: But why wouldn't the other? You give the teacher -- you let the scores follow the student that comes into the third-grade class, and the teacher would know where that child was. And so far as the new children in her class are concerned that were not tested the previous year, then you would just give the cohort test to that minority of students instead of to the entire group.

Mr. Caradonio: That is another approach. Many of these schools are Title I schools, and this is the kind of testing that they do in Title I schools, so we're also fulfilling that obligation to provide extra data.. But that is another way to do it, and I think we're going to do some of that, to look at the kids who took the Iowa Grade 3 in '97 and what's their MCAS scores in Grade 4 in '98. We need to get that. And we're now working with all our schools to implement a software program which will allow them to build a longitudinal profile for every child no matter what test they use, so that's what we really need to get to. Again, you go to your doctor, he says, " Gee, your cholesterol is high." He doesn't tell you to come back in four years. He tells you to do something and come back and see him in three weeks, and so we have got to do the same things with many of our kids. So that's another approach.

The Chairman: Thank you very much. What's next on the program? I gather these children are here for something.

Mr. Tetler: Dr. Silber and Members of the Board, my name is George Tetler, and I'm Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Seven Hills Charter School. I want to welcome all of you to our school. We're pleased to have you here. It's a pleasure to follow Dr. Caradonio with whom I've had considerable interaction over the course of my life in Worcester. We serve as co-directors of the Alliance for Education, and we've had spirited interaction along the way. I'm a fan of Jim Garvey's and an admirer of his, and he's done some tremendous things for the children of

Worcester, and he deserves a lot of credit for his hard work and service to this community.

You are sitting in a school that not more than three years ago was a ramshackle, abandoned public-school building. It is 100 years old. The trustees of this school and its staff worked feverishly to put it in the condition that you see it today. It cost in excess of four and a half million dollars for us to accomplish that feat, and none of that was publicly funded. The debt that was incurred, of course, is being paid through public funds in the form of the reimbursement that we received from the charter school statute, but it is a monument, I think, to the level of enthusiasm for the formation of a charter school that this building and all that goes on inside of it exists today. Critics of the charter-school movement in this city, and I presume throughout the state, had a chorus to the effect that they wanted us to play on a level playing field, and it is ironic, indeed, that the level playing field is tilted dramatically against charter schools when it comes to facilities. And it is our hope, as a charter school community, that the Board and Commissioner and others can take the necessary steps to correct what we perceive to be that inequity. It is a dramatic burden on charter schools to finance capital through operating budgets, and that is in fact the state of affairs in Massachusetts today. This community is a community diverse and rich and enthusiastic. It has a terrific staff led by a wonderful principal, Deborah Springpeace, and parents are fully involved. We emphasize values as well as a rich curriculum. We bring a number of special features to children, including computers in the home and a longer school year. But most importantly are the people of this community. It is truly a community here at Seven Hills Charter School, and we're delighted to have you all here. It's my privilege to introduce to you Deborah Springpeace, our principal, who will introduce our students to you.

Ms. Springpeace: And I promise to be brief because I'm not sure how much longer they can sit still. We are very honored to have the Board of Education join us at Seven Hills Charter School today. As Scott Hamilton reminded me as he came through the door, this is in fact a historic event, that is the first Board of Education meeting to be held at a charter school, and we are so delighted to have you choose Seven Hills. We were honored by your statement, Dr. Silber, about the writing of our children because it alludes to the success and the growing achievement level of our children through the rigorous academic program that we offer here. We also, as George Tetler said, stress values and exposure to the arts, and it's that commitment to arts education that formed the basis of a unique experience last year. In an attempt to have our children better understand the history of this city, particularly since this building was erected in 1898, we formed a coalition with a world-renowned composer of children's music under the auspices of a grant, and Carmino Ravosa is that composer, wrote an entire show for us based on the history of the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. The children have performed that musical all over Worcester, throughout the state and even in Chicago and Colorado Springs. Today I feel like John Kennedy when he said he was simply the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris. I'm just the principal who accompanies a world-class show choir today, and we're delighted to introduce them to you. Please enjoy.

The Chairman: What a way to begin a meeting. The next item on the agenda is the Chairman's remarks. We, of course, are about to inform the schools of the results of the MCAS test, and we are just releasing the results of the third test given to persons who are seeking teacher certification in this regard. I'm sorry to say that certain misunderstandings tend to persist. And so, although what I'm about to say is nothing new, I think it's important to have this repetition of information in order to put an end to the disinformation and misinformation that's out there.

I have a letter, a very well-written letter, from a young person who wanted to be a teacher who had this to say, " I'm concerned that the Massachusetts teacher test is considered to be the, quote, end all and be all in the vote of determining who will make a good teacher." There's not a shred of truth in that statement. We have never presented the Massachusetts Teacher Test as anything other than a test by which to determine if there is sufficient competence in the English language and sufficient competence in subject matter for a person to be considered for certification. It is by no means the only standard for certification. It has never been described as a test to demonstrate confidence to be a teacher. It is a test that reveals incompetence to be a teacher. One of the things we expect of teachers is the ability to correct the mistakes of students. There is no way they can correct the mistakes of their pupils if they do not know the subject themselves. There is no way that they can improve the quality of language of their students if they do not know the English language themselves. And consequently, all we're talking about are the fundamental conditions of minimal competence, not the end all and be all of determining who will be a good teacher.

She continues, quote, I'm upset by the fact that a person would be certified to teach based solely on the results of a one-day totally impersonal written test. Now, first of all a written test when you have to write out your own answers and your own reaction to various questions and issues put to you is highly personal. There's nothing impersonal about that test at all. When you fill out a multiple choice test, your answers and your response is a personal response, nothing impersonal about that. We can have a personal -- highly personal test without having an interpersonal test between two individuals. And that confusion needs to be cleared up. Also, no one is certified to be a teacher simply on the basis of having passed that test. A person can't come into Massachusetts never having seen the inside of a college, or inside of a high school for that matter, and take the test and say, okay, I'm certified to be a teacher. There is nothing to justify that kind of interpretation.

Now, this young person concludes her letter by saying, " My S.A.T. scores were not high, and the Massachusetts teacher test has been compared to the S.A.T. If I do not pass the teacher test, my dream of becoming a teacher will never become a reality. I feel that I have a great deal to offer the teaching profession, and I do not feel that mine or anyone else's teaching ability can be accurately measured by the teacher test. We never suggested that her ability or anyone's ability to be a teacher can be accurately measured by this test. But if she fails to pass this test, we will know that she is not qualified to be a teacher. On the other hand, if one reviews the quality of this essay that she is submitting in the form of a letter to me, I don't have the slightest doubt that she will pass that literacy part of this examination with one of the highest scores that's ever been made on it. This is excellent English. I found no grammatical mistake, spelling mistake or any other kind of mistake in this document. So I think she can rest assured that she will reach her dream of becoming a teacher.

There is no reason for persons to misunderstand the purpose of our teacher test. We know now from the results of the third time around that those who've taken the test for the second time, only eight percent of them passed, while we now have success rates in the 60 percent and 55 percent level, and we are going to publish shortly the results on those who have passed at least one part of the test, and we believe those results will be something in the 85 to 90 percent. There is nothing wrong with this test. There is something wrong with the preparation of some of the people who are taking the test, and the purpose of this test is simply to encourage higher standards in our high schools, higher standards in our colleges, higher standards in those who offer programs to prepare teachers, so that those who come into the classroom will be fully qualified to meet the demands of our children. I repeat that our highest obligation is not to the teachers. Our highest obligation is to the children, and they deserve teachers who are fully competent, and this test is simply designed to remove from the classroom those who are not competent. It is not a test to demonstrate the competence to be a teacher.

The next thing we have to do is to clear up confusion about the MCAS test, and I don't think there is any way better to do that than to reflect on just what has been said about the use of diagnostic tests by the Worcester schools. The primary purpose of the MCAS test is two-fold. It is to establish benchmarks against which we can review the progress of education reform in Massachusetts. Education reform has been on the books for quite a while, but there was no way to do things overnight. It has taken us several years to prepare an examination which for the first time will lay a baseline against which we can assess the progress of our schools. But the second thing, and this is perhaps even more important, is to offer a diagnostic tool, not only for the superintendents, the principals and the teachers, but especially for the parents, so that the parents can have some notion of how their children are doing relative to other children in Massachusetts. And in future years, we will try to correlate the results on the MCAS test with other tests, so that we will have a basis of comparison of the performance of children in Massachusetts with children in other parts of the United States and in other of the leading nations of the world, which is our obligation under the Educational Reform Act. When you see the results of the MCAS test, you will see how detailed the analysis is. This is not going to be a secret test. The results will be known to the teachers and to the students. They will know which answers were answered correctly -- which questions were answered correctly and which were missed, so that teachers can look at it and see where they have succeeded and where they have failed.

Let's also be quite candid about the fact that this is the first time we have developed a test to try to align the test with the frameworks that we recently adopted here in Massachusetts. The alignment may not be perfect. There is no guarantee of perfection. It's not an automatic thing.

It's something we have to work for. If the alignment is not perfect the first time around, we will have a very easy way of discovering that, by examining which questions the children answered correctly in a reasonable percentage of the time, and which they missed to a degree that is not reasonable. And when we find that variance, we will know there's something wrong with the match between the test and the framework. I suspect it will not be so much a criticism of the test as a criticism of the frameworks. These frameworks were not drafted on Mount Sinai. These frameworks were drafted by committees very large and very diverse. These were compromised documents because everybody, to quote Jimmy Durante, wanted to get into the act. And because everybody wanted to get into the act, many of those frameworks require much too much material in order to be teachable in a finite length of time. There are frameworks in which if you test them on all aspects of the framework could not be passed by a Ph.D. who had a Ph.D. in geography and history and economics. He just wouldn't know enough to pass it. Obviously, those tests have got to be selective, and we have to be sure that we have either developed selective tests that can meet the finite capacities of our teachers and our students or we have to go back and fine tune those frameworks to say here are the specific expectations at every given grade level, so that the job is made manageable.

We have much work to be done. I have said from the first day I was in this job that to reform the schools of Massachusetts is a 25-year project. It is the work of a generation. It will be most unfortunate if the newspapers try to draw unreasonable conclusions from the first administration of the MCAS test. I hope that they will recognize the long-term problem of educational reform and see this test for what it is, the first diagnostic of the work being done by children, a diagnostic that will help us evaluate the examination, and a diagnostic that will help us evaluate the frameworks. All of this is the first step toward further refinement, further gradual progress toward the goal we all have in mind, but it is a major achievement, and one that I think we can be very proud of because at the end of this process we will have information we never had before.

One of the most valuable parts of that information will be information on the performance of children who have been in the school system for more than three years, as compared with the performance of children who have been there only two years or only one year. Just, again, reminding us of the kind of excellent analysis that has been made in Worcester. Worcester has demonstrated in its study that those who have continuity in the school system are doing better, and I would suggest if we wanted to evaluate the Worcester schools, let's say, well, how good are the Worcester schools, I don't believe we should take an average score. I think we should break that score down and say how did they do with regard to students who have been in that system for three years. I would take that as a benchmark of the quality of the Worcester schools and say that's how we can evaluate the school, in terms of how well they did with students who have been in the school system for at least three years. If we average it, however, we're holding them responsible for students who are educated someplace else and who only dropped into the school system perhaps for one year, or even less than one year at the time that test was given. That would give us a false negative, and we need to avoid the false negative. So until the press and the parents see the breakdown of how the schools have done with regard to those students who have been in the school system for three years, they will not be in a position adequately to assess the quality of their schools, and I hope we will have this kind of relatively complex assessment of the results of this test. It is so important that it's worth doing.

Now, we have critics of the test who are highly-informed people. For example, Deborah Meier and Ted Sizer have proposed to us (I passed their proposal on to the Commissioner, and the Commissioner has found $20,000 to fund it) offering an alternative method of assessment of schools and individual students as an experimental basis, because we want to try to assess the quality of the MCAS relative to other forms of assessment, and the quality of other forms of assessment, such as the inspection system. We're going to go ahead with that. Now, unfortunately the conversation I had with Ted Sizer and Deborah Meier, they came away with the impression that doing it their way was the only thing they had to do. I don't know how that misunderstanding took place, but, you know, perhaps it was my fault, perhaps it was their hopes exceeding the expectations. I don't know how the confusion developed, but there's no way we can exempt any school from the MCAS test. Every school system will have to submit to the MCAS test, that's a requirement. But it will be very useful to have the comparison in those four schools of how their children did on the MCAS test and how they did on the other form of assessment that we plan to make. I think it will all come out well in the end, and I regret the confusion.

We have many exciting developments to discuss today in terms of the budget, in terms of new initiatives passed by the Congress. They passed a hundred million dollars for charter schools. I

don't know how much money is going to come to Massachusetts, but I hope we can grab it, and I hope we can find out from the Commissioner how that money can be spent, what our opportunities are. Can it be used, for example, to support initial costs of facilities of the sort we have here? We also have twenty-two million dollars coming to Massachusetts for the recruitment of new teachers. We need to know just how much flexibility is built into that initiative. Can we use that to expand our preschool program? Can we use it to expand the parent/child home education program which has been so highly successful in Pittsfield? We definitely need to expand that program. Could it be used for the hiring of initial foreign language teachers, so that we can put foreign language into K through 5 and get it started much earlier, which is what the experts in this field advocate? Can we use this to encourage candidates from industry and housewives whose children are now in school, who are very well educated and highly competent, to come into education? Can we use it to pay for their tuition for a period of preparation in our teacher programs? Can we use it as a bonus to encourage such people to come into the schools? Could we use it as a salary to support them while they complete the three to six months of educational preparation they will need to enter the classroom? These are all the kinds of questions that we will be exploring.

Let me indicate where we are in the Commissioner search process. The screening committee will review applicants in terms of numbers rather than names to develop a list of about 12 names or so, which we will then submit to an outside consultant for further evaluation. And when the consultant narrows that field even more, we will then hold a public meeting by name, in the presence of the candidates, interviewing them in public to reach our final decision. I hope we can have preliminary review completed by December 7th. I hope we can hold meetings in early January and have the selection of a new Commissioner by the end of that month.

To close with two minor items, I had a letter from an irate parent in Newton South High School complaining that there was no lunch period, and the children either had to eat in class or they didn't get to eat at all. I thought that was an unreasonable thing, called the superintendent, asked the superintendent what could be done about it. I'm very pleased to report that Superintendent Young wrote back approximately one week later to say that the problem had been solved, he got together with the teachers' union, they've extended slightly the class day, opened up the schedule so that beginning on the 16th of November the children in Newton South High School will have their lunch period back. It wasn't caused by any effort to mistreat children. It was caused by the families -- by the parents of Newton wanting to have eight class sessions per day. They were ambitious for their children to take more courses rather than fewer courses, and so they packed the schedule so tightly that there was no time for lunch. But it was very interesting to see the administration and teachers' union get together so cooperatively and within a period of approximately a week get a problem solved that had bedeviled them for a couple of months.

Finally, the German Consul has proposed that they bring to Massachusetts or New England an expert to help facilitate developments in German language instruction. I passed his letter on to David Driscoll, and he and the Department of Education have been in consultation with him. It is a matter of applying. It is not a matter of any guarantee. But there has to be some interest on the part of Massachusetts to be a host for this assignment for this to come through, and that is also in process.

Commissioner Driscoll: I will be brief for two reasons. One, we have a long agenda, including the foreign language curriculum framework, legislative proposals and so forth. Secondly, when I came in this morning to write out my lengthy remarks, I was distracted by the choir that was rehearsing, particularly those in the front row, and I couldn't get any work done. I want to thank everyone in Worcester that has been so helpful both today at this school and yesterday afternoon and early evening at the Abby Kelley Foster Charter School where we had our Board meeting. I particularly want to thank Roberta Schaefer, who has been extremely helpful to the Department of Education in helping with us all the logistics, yesterday, last night and today, and it's been a terrific visit for us. I also want to recognize that Joe McGillis from City Manager Hoover's offices is with us as well this morning. And I finally want to just say publically -- I want to thank Jim Garvey, who has announced, as people here know, that he will be retiring sometime this spring or the winter, and I certainly want to commend him publically for all that he has done here in the Worcester Public Schools.

The Board Chair mentioned test results, and there are a couple of significant issues to talk about there. First of all, people should be aware that we are releasing this week the MCAS test. So the test that the children took last May, at least 80 percent of it, at all levels, will be released to the public, to schools, not only for scrutiny, but for use in the schools. We feel very good about that, and we think it will be a terrific tool. It will be an indication of what the test was like. We know that there will be those that will scrutinize it, look at this question, that question, raise some issues. That's fine. That debate is a healthy debate, and we're very pleased to make that another important part of the process of the MCAS program.

With respect to the teacher test, I think the Chair has raised an interesting issue. We focus on this passing rate which fortunately keeps going up, although small this time, 55 percent, but that really is focused on those test takers who passed all three parts of the test. I think it's significant to note that in the case of reading, the passing rate went from 70 percent in July to 80 percent and then to 81 percent. The writing went from 59 percent to 78 and dropped slightly to 75 percent. The subject matter overall went from 62 to 64 to 68 percent. So, as the Chairman suggests, if we look at those that passed at least one section or perhaps two sections, we'll see a fairly high number, and I think that needs to be talked about when people focus on the test as somehow being unfair. When we look at it in that light, it indicates that people are passing one, two parts the first time, and then taking it again and so forth, and eventually passing it.

I want to talk about two other issues. First is a schedule that I've put forward and perhaps Board members may want to amend it. A lot of our focus is going to be on teacher quality, and there are some matters that I think we need to look at, and I've suggested a schedule. First of all, we've had discussion on an alternative to a master's degree which is currently the requirement of standard certification. Frankly, that ability to establish an alternative to the master's degree

has been on the books since 1993. Jim Peyser, a member of the Board, has raised that issue, and I think it's a right issue to raise. I believe we need to come to closure on that whole matter, and I've suggested that we do that in December.

I raised the issue in September about recertification, and I hope the public knows the next round of recertification begins in June of 1999, so we need to have regulations in place. I have recommended increasing the PDP requirement from 120 to 250, with the focus on subject matter and mastery of content and so forth. I've been meeting with a number of groups, including the MTA, the MFT. We'll continue that, and I'm hoping that in January we will present some recommendations, based on reaching out in those areas, and hopefully we can come to some kind of conclusion so that we can get regulations out for public comment. We want to have them back in time to be voted so that educators will know what the rules of the game will be, so to speak, for the next five years.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to talk about the various aspects of the Chapter 260 of the Acts of 1998, what I dub the 12-62 plan. That law was passed in August, and we have proposed regulations this morning. Hopefully on the bonus recipient program, we can begin that. But I want to point out that we're off and running in a number of areas. You will see today in your package that we have $230,000 worth of requests from 115 applicants for Future Educators of America clubs. We're only able to provide a hundred thousand dollars for that program, but we are going to be able to fund 89 Future Educators of America clubs, or what we call Tomorrow's Teachers Clubs, because it fits with the plan for free tuition for those high-school students who graduate in the top 25 percent of their class and commit themselves to a career in teaching. They will be able to attend our state colleges and universities free of tuition and fees. Secondly, with respect to the Attracting Excellence In Teaching Program, it's a program that's been on the books since the Education Reform Act. It's a loan-forgiveness program. We have been more diligent than we have been in the past in advertising, reaching out, seeing to it that those people who have gone into the field of education and who did do well in their academic career in college are encouraged to apply and have their loans forgiven. I'm pleased to say that we have had 115 applicants so far, which is a significant increase, and we're pleased about that.

And finally, we have encouraged people to apply for National Board certification. When I talked about having a goal of a thousand National Board certified teachers here in Massachusetts within five years, a lot of people said that that was impossible, after all we only have six or seven now. The fact of the matter is North Carolina has done it. I think it's doable. I'm pleased to say that we have had thus far 203 applicants for that program. In fact, the National Board is subsidizing,

because of our actions,more positions due to that response, so we're off and running. I think there's a long way to go. There's a lot of parts to 12-62 and Chapter 260 that need to be enhanced. But at least in this first few months, I feel very good about our progress.

Finally, just two matters. I wanted to bring to your attention that a long-time employee, retired employee of the Department of Education, passed away this weekend -- Joseph Cella, who was a very loyal member of the Department of Education for a number of years. And finally, every once in a while you have a duty that's not so pleasant, and it's my duty to inform you that Robin McCaffrey, who has been so terrific to the Board members and public, is leaving us. She's been pirated away. I won't mention who it was that pirated her away, but his initials are Bob Antonucci. A lot of changes are in store for Robin. She'll be getting married next year, relocating and so forth, but she is leaving us to join Harcourt. She has been just terrific, and I think everybody knows just how phenomenal she's been. So, Robin, we will miss you, but we thank you for all that you've done.

The Chairman: The next item on the agenda is the approval of the minutes. Do we have any corrections or additions to the minutes? We've seen none. Do we have a motion to approve? Made by Mr. Delattre, seconded by Roberta Schaefer. All in favor? It passed unanimously.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was: VOTED: that the Board of Education adopt the minutes of the October 13, 1998 meeting, as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

The Chairman: The next item on the agenda is the budget. It is item number two, I believe. So we'll take up the budget for the year 2000.

Comm. Driscoll: One thing I will say, Mr. Chairman, as we begin the budget deliberation, the process is virtually year round. I think we get about a two-week break from when the budget is finally approved sometime in July to where we begin right in August talking about getting the next year's budget before this Board. In order to be timely with House One, we need to submit it. I would just like to remind Board members that there are opportunities, however, as we go along. We'd like to get as much into House One as we can. But even if there are initiatives or other matters that come before us, we do have opportunities to communicate with the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and we have done that in the past. So to some extent, this is a final vote, at least to get into House One. But in another way, there are opportunities for us to make changes, and we did that fairly significantly last year. It's before you based, I think, on all the recommendations that you've brought forward, and so it's before you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any discussion? One thing I wanted to ask you, Mr. Commissioner, is the two items I mentioned in my opening remarks. The Congress has passed two major bills. One is to try to hire 100,000 additional teachers, and I understand approximately twenty-three million dollars will come to Massachusetts for that initiative. And a hundred million dollars was passed to support charter schools. I suppose Massachusetts will get somewhere between three and five million for that. Will you report to the Board on the specifics of this legislation and the regs that go with it so that we can know how this money might be assigned? Because in terms of the teacher shortage, it would be an excellent thing if, in trying to recruit additional teachers, we tried to support initiatives of alternative certification, bringing highly qualified people who don't go through the normal routes into the teaching profession. We also have specific problems with early-childhood education never having been funded. It might be able to help. We need to know the flexibility there. And we also need to know in what ways we could help the charter schools in Massachusetts through that legislation.

Comm. Driscoll: Mr. Chairman, I think a complete report is in order because to some extent there are rules of the game, if you will. For example, I believe current charter schools are not eligible, is that correct, Scott, for any of the funding program that you were able to receive ten million dollars for. The charter schools, for example, aren't able to access that money for capital costs and so forth. Now, with respect to the teachers, the twenty-two million dollars, there is a lot of flexibility at the local level. In fact, that money flows out to the local communities, but I

certainly think we can be encouraging certain aspects. So I would rather wait, Mr. Chairman, and give the Board a full briefing on what the regulations are.

Dr. Schaefer: I wanted to ask about the Department's auditing/monitoring initiative. Could we have a report on how the Department has been reorganized and the staff added and so on? And I'm confused about that line because I couldn't find the 7010-0005 reference.

Mr. Wulfson: 0005 is down under operational expenses. The Department auditing and monitoring really is funding three separate initiatives. One is a half million of that goes to the Department of Revenue to pay for the educational management accountability board audits that they are doing. Another half a million comes to our finance office to handle normal auditing of grantees and those types of issues. The balance of the money is to support the accountability program that Juliane Dow is developing, and we will keep the Board up-to-date on that. That's an emerging initiative, and it's basically designing the system and hiring the staff to carry out that system to measure the performance of schools and districts and to manage the remediation funds that we have under separate accounts.

Dr. Schaefer: How many staff have you added in your department?

Mr. Wulfson: In my area, we just hired one manager, and we plan to do most of the work through contract services with accounting firms. Juliane is planning on hiring a number of staff, and they are still putting together a hiring plan for the Commissioner. They have just started the recruiting process, but she will be looking to hire perhaps a dozen or 15 people at some point.

The Chairman: Is therefurther discussion?

Mr. Peyser: Mr. Chairman, two questions. One has to do with the new consolidated special ed. program. I'd just like to ask the Commissioner, there's a note here that there is an additional twenty-two million dollars, but there is not an explanation for exactly what that's intended for, and I wonder if you could say something.

Mr. Wulfson: Yes. The original proposal that we showed you last time was seventy-eight million, that was basically level funded. I think we all acknowledge, and there is wide-spread support that the state needs to do more financially to help districts with exceptionally high costs in special education, not routine costs but those cases that are very high. The foundation budget doesn't really provide enough for it. Right now there is sort of a stalemate because the Governor has clearly indicated that he's not going to support additional funding from the state unless the special ed. reform bill is passed. That bill is still pending before the legislature. The Commissioner's recommendation here basically is sort of a place holder to remind people that if that bill passes we need to be prepared to put in some additional state dollars. That was sort of the promise that was held out, that if we can pass the reform bill the state would contribute a little bit more towards high costs of placement.

Mr. Peyser: So the twenty-two million dollars was based essentially on the formula that was incorporated into the most recent form of the special ed. reform bill?

Mr. Wulfson: Yes.

Comm. Driscoll: Just to reiterate, I think the bottom line was, unfortunately, that everyone agreed on the money, so approximately twenty-two million dollars --

Mr. Peyser: That's usually the way it works.

Comm. Driscoll: Yes. But it was significant additional money. So the special education bill contained that extra money, and then theyt couldn't come to consensus on the language and everything died. I wanted to preempt at least the reminder of that twenty-two million dollars, so we can at least do that to help school districts, and hopefully we'll even get some agreement on language so we can make progress on the special education.

Mr. Peyser: The other question had to do with the teacher quality line item and this 4.9 million dollars. I've got a break out here of the components of that, and the largest single component is for release time to schools, payment to schools for release time for master teachers to mentor. I wonder if -- I don't have the statute in front of me, but does that take into account or specifically call for the use of the sixty million dollar interest, the earnings on the sixty million dollars? Is this in addition to what had been laid out in the bill?

Comm. Driscoll: The statute is silent on that. The statute is not that specific. As is always the case with trying to engage teachers, you always run into this issue of time, and so it's money for that release purpose.

Mr. Peyser: I don't want to hold up our discussion today, but I'd like to talk about that a little bit more going forward, because I do think that there is a value and perhaps already a current practice in schools to use teachers for these purposes, and I'm just concerned about not creating a double subsidy here where the largest proportion of the subsidy goes to the school and the minor portion goes to the person actually doing the work, the mentor teacher. Somehow I think the intent of the program and the intent in terms of the use of the funds was to provide incentives for teachers to participate. But again, it appears here that the largest single item is more like an incentive for the schools to release their senior teachers for participation in the program. I don't want to pass an instant judgment, but it is of some concern.

Comm. Driscoll: I agree with that concern, and I would suggest that we have that discussion. We have plenty of time, anyway, until next July 1st.

Mr. Wulfson: And obviously regulations will need to be brought forward to govern the program.

Comm. Driscoll: I prefer the Board approve the budget, understanding that before we more forward on this I'd be more than happy to talk to you and other members of the Board to be clear about this.

Dr. Schaefer: I know we've discussed this before, but maybe you could go over it again. I thought in the past we had two breakfast programs, and now we have three. I see one is a pilot. What is the difference among these?

Mr. DeLorenzo: The Senate proposed a number of new breakfast programs this year. They had come before the Board in the previous meeting, and reports will be submitted to the Legislature. Later this year we will report to the Board on the impact of these programs. It was a major initiative by the Senate, and these are new programs proposed by the Senate. I don't have the specifics of them.

Mr. Safran: Let me take a stab at this. The Legislature passed two particular grant programs this past session that were signed into law. One is a universal school breakfast program where in districts that compete for the grant, the districts will provide breakfast for free. No matter whether the student is entitled to a free meal, a reduced-priced meal or a full-priced meal, they will be provided for free, in an effort to remove the stigma that's sometimes attached to those kids who go to breakfast. You have a broader spectrum of kids going to breakfast. The second program is a pilot demonstration program that is for certain districts to demonstrate innovative ways of reaching out to broaden the participation in school breakfast within their communities, not with a universal free approach but with other approaches, whether they involve special cost for transportation, school schedule changes, or other ways to increase participation in schools that are mandated to have breakfast, but right now don't serve the 75 percent of the kids. These are two of the new programs that have line items in state law now that were designed last year by the state legislature.

The Chairman: If there are no other comments, the motion is that the Board of Education approve the FY 2000 state budget request and authorize the submission to the House and Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and the Humanities and the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was: VOTED: that the Board of Education

approve the FY 2000 state budget request, and authorize the Commissioner to submit it to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities, and the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

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

The Chairman: Now item three on our agenda which are legislative proposals that have been submitted for consideration by the Board of Education for possible submission to the legislature.

Comm. Driscoll: We will begin right with the first page which are recommendations for special education, early childhood education and bilingual education. Again, the intent is to provide the concepts. We will be working with the Board to establish the exact language that will be submitted.

The Chairman: If there are no suggestions, I don't think we need to vote on that. We just refer this to the Commissioner for the development of specific legislative language to accomplish these results. Much of that was already developed last year, so it's just a matter of reintroducing the bills that we had introduced before.

Comm. Driscoll: Next are proposals to amend Chapter 260 of the Acts of 1998.

The Chairman: Roberta.

Dr. Schaefer: On the first one, I know there are a variety of permutations and combinations on this $20,000, but I was going to suggest that we do 4, 5, 5, 6, so that it's more evenly distributed with the greater number coming at the end.

The Chairman: How do you get that the greater number comes at the end, unless 6 is larger than 8?

Dr. Thernstrom: Larger than 5.

Dr. Schaefer: 4, 5, 5, 6. 6 is greater than 5, obviously not greater than 8. I think that adds up to 20.

Dr. Delattre: Well, since nobody is willing to consider my proposal of 1, 2, 3, 4 --

Comm. Driscoll: Are those dollars?

Dr. Delattre: -- 4, 5, 5, 6 is very attractive.

Mr. Peyser: I guess that maybe the question we ought to resolve or the issue we ought to resolve first is what we're trying to accomplish with it. If the idea is to provide an incentive so that teachers will stay through the fourth year, then maybe it makes sense to back load it on the fourth year. If the idea is to provide incentive for them to stay beyond the first year, then it may make more sense to provide additional incentives in the second and third years. So, I mean, I don't really know exactly the problem we're trying to fix here, but it seems to me that's the issue.

Dr. Delattre: Let me say what problem I'm trying to fix. I think when you front-end load it this hard, with $8,000 up front, it's an incentive for people to plan to enter teaching only for a year and to leave. It's an incentive to leave, to cash in and get out. And I think that it's an affront to practicing teachers to load it that way. I'm trying to avoid an incentive to take a year and then grab the money and run, and I'm trying to avoid a slap in the face to practicing teachers. I don't know that a bonus program like this, which is after all on a small scale, would provide an incentive for people to enter teaching or to stay. But however it's loaded, it ought not to be hard loaded at the front end. It doesn't really matter to me whether it's 4, 4, 4, 8 or 4, 5, 5, 6. But you load it at the front end, it's an affront and a disincentive to stay.

The Chairman: There's another problem with it, and that is that the first year of teaching is very often the most difficult and the most troublesome for new teachers. If they have the money and then have the ordeal of the first year, they may not be very happy with teaching, and they may decide, you know, this isn't for me, but we know that the dropout rate for teachers comes early. It doesn't come late. If we can persuade them to remain in the classroom for four years, the chances are by that time they will have honed their skills as teachers; they will have achieved a mastery of the work that they have to do, and enjoyment and fulfillment in the teaching profession will follow, that's why I think it is so important to have that incentive on the back end. The reason I am somewhat reluctant to change that number is because we have to -- this is something we have to pass through the legislature. The legislature thought that anything less than $8,000 was not significant enough to be an incentive. I'd rather not argue with them about that point. I'd rather leave the $8,000 in there as the incentive, just put it on the tail end, but I think we're going to have a more difficult time -- we're going to have a hard time passing this change, in any event, but we're going to have an easier time if we go 4, 4, 4 and 8, sticking to their formula except reversing the sequence, than if we offer any alternative formula.

Comm. Driscoll: Could I suggest, that I think you can do both. The statute right now, the Senate President felt strongly about this, says that the first year shall be at least $8,000. What I'm hearing the Board say is that that needs to be reduced to $4,000. So I would suggest that the Board consider filing legislation first of all that changes that first year to $4,000 which is consistent with both proposals and then offer both or either.

The Chairman: Well, I think that that's just to confuse the issue.

Comm. Driscoll: You could offer both. If you get the legislation that said it shall be no more than $4,000 the first year, then this Board can determine the next three.

The Chairman: I think if you say that and you don't put 8,000 in, you're not going anywhere because I think the legislature is really keen on 8,000 being a minimum significant incentive. So I don't like to introduce a bill where we reduce the chances of its passing.

Dr. Koplik: Mr. Chairman, I like the idea of 8,000 up front if the $8,000 was a bonus to the extent that it attracted people to areas where there were critical shortages, not just across the board. Is there any provision in the legislation we have to address that particular issue? I think 8,000 up front where we immediately can address a critically under-served area of need is better than $8,000 across the board where we may have a proliferation in areas where we don't have any need.

The Chairman: Well, you got two parts to that. To have this entire program focused on special need, makes a lot of sense. To propose you give the 8,000 up front, it still has all the difficulties that I've mentioned and that Mr. Delattre has mentioned. The state will propose that if a person quits after the first year and doesn't complete the four years, that they will owe the state that money. The state can spend about $50,000 and take the person to court and try to collect the $8,000. It's not going to happen. If you give them the $8,000 in the first year and they quit, it's down the drain. And considering the number of teachers who drop out after the first year, it would seem to me we'd have to just fly in the face of all empirical data to propose that that's the way to go.

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, I'm in agreement with you on that, but there is also another issue it seems to me. We should be using this money to recruit only the exceptionally qualified candidates. This should really be a very special pool that receives this extra money, and it doesn't seem to me that the criteria here for eligibility -- that we have set the bar sufficiently high. I'm delighted to see the proposal to remove the reference to grade point average or class rank, because those are really quite meaningless. But I would really like to see a score on the GREs, for instance, or at least the GRE broken down. They are broken down -- Roberta, you know this better than I do. They are broken down into literacy --

Dr. Schaefer: There is a general part.

Dr. Thernstrom: There is a general part. At least a certain score on the general part. I mean, I just do think we need something more that indicates that we are recruiting candidates of exceptional quality here.

The Chairman: But do you want that in legislation or do you want that in regulations? It seems to me part of the problem here is that there is a lot of this in 260 that doesn't belong in legislation at all, that should have been left in the hands of the regulatory powers of the Department of Education.

Dr. Thernstrom: Provided the legislation allows that kind of regulation so that we can set that as a condition of receiving the bonus.

The Chairman: I think we ought to introduce that flexibility as one of the reforms that we would request in the legislation. Is there any disagreement with that? If not, we'll just have the Commissioner add that discretion. In the establishing of regulations, to ensure extremely high quality demonstrated, recognizing that a grade point average just won't work with the kind of grade inflation we have.

Dr. Thernstrom: Then there would then have to be specific language allowing in the regulations, because I don't want to be caught at the end of the day not being able to establish the kind of criteria that really satisfies.

The Chairman: And I would think that that language ought to also include Mr. Koplik's concern that the regulations permit the Department of Education to focus these bonus programs on specific areas of instruction in which the supply is minimal.

Dr. Koplik: I like that.

The Chairman: So we can incorporate those two suggestions but try to incorporate them under a flexibility provision that leaves this as a regulatory authority of the department. Are there any other additions or changes that one would want to make?

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, where are we on the 4, 5, 5, 6 as opposed to 4, 4, 4, 8?

The Chairman: Let's get a straw vote. How many are in favor of Roberta's suggestion of 4, 5, 5, 6 besides Roberta? Roberta, you've got a loser on your hands. Win a few, lose a few. But we will go with the 4, 4, 4, 8, I think. And then any

other --

Mr. Peyser: Mr. Chairman. On my memo a little bit later there is a section which refers to the bonus program. It is number eight, and specifically it suggests adding a component -- I think this probably would be required in the statute -- which would say if a teacher who is receiving a bonus receives an unsatisfactory evaluation from his or her principal or supervisor, that that teacher would not be able to receive the next year's bonus.

The Chairman: So it shouldn't be payable, or rather continued.

Mr. Peyser: That's correct.

The Chairman: Any of you have any problem with that? If not, let's just assume that that is transferred from that section of Mr. Peyser's into this section here.All right. Are we ready to vote on these proposals to amend Chapter 260?

Mr. Peyser: Are we voting on the entire page?

The Chairman: Yes. Chapter 260.

Mr. Peyser: There may be one other, from my memo again. It is the ninth point. It has to do with the master teacher program. As I understand it, under current law, once you qualify to receive the master teacher award, you receive it regardless of whether you're doing any mentoring or not, regardless of whether you receive an unsatisfactory or you were not recommended or your system or your principal does not wish to use you as a mentor. So there's a presumption that if you receive the certification that you are in fact deemed by your school and district to be worthy of mentoring other teachers. I guess what I'm suggesting here is that in order to receive the bonus you actually ought to be fulfilling the role of mentoring which requires not only that you put in a certain amount of hours to the task but also that your principal or your supervisor agrees that you are someone who ought to be mentoring teachers.

The Chairman: Can we transfer that? Do you think anybody ought be named as a master teacher or a mentor who has not passed the certification examination? I would think that that's one area in which the certification examination might be introduced for people who are already there, particularly since these people presumably are going to receive additional financial compensation for it. It's an incentive for the most competent teachers to step up and take the test and demonstrate to their peers that they're not afraid to be tested for competency. If they want to assume that elevated role as a mentor, it seems to me that the credentials ought to be there, and that credential should be the teacher should be required the completion of that examination. I'd like to see that in there.

Dr. Koplik: And that's strictly voluntary?

The Chairman: No, that wouldn't be voluntary for someone who wants to be a mentor.

Dr. Koplik: I said voluntary if you want to be.

The Chairman: If they don't want to be a mentor, then they don't have to take it. Now, we're ready, or do you have another item? Okay. All in favor of these initiatives for the amendment to Chapter 260? It passes unanimously. Now we go to Mr. Peyser's proposal.

Mr. Peyser: Obviously, you've taken care of numbers 8 and 9 on my list. But being greedy, that's not enough. The first five items have to do with charter schools. The first one is to increase the cap from 50 to 100, and the more subtle component of this is to provide greater discretion to the Board to determine which types of charter schools or which types of charters to award. Specifically, there are currently caps on a number of Commonwealth charter schools and a number of Horace Mann charter schools, and what I'm suggesting is that we just have a total aggregate cap but eliminate the sub caps, so that the Board could pick those applications, those charter proposals that are best regardless of whether they are Commonwealth or Horace Mann. The next three deal specifically with the Horace Mann statute and suggest recommendations most of which I've made before. One is to allow school site councils by a two-thirds vote to apply directly to the Board of Education for designation as a Horace Mann school without the prior approval of the local school committee or teachers union. Point three is to invest Horace Mann boards of trustees or designees, such as heads of schools or principals, with the exclusive authority to hire, manage or fire school staff. In other words, to treat school staff within the Horace Mann school as employees not of the district, but of the school, and therefore vest the school with the authority to make decisions. And to the extent collective bargaining agreements do apply to those teachers from the district, that those bargaining agreements only apply with respect, first of all, to those covered under the teachers' union contract, as opposed to other contracts, and only with respect to salary and benefits and not with respect to work rules and other components. And finally, under the Horace Mann section here, having to do with the funding reform, to provide Horace Mann schools with 90 percent of the expenditures per pupil in the local district using essentially the same calculation that we apply to Commonwealth charter schools, less any rent payments which may be applicable if the Horace Mann school is residing in a local district building, and that the Horace Mann schools receive these funds directly from the state through the same mechanism that is used for Commonwealth charter schools, rather than essentially negotiate with the local district for disbursement of funds. So those are the Horace Mann elements.

The Chairman: Shall we deal with those?

Dr. Thernstrom: I have a general question. What you're really doing, it seems to me, is blurring the difference between the Horace Mann schools and the charter schools, is that correct?

Mr. Peyser: I'm making them more consistent with one another which reflects, I think, some experience that the Horace Mann schools are having and some of the difficulties they are having in actually trying to implement their school designs as envisioned by their charters. The thing that would remain distinct about Horace Mann schools is how they get their charters, not how they operate once they have them.

Dr. Thernstrom: Right. But after that initial process, it seems to me there's basically no distinction.

Mr. Peyser: That's right. There probably would be some minor distinctions, but those would address the major distinctions.

Dr. Thernstrom: You're really saying there should be two routes to getting a charter school, is really what you have proposed here.

The Chairman: And the legislature has spoken of Horace Mann schools as charter schools. They will continue to have that one great advantage of access to a building, and this does narrow the distinction. If there is no further discussion on those, let's go to your number five, six and seven.

Mr. Peyser: Number five is the last charter school proposal, and it addresses the problem that George Tetler mentioned earlier which has to do with facilities. It is not a solution, but rather it is an initiation of a process that might lead to a solution. What I'm calling for, by the way, doesn't require legislation. And if we can initiate this off-line, that would be great -- but it suggests that DOE, ANF, Higher Education Finance Authority and the Massachusetts Development Finance Authority, all of which have various interests and obligations with respect to school financing and particularly charter schools, form a joint task force to identify and recommend alternative means for providing charter schools with affordable access to tax exempt financing, for the capital projects in particular. That's the end of the charter school section here. Number six suggests forming an eight-member commission to review school building assistance, with an eye towards a number of weaknesses which I think we talked about previously here, but I won't belabor, but there are a number of weaknesses associated with school building assistance that need to be addressed, and I think forming some kind of blue ribbon commission to review this program may be our best hope.

The Chairman: That also is not legislative, right?

Mr. Peyser: Well, this would probably be legislative, the way I've constructed it at least, which is having gubernatorial appointments as well as appointments by the Speaker. If there would be another way of doing it, that would be fine as well.

Dr. Thernstrom: Well, not really, in the sense that it seems to me you want to get the main actors in the state on board, and therefore it is essential to have it structured as you suggest here.

The Chairman: Good. Number seven.

Mr. Peyser: And finally, under the current legislation dealing with academic support services, which is this twenty million dollar program we've initiated this year, I would like to indefinitely maintain the flexibility on the part of the Board and the Department to use other measures, other standardized test measures besides the MCAS. The reason I'm raising this is that right now we are using the third grade Iowa reading test as a diagnostic tool or an eligibility tool with respect to this tutoring grant. The Chairman suggested perhaps going even earlier in grade levels in order to identify students with reading weaknesses so the remediation and support can be provided at an earlier stage where it can provide greater benefit. So what I want to avoid doing is hamstringing the Board and the Department by relying only on a fourth grade MCAS test, which by that point we're basically looking at providing services to fifth graders, which is kind of too

late in the game.

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, one final remark on that last one. I think that's a particular important proposal in light of what we heard this morning with respect to Worcester, that it is really not sufficient to test these students in grades four, eight and ten plus the third grade Iowa test. Students have to be watched much more carefully with much more frequent testing, and I think therefore that is a very, very important proposal.

The Chairman: Are we all in favor of these? Is there a consensus that we support the submission of these initiatives?

On motion duly made and seconded, it was: VOTED: that the Board of Education direct the Commissioner to prepare and submit legislative proposals reflecting the consensus of the Board at this meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

The Chairman: So we move ahead. Rebecca, do you have a proposal?

Ms. Urbach: Yes. I'm presenting this bill on behalf of the Student Advisory Council. It is very similar to a bill that was presented to the legislature in 1997. It was filed by Hal Lane. The first sheet that I put together is explaining the issues the SAC felt were the real problems and then explaining down below what we were hoping the bill would accomplish. And on the next page, with the understanding that there are also some problems that could arise if this bill were to pass, it lists some other things that could possibly be considered. It's something that I feel strongly needs a discussion. Understanding that there is a lot on the agenda today, if you want to look this over and place it on the agenda for discussion at some other time, that's fine also.

Dr. Thernstrom: Do the schools have any data that correlates truancy with any of the factors that have been mentioned here, that is chronic illness, substantial family or economic responsibility? I tend to doubt that those are the main sources of student absenteeism. And if they are, we need to see that in the form of some hard evidence.

Ms. Urbach: This isn't necessarily saying that those are the major reasons for absence, but that's the reason that we see a problem with punishing all absences for those cases no matter how small they are.

Dr. Delattre: In my experience, it's not true that all absences are treated identically under provisions like this. Chronically ill students are frequently credited with excused absences, and the academic consequences are rather considerably different from cases where the absences are not excused.

Dr. Schaefer: I would like to pick up on what Jim Caradonio said earlier in our meeting, that there is some correlation between attendance and academic achievement. In fact, a strong correlation. I think that most districts have implemented those regulations precisely for that reason. I know in Worcester they have increased required attendance from -- Jim is not here still, is he? No. I think it was 89 percent attendance to 91 percent attendance for a student to get course credit, and they have instituted, as Rebecca mentions on Page 2, a buy-back program for those students who are out more than somewhere between 17 and 24 absences, that they can attend classes on Saturday to make up those absences and still get credit for the course if they are not passing the course. So I think there are ways of addressing this issue, and I think that we would really -- if we were to approve the original proposal that Rebecca made, we would really be undermining the efforts of school districts to try to improve student achievement.

The Chairman: I think there is another problem here. This is not an issue for legislation. We have to leave some responsibility and judgment in the hands of the superintendents, the principals, the teachers and the students, and there is a real misunderstanding by the Student Advisory Committee when they say we have already established each student's right to attend. The student's right to attend was established in the constitution of Massachusetts. They didn't

establish it. It

was a constitutional right. But what we also want to note is that each student has the obligation, the duty to attend school. It is not simply the right or the privilege to attend school. It is their obligation to attend school, that's why we are running these schools, and I think that has to be clearly kept in mind.

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, there is another minor point here. There is an allegation of discrimination against very low income students, that they can't afford to go to the doctor, therefore they can't get a medical excuse. Now, these students, if they are that low income, are Medicaid eligible. And, what the disadvantaged student needs most is to be in school. The disadvantaged student needs to be sitting in a classroom in order to learn. And so that I think in terms of pure equity, it works the other way.

Dr. Delattre: Let me say that I appreciate your willingness to delay, but I really don't think there's any need. I would rather we went ahead and voted on this. I don't want people in a state of suspended judgment about what the Board is going to do.

Ms. Urbach: Well, with all due respect, I understand the problems with this bill. But if nothing else, I think it gives us an opportunity to discuss attendance issue. We have had two student advisory councils from two separate years, three regional councils, that's almost 400 kids who are saying that there is a problem within their schools, that's western Mass., central Mass., southeastern Mass. All throughout the state there are kids that feel there's something wrong. If you don't want to pass the bill, that's one thing, but I think attendance needs to be discussed.

Dr. Delattre: If they want to discuss this, then they invite members of the Board to come to their council. I'm sure we will discuss it. I don't want to discuss it under the heading of proposed legislation.

Dr. Thernstrom: Rebecca, I appreciate your bringing it before us, but the problem is we can't figure out what exactly is wrong with saying that if you want to raise student achievement then students have to be in school. I mean, there is no other alternative.

Ms. Urbach: It is very ideal thinking because, while it shouldn't necessarily be the school's responsibility to provide incentives, there aren't incentives to go to school, in some students' minds.

Comm. Driscoll: May I suggest this? This is the process. Board members bring proposals before the full Board to see whether there is approval. Clearly if this were filed, and probably it will be filed by students or someone, the question will be asked of the Department, of the Board, do you approve? That is probably the reason it hasn't passed as legislation. I think the Chairman raises the correct point, and that is that this really comes to us because of what happens locally.

Anecdotally over time there have been these situations perhaps where common sense did not prevail and a student was given a poor grade, given a zero for the day, for a minor infraction that had nothing to do with the overall situation. There are reasons why this came forward. It seems to me that there is not consensus of the Board to approve it. I would recommend the Department take this back with the Student Advisory Council to look at what we can do locally to make sense and to see to it that good solid policies are developed. Clearly we want to make sure that attendance is something that is promoted. We know the correlation between good attendance and student achievement and so forth. So, Rebecca, I would suggest that you've made the point by bringing it before the Board. I think it is the right issue to raise. It seems to me the Student Advisory Council and Department of Education ought to come together on this. And perhaps, as Dr. Delattre suggested, bring Board members back at some point.

Dr. Schaefer: Perhaps the Department can survey the districts in dealing with this issue.

The Chairman: Well, I take there is consensus this is not an initiative we are going to forward to the legislature on behalf of the Board. We will now move on to the proposed regulations for

Teacher Quality Enhancement.

Comm. Driscoll: I would like to thank the members of the Board for their input. We have not only made changes, but we have reordered the regulations so that they specify eligibility, screening and selection. And I might add, Abigail mentioned before when we were talking about the legislation, about the GREs or perhaps even the NTE or the LSAT, and I would point out to the Board that under the eligibility section, 6.03 (d) is ranking in the top tenth percentile on a nationally recognized examination designated by the Commissioner, and that clearly would include the GREs. And also the requirement that the bonus recipients do in fact pass the so-called teacher test, Mass. Educator Certification Test upon selection. We are going to be recruiting this winter. We will be making selection, and then all potential bonus recipients will have to take the educator test prior to April 1st. And as you know, we talked about moving the test date for the educator test to March rather than April, because school districts and people have talked about the importance of doing that. So I think we've incorporated all of the changes that people talked about. In my judgment, the first year we're looking at the selection of 50 bonus recipients. We are ready and willing and able to recruit on campuses, at Raytheon, other places. This bonus recipient program does have all of the elements that we've talked about which is it's not just about people who are seniors in colleges. It's about different walks of life, be it homemakers,military personnel, Raytheon engineers, whatever it is, and we're going to be recruiting actually on company sites as well as at colleges and reaching out. There's also the issue of trying to recruit in areas of need as well. We'd like to begin. If there are things that we find as we go along, fine. This is the first year, and we certainly would be more than happy to bring this back to the Board for rereview after we've gone through the process this first year. I hope the Board will now support this recommendation so we can move.

Dr. Delattre: I think Mrs. Thernstrom is right, and I wonder if the language might be changed just a bit. The way it is set up, it says that the eligibility turns on any one of the following criteria, and then it is A or B or C or D or E. I wonder if you might change it so that D, ranking in the top tenth percentile in a nationally recognized examination designated by the Commissioner, is specified as a criterion for all, as a required criterion, and then the balance of the criteria are -- so it would be that and then A or B or C and so forth. So that particular criterion wouldn't be discretionary in the way that all of the others are. The only other comment that I would make -- I think the Department has done a very nice job in the revision of these -- under heading two on Page 2, screening, where it says " High achievement based on objective measures defined including performance on Massachusetts Educator Certification Test." I would like that to say" including high performance on the educator test."

Dr. Thernstrom: Mr. Chairman, I like both those proposals very much.

The Chairman: There's a problem here, though. If you are going to have an outreach to housewives who have an excellent undergraduate education and the kind of intellectual capacity based on their college record that would indicate this, and you're going to have an outreach into industry and to retired military and so forth, I don't think that it's -- I don't think that you are going to encourage them unless you give those individuals who are spotted with a certain set of criteria the opportunity to take a kind of intensive program, an educational program, to qualify for the classroom. It would seem to me that is one of the excellent purposes of this bonus program, is to bring those people in to, let's say, a school of education for a rigorous -- a 12-week summer program or a rigorous program for a fall semester, where they then follow by practicing teaching with mentors. Otherwise, we're notgoing to be bringing these alternative people in. How are they going to pass the teacher certification test in the subject matter, for example, if they -- if they are in mathematics and science, that's easy. But suppose that you've got a housewife and it would be elementary education. They might be an excellent elementary school teacher. But in order to pass that test on elementary education, they might need that intensive course in the summer or in the fall. And I would hate to see those people lose out on that. If they don't pass the literacy part -- and I wouldn't give any exemption for math and science because those are such routine things. But when it comes to a person who is going to be a reading specialist or a person who is going to be in elementary education, it seems to me you have to have a little more flexibility.

Dr. Delattre: Well, the flexibility is still there under eligibility, under the last heading under number one, following E, where eligibility can be determined at the discretion of the Commissioner for anyone who graduated from college five years or more before applying for the

program.

The Chairman: I think that's right.

Comm. Driscoll: Well, let me agree with the Chairman, who may not agree any more, but the problem with the eligibility is that we want to be able to cast a wider net. For example, I first proposed a GPA, which I'll get away from, but I proposed a GPA of 3.0, which Board members found to be too low, and I understand that, but I was basing it on the model of Teach for America which used a GPA of 2.5, but that was to cast the net wide. When they actually chose their bonus recipients, the average GPA was 3.6. So I would just urge the Board to understand that the eligibility is one issue, and then we have the screening. The Chairman is quite right. To require the GRE, for example, some nationally recognized test to be in the tenth percentile is really going to be very limited, and yet it is going to be part of the mix, as is high performance now if the Board approves Dr. Delattre's proposal on the educator test, which is both literacy and in the subject matter. So I think we've got it covered. I will be the first one to come back here and say to you, you know, I wish we had stuck with the top ten percent of the GRE, but I suspect we are going to be able to bring back to this board 50 outstanding people. In fact, we will have more than 50. They are going to be tremendous people that we are all going to be very proud to have in our schools. They are going to make, I believe, a commitment both to education and to long-term careers in teaching. And so I would urge the Board at least this first year to go through with this, to see how we're doing. I believe these regulations give us the tools to select outstanding people, and I don't want it secured in terms of the eligibility one way or another yet, and so I respectfully ask the Board to consider it.

Dr. Thernstrom: But we're not talking about the entry criteria for all aspiring teachers but only for those who we want to award with very special bonuses, and I just don't see the argument against raising the bar for them so that they are in effect an elite corps whom we are recognizing with a financial reward.

The Chairman: I think the Commissioner's argument is that we can achieve that objective. I think that I'd be quite willing to have sort of an implicit contract, you go out and do this first selection, and we are going to examine in detail the criteria of the people selected. They better be damn good. And if they are not, then we're going to tighten the screws. But I think there is a real case for some flexibility the first time around, because this is a judgment call, and you could have an excellent person. The best graduate student we ever had in philosophy at the University of Texas during my period as chairman scored a combined GRE of 700 and was deemed by the dean of the graduate school inadmissible. He had graduated from Notre Dame with a 4.0 grade point average, and it was in philosophy and physics. You can't do that at Notre Dame and not be brilliant. He probably had flu the day he took the exam, or it was some kind of a fluke, but I got him in over the dean's objection. And in the first year he was at the university, not only did he complete a master's degree, but he published a highly successful novel. He was a brilliant young man. I think there has to be some flexibility built into it. If the Commissioner misuses that flexibility, then we have two remedies. One is to tighten the criteria. The other is to get rid of the Commissioner.

Comm. Driscoll: That's absolutely correct. I agree with that. I feel very strongly about this. We fought very hard to get this legislation, and I take this responsibility very seriously, and I take the challenge of the Chair, that is absolutely correct. I will rise and fall on the selection process. I can only say that, as we're dealing with human beings across the board, and trying to cast the best net. I understand the point. I understand the criteria of making sure that these people have special qualities, have ability, perform well and have shown performance, but I just urge the Board not to tie my hands this first time. I think you will be very proud of the 50 people that we select. That's up to the Board. I urge you to vote these as presented.

Dr. Delattre: Well, it's universally known that I'm soft-hearted and always agreeable. And on those grounds, this one time, Dave.

Dr. Thernstrom: My last word on this, if we do not have sufficient information on the basis of which to assess whether we have picked the right students, then that process will be worthless, and I'm saying we need some additional information. If a student has taken the GREs on a day that he or she has the flu and has done badly, then take them again. I mean, cut off scores are

always arbitrary. When you apply to graduate school, if you get a score that doesn't reflect your worth, you take the exam again. We're going to look at these teachers and measure them against our existing criteria, and we're not going to know enough whether we are giving the bonuses to people who are really sufficiently qualified.

The Chairman: But one of the responsibilities the Commissioner will have is to leave a trail, so that when he gets through with his selection he can be able to submit to the Board evidence that justifies the decisions that he's reached. I just think that -- you know, ex post facto auditing is excellent. This is one thing that I would do all the time with deans. If you try to tell them how to run their program, you're not going to get a good dean. If you let them run the program and you check them, that way they can be just as creative as they want to be. But if they don't perform, you have the basis for removing them. I think this is what we have to have in this program, a good deal of flexibility. This is a judgment call of a highly complex nature, and I think that we can write all these rules -- for example, I don't like the idea of their testing logical thinking and clear written expression unless it's proctored. If it's not proctored, as far as I am concerned, it could be gotten off the Internet. I don't believe that all the candidates are honest. I'm highly suspicious of that. But I figure the Commissioner is smart enough to figure that out too. If he has somebody who passes the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test in mathematics at 70 percent right, he is not going to recommend that person. He is going to recommend the person who passes that mathematics section at about 100 percent. That's what he would expect from somebody who is an engineer or a success in science and industry. So I think just give him some running room and see what happens.

Dr. Koplik: I think we might want to consider under the bonus program a footnote to reflect the action we took earlier this morning.

The Chairman: Yes. I assume that all of this will be revised in accordance with the earlier discussion. For example, on the bonus payment section, all of that would be brought into line with what we've talked about.

Comm. Driscoll: Obviously. You have the ability to change the regulations too.

Dr. Koplik: The footnote I think should put the applicant on notice that the Board Education is seeking legislation to amend the particular provision.

Dr. Delattre: I will move.

The Chairman: All right. It's been moved by Mr. Delattre. And seconded by?

Dr. Koplik: I'll second it.

The Chairman: All in favor? Opposed?

On motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 15A, §§ 19B and 19C, as added by St. 1998, c. 260, hereby authorize the Commisisoner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed Regulations on Teacher Quality Enhancement, 603 CMR 6.00.

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

Comm. Driscoll: I want to thank the Board.

The Chairman: We've now passed that one. Next is a Higher Education document on teacher prepaation which I believe holds some problems. I have discussed this, as I mentioned, with Stan Koplik with Jim Carlin. I think that the Board should give me the benefit of any suggestions for change in this document, so that we can then revise the document in a way that satisfies the interest of the Board of Education as well as the Board of Higher Education, and at that point we will implement this program by appointing a committee that is called for. One thing that I find a

serious criticism in this document is that you are throwing all the money and all the preference here into the hands of the institutions that perform the weakest on the teacher certification test. Why don't we recognize that universities and colleges in the independent sector are also educating the children of the public? They are doing research in the public interest. They function in the public interest. They are subject to scrutiny by the Attorney General's Office, by these nonprofit charitable organizations, and many of them have a much more distinguished record in the preparation of teachers for certification than some of the Massachusetts universities and colleges that will be given under this program a monopoly on all of the advantages that go with this program, and I just think that needs to be re-examined.

Dr. Koplik: Let me just respond quickly on that. You and I had talked earlier in the summer when this was in the drafting stage, and in the largest piece of the scholarship program, the Tomorrow's Teacher's Scholarship, and that's in legislation now, what I did add was a line in the report that after initial implementation, because it was too late to do anything in year one, it is recommended that the program be expanded to include students attending independent institutions of higher education. That was a change, John, that I made after our conversation, but your point is correct that we need to give this Board more time to look at the document, because they have to be comfortable with it. Ultimately I'm looking for a document that the two boards can bring together and work with in some cohesive manner, and that may not be at this stage today. You need some time to review it.

The Chairman: I would like to have response from each member of the Board of Education within a week so that I can take all the suggestions you have and just cull them out in terms of the page numbers in this document identifying the changes in language you want, and I will try to fit it altogether, get it back to you with a draft so that within a period of two and a half to three weeks we can be ready to sit down with Jim Carlin and Stan Koplik and see if we can't approve the document as revised. We might have to give back a little bit, because, you know, it is a two-way street of negotiation, but I would like to get that negotiated within the next three weeks. So if it is agreeable to the members of the Board, you have a week to get in your responses, and then I'll take it from there as quickly as I can. All right. The next item is the foreign language curriculum framework.

Comm. Driscoll: We have three members of the committee that we would like to have come forward, and Carole Thomson and Susan Wheltle who have worked with the committee will be here as well. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. First of all, Dr. Murray Sachs who is a professor at Brandeis University, Dr. Yu-Lan Lin from the Boston Public Schools, and one of my pen pals, Dr. Kathleen Riordan, the director of foreign language from the Springfield Public Schools. Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, you have before you their draft of the foreign language curriculum framework. Dr. Sachs.

Dr. Sachs: Mr. Chairman and members of the Massachusetts Board of Education, I have the honor of initiating this presentation to the Board of a newly revised foreign languages curriculum framework. Our review panel has tried to assure that Massachusetts foreign language teachers and their students will have the best current wisdom in our discipline to guide them in their efforts to meet the high academic standards to which the Commonwealth is committed. My segment of this presentation will emphasize the educational principles and values, the overall educational philosophy, if you will, which are at the base of this version of the framework. Two other panel members will complete our presentation. One, Yu-Lan Lin, by outlining the pedagogical approaches and learning standards that will determine what students can be expected to know at each stage of their studies. And the other, Kathy Riordan, by a brief account of the framework's treatment of some important collateral issues in language studies, such as early-learning programs or the role of technology, and of course the absolutely indispensable issue of assessment.

The panel's work began last spring with considerable forward momentum because of two distinct advantages the panel had at the outset. One advantage was the 1995 version of the framework which contained a stunning array of inventive teaching techniques which we recognized we could build upon for our version and which we were determined to preserve as a tribute to the creativity of the more than 200 teachers across the Commonwealth who had contributed to it.

The second advantage was the concise but exceptionally thoughtful charge to the panel from the Board which recommended literacy as our primary goal, as had been done in the English

language arts framework. That suggestion happened to coincide with our own idea of our mission, so we promptly decided to make an increased emphasis on the skills of reading and writing the central new feature of our revision. To give the goal of literacy its appropriate prominence and to define its many sided educational benefits, we have added a brief introductory essay to each of the existing learning strands, or called communication, cultures, comparisons, connections and communities, and we have included in each essay some mention of how each of the learning strands naturally leads the student to the great books of the civilization being studied in order to learn the best that that civilization has to offer. In that way, each of the learning strands contributes to the development of our understanding of the world around us. And the higher the level of our literacy, the greater the contribution will be to our growing insight into the world.

The fullest statement of the educational powers inherent in literacy is given in the core concept. In this revision, the core concept has been elaborated from a simple goal statement into a short essay which sets forth the stages of intellectual growth that take place in the course of foreign language study and culminates with the stage at which the student's progress approximates the literacy level of the educated native speaker. At that point, the student no longer feels confined to a single-linguistic system for understanding the world, a condition the philosopher Nietzsche referred to as the prison house of language. Instead the student has the prospect of experiencing and appreciating the world with a significantly enhanced comprehension, insight and pleasure which is available only to the well educated. For the core concept of foreign language study, as our revised framework insists throughout, is to produce students who are measurably better educated than they could be without such studies.

Let me conclude my words by noting that as our work progressed, we recognized two more major advantages favoring a successful outcome. One was the review panel itself, a group of dedicated and hard-working teachers who cooperated so effectively as to provide a model of what first rate public service can be at its best. I would like the board to be aware that this panel was such a group. The other was the Department of Education, and this, too, I would like the board to be aware of, particularly the three staff people who were most involved in our work, and I will name them in alphabetical order, Carole Thomson, Susan Wheltle and George Yu. It is quite literally true, as the review panel was constantly aware, that without the skill, wisdom and devoted hard work of those three, this framework revision would never have gotten off the ground, and I speak the truth.

Dr. Lin: Dr. Silber, members of the Board, we worked to revise the Massachusetts Foreign Languages Curriculum Framework to reflect the Commonwealth's solid commitment to high academic standards and expectations that all students in the public schools will read, write, understand and converse in at least one language in addition to English and at a high level of proficiency by the end of the 12th grade. The framework opens with the essential core concept of making foreign languages an important part of every child's education. We believe that the study of language is the study of everything that pertains to the nature of people in society. When we offer foreign languages, we confer upon our students multiple educational benefits. They learn a new way to proceed and understand reality, expand their vision of the world and gain insight into the diversity of human conduct in communities. Our students also improve their skills in reading, writing and conversing which results in higher performance in English, mathematics, social sciences, science and art.

The framework introduces four guiding principles which define the underpinning philosophy of foreign language education and describe effective approaches for classroom teachers. Guiding principle one states that the primary goal of all language programs is to develop students' abilities to use the language in meaningful ways. Guiding principle two stresses the importance of an uninterrupted kindergarten through 12th grade sequence of language study in order to develop high levels of both proficiency and accuracy. Guiding principle three emphasizes the need for culture content to be integrated into the study of language to help students recognize Guiding principle four reminds language educators that assessment of student learning is an ongoing and integral component of language instruction.

The revised framework consists of five strands instead of the four strands outlined in the original framework. These five strands were adapted from the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. They describe the overall content and skills of foreign language learning, teaching and assessment. These five strands are communication, cultures, comparisons, connections and

communities. Each strand is elaborated into learning standards, and each learning standard further developed into learning standard components proctered into four progressive stages of student study, student language study.

How do foreign language teachers teach communication following the revised framework? The framework outlines three ways that a teacher can help students develop communicative confidence. The first approach is to teach interpersonal two-way communication in order for students to negotiate meaning among individuals. The second approach is to teach interpretative communication. This is a one-way communication process utilizing listening and reading skills. Since this communication lacks direct face-to-face interaction, it requires students' profound knowledge of culture and ability to read or listen between the lines. The third approach is to teach presentational communication which requires speaking and writing skills. This mode of communication creates formal messages to be understood by listeners or readers without interaction or negotiation for meaning. The inclusion of interpretative and presentational modes of communication adds reading and writing skills development along with listening and speaking skills. In other words, the framework recognizes that literacy in foreign language and literature can serve as a direct route to the central stores of accumulated human knowledge that contribute to understanding and expression.

For example, in the revised framework, using the interpretative mode, the stage one pre-K to 4 grade students will read and interpret signs, simple stories, poems and informational text. While stage four grade 12 students will analyze the aesthetic qualities of the works of poetry, drama, fiction or film. Using the presentational mode, the stage two students will describe narrative elements of character, plot and setting, whereas the stage three students will write a review of a film, story, play or other work of literature. The interpersonal, interpretative and presentational modes of communication are woven through all five strands, thus fortifying the other four strands as well. In the culture strand, students learn about traditions, perspectives, practices and products of a certain culture as reflected in its history, literature and the visual arts and performing arts. When culture content is presented through the interpersonal, interpretative and presentational modes, the stage three grade ten students will be able to discuss biographies of historical and cultural figures with other. They will be able to identify characteristics in literature, periodicals, videos and relate these to the language and perspective of the target culture. They will also be able to explain in spoken and written form the relationship between the social establishment, such as schools, religion, government, and the perspective of the target culture.

In the comparison strand, students learn to compare and contrast their own language and culture with that of the target language. The stage two students will be expected to discuss words in their target language that are used frequently in English, to recognize their meaning, grammatical category, such as tense, gender and agreement, in the target language as well as English, and to present orally or in writing the differences and similarities between the writing system of the target language and English. In the connection strand, the stage one students will be able to share information obtained from such sources as CD roms or the Internet. They will also be able to read and understand works of age appropriate literature and relate it to their language studies, as well as present to their peers knowledge acquired from print and nonprint materials. The last strand, communities, students will develop their skills in reading, writing and conversing in the target language within and beyond the school setting. They will be encouraged to do volunteer and community services or participate in events where the target language is used. Other encouraged activities such as listening to music, watching dances and plays, reading stories and newspapers or viewing television or film will also greatly enhance and enrich students' language experience and help them become lifelong learners.

It is evident that the revised framework has been strengthened and fine tuned in a number of areas. You will notice that a great emphasis has been placed upon reading and writing in addition to speaking and listening in each one of the five strands as well as in each one of the four stages of the students' learning continuing. We believe that literacy in the target language should begin at a young age giving students the opportunity to experience the language and culture while they develop communicative confidence, thus making them better educated citizens of the world. Another highlight of the framework is the treatment of cultural strands, where the content of culture has been augmented to include history, geography, government, economics, art, performing arts, various literature and literary criticism. This treatment places the study of language at the center of the great arena of humanity and also makes natural connections to many other important academic disciplines such as English, language arts, history and social science and art.

Last, but not least, is the thoughtful consideration given to teaching of classical languages. Since teachers and students of Latin and ancient Greek are primarily concerned with interpretation of text and understanding of differing culture, they will concentrate their study in the interpretative mode in all five strands. When the learning standards under interpersonal and presentation modes are applicable to the teaching of classical languages, teacher will note it afterwards next to the standard. Taking a holistic and applicable approach to the concept of language, the revised framework will serve as the best of possible tool for both the modern and classical language teachers to craft their language curriculum and teach effectively.

Comm. Driscoll: Thank you. We're facing a couple of deadlines, one of which is the news media, so I want to make a correction. Under the legislative proposals to amend Chapter 260, the concept requires testing on the model of the Massachusetts Teacher Certification Test. People are interpreting that to mean that it was the Board's backhanded way of having all veteran teachers tested under recertification using the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test. That was not the intent. The intent is for those teachers who choose to become part of the master teacher program, which would be a bonus for ten years, they will go through that process. For those people who want to be part of that program, the Board is suggesting that that be a requirement. Any proposal to require veteran teacher testing is emanating from the Governor's office and will be put before the legislature. That will be the vehicle. The Board doesn't need to weigh in on that issue. The Board was looking at the proposed regulations for the master teacher program. I'm sorry for any confusion, but that was the concept, and it is intended to see to it that those people who do seek that bonus have to take the test.

Dr. Thernstrom: David, the language needs to be changed.

Comm. Driscoll: Yes.

Mr. Peyser: Is the Board then going to take up this issue or is the suggestion that the Board simply remain silent?

The Chairman: No, I think the Board has thus far not taken any position one way or the other. We're not on record as being opposed to the recertification of teachers by testing. We're not on record as being in favor of it, but we were on record this morning as being in favor of requiring that examination, that recertification examination, for those who wished to be master teachers and qualify for bonus considerations in consequence. We're sorry to interrupt.

Mr. Peyser: I don't understand the connection between the two.

Comm. Driscoll: There is no connection, but the public saw it --

Mr. Peyser: I don't understand the connection between recertification and master teacher status.

The Chairman: Well, I see a great deal. If you want to be a master teacher, you ought to be prepared to demonstrate that you're a master of at least the English language and the subject matter.

Dr. Thernstrom: The language is very misleading, and it just needs to be corrected, that's all.

Dr. Delattre: There is a description now, because there is no recertification testing. There is certification testing, and what we have said is that if you want to be a master teacher, you have to take the certification test and do well, and it doesn't have any implications for anybody else at all.

The Chairman: And we're very sorry for the interruption of your presentation, but that was a potentially hot issue, and we didn't want to have the public misinformed. Please go ahead.

Dr. Riordan: Thank you. We're happy to take this opportunity to highlight the topics included

in the appendix section of the foreign language framework which you have before you. Each topic area in the appendix certainly merits more than a full document. The purpose of the appendix items is to simply provide an introduction to some of these topics. Appendix A addresses the issue of early language learning. A document which is based on the philosophy of programs for all learners certainly must include at least a brief overview of the importance of long and strong language sequences to empower students to become true users, in all that word implies, of a language. Users are those who have mastered all skills, not just some, and they have mastered them to a high level of proficiency. This certainly requires a long and a very high quality foreign language experience.

I might mention that at the recent meeting of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, there was a special meeting convened to which superintendents, assistants and curriculum directors were invited to continue this discussion as it relates to schools in Massachusetts, and there will be further meetings held in cooperation with the Mass. Association of School Superintendents. It is also particularly important to keep in mind the reference that Dr. Silber made earlier to the financial impact and the possibility that there could be some support for districts who want to strengthen or begin programs at this level. The second appendix section refers to assessment which as you are well aware is a topic very near and dear to the hearts of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts frameworks in all subject areas served as the foundation of the statewide assessment program in grades four, eight and ten, and the foreign language framework certainly should not be an exception. We believe that this assessment section is really the beginning part of a conversation in which the Commissioner has indicated will be the work of the assessment committee which he will appoint with a spring reporting date. This section we have included makes references to Massachusetts school district experience in the foreign language assessment issue.

Appendix C addresses the connections between the communicative modes that have been outlined in the text and teaching of literature and culture. It is merely meant to be a brief glance at the relationship between the three communicative modes and the teaching of literature and culture, because we believe it is important that teachers and the general public see these as interrelated items. Appendix D offers teachers a template to use to actually develop curriculum and to implement programs, because it addresses topics and content for foreign language learning at specific age or grade levels. And the final section is on the topic of technology. In reality, foreign language teachers and students have been technology users for many years, and in fact we may have been one of the earlier technology users in schools. However, the technology is changing, and it changes even as we speak. This particular section focuses on the powerful role of technology to support instruction in the area of foreign languages, because it really supports the concept of technology as a tool in foreign language instruction. We see this appendix really as providing the opening of a door to users, a door which will engage them to further study as they pursue this topic of quality foreign language learning in the Massachusetts schools. Thank you.

Dr. Delattre: I'm enormously grateful. I know all the members of the Board are. The work on this framework by the committee and by the members of the Department of Education has been in my judgment spectacular. I have read the framework draft with enormous benefit and appreciation. And if you would think it appropriate, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Board agree to forego our requirement that voting matters be on the agenda beforehand and that we vote to go ahead and send this draft out for public comment. It seems to me to be entirely ready for public comment, and I see no reason for us to delay the process of getting a completed framework into the hands of teachers and schools.

The Chairman: The motion is to waive that bylaw requirement of having it on the agenda a week in advance. Do I have a second?

Dr. Thernstrom: I second that, Mr. Chairman.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education waive its bylaw requirement in order to permit the revised draft foreign languages curriculum framework to be sent out for public comment.

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

THE CHAIRMAN: It's waived. Now you can make your other motion.

Dr. Delattre: I move we approve this framework draft to be sent out by the Commissioner for public comment.

Dr. Schaefer: Seconded.

The Chairman: Any discussion?

Ms. Urbach: I did have one question just for clarification, and it may be something I missed. I'm wondering who decides what language is taught in the elementary schools before students have a choice of which language they would like to take. And then, when they may decide they want to switch languages, how is that dealt with?

The Chairman: Does any one of you wish to address that question? It is a question that is very difficult, so we will leave it to you.

Dr. Riordan: It is a difficult question, and we think about it a lot in Springfield where we do have an elementary program and where many schools do not in fact have the capacity to offer languages from which a child can make a personal choice.

What many school districts do who find themselves in that situation is they make a global decision either by school or by district that they will offer one or perhaps two, if that's within their capacity. Then in many cases prior to middle school, they give students the opportunity then to make a personal choice which would then be their language of study for the remainder of their careers. So what it might look like is you might take, let's say, French, just to pick one, in elementary school, K through 5, and then at the end of 5th grade you might select German as the language that you are going to study in grades 6 through 12, and then it moves on like that. That is simply a way. It is not necessarily the way. But it is how it is done in a number of situations.

Ms. Urbach: How are they held accountable then on the eighth grade MCAS if they haven't had the first five years?

Dr. Riordan: That is an issue where if in fact the MCAS is structured in such a way that it is built on a full eight years of sequence, then that particular practice, which may be in place now, would have to be looked at, because obviously you wouldn't want to do anything that would in fact jeopardize a student's ability. Certainly students who change a language, while they are going to be beginners of this new language, they are never really going to be beginning foreign language learners ever again. They will be beginners of a different language, but they will bring with them much language learning background. But the point you raise is a very interesting question, and it is asked often, so you are right to see it as an issue that has to be resolved.

The Chairman: It would be impacted by budgets. There is no question about that. What I hope will be possible is for every school district to be offering at least one foreign language from K through 12. If we could achieve that result, it would be a monumental achievement. And if of course we can have some of the school districts handling two foreign languages K through 12, that's even better, but there will obviously be a limitation on the choice of languages, that's going to be inevitable simply from an economic point of view. But there are three issues that I think remain. We would have a lot better opportunity to acquire competent language instruction if we did not require bilingual achievement on the part of the instructor.

As we have this committee continuing to make assessments, I would like to ask them to consider three questions. Why do we expect a foreign language instructor to be competent, really competent in English no less than a foreign language? Couldn't we pair in bilingual programs a native speaker of English with a native speaker of a foreign language in different times of the day? And thus, without increasing the cost to the school district, ensure really superior competence, because my observation is that many bilingual teachers are not very good in one of the two languages and sometimes not so good in either. The second question is, you point, on your Page 23, that students must learn from mistakes and try again. They can't learn from

mistakes if the teacher doesn't spot the mistake, and I would like to have that committee assess what is -- what should be the passing score on the Massachusetts Teacher Certification Test of those who are certified as competent, not necessarily that they will be effective at it, but at least competent in terms of their knowledge of a foreign language to be a foreign language instructor. It seems to me that if you get 70 percent of the answers right on Latin or German, that doesn't qualify you to be a teacher. If the child is suppose to learn from mistakes, they only learn from 70 percent of the mistakes, which are the only mistakes that will be recognized by that instructor. So I would like guidance on that issue also. And we had yet another point. So that we can accelerate the testing of a foreign language in Massachusetts, could this committee consider is there a test that we can get off the shelf that will be useful in the assessment of foreign language at the fourth, eighth and tenth grades? Because if we could, then we don't have to go through the process of designing the test. And it does seem to me that with regard to fields like foreign language and mathematics, the subject matter is sufficiently well defined that there might be an off-the-shelf test that would be useful, or one that could be very simply designed by one of the companies that has an off-the-shelf test. The off-the-shelf test might take care of part of the problem and then they might have an oral part of the test as a supplement. But there is an awful lot out there through the State Department and Monterey and other places, and we would like to have that explored. These issues are in your area of expertise and not in ours.

Dr. Schaefer: Do we have any data on how many districts offer Greek and Latin, and is there any effort to encourage districts to offer especially Latin?

Dr. Riordan: I don't know exactly the figures there, but certainly Greek is very small. Classical Greek tends to be taken only by students who have already done a fair amount of work in Latin, at least from what I know across the state. We haven't offered it, but it is a very erratic offer from year to year. The Latin enrollments in the state are quite strong as evidenced by the number of Latin teachers who came to our conference this year. It was the largest number that we have had in a long time. I think the Latin enrollments are not consistent across the state. But where they are strong, they are very strong. Unfortunately it's not a consistently strong program. There was a survey that the department did in'93, I believe. It is old data, but it at least would give some of that information. I'm sorry not to have a firmer answer.

Dr. Schaefer: But there is no way of encouraging districts to offer that?

The Chairman: There are lots of ways. Are we ready to vote on this? I think we're all very pleased with the difference between this one and its predecessor. It's wonderfully developed. All in favor of the motion?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: that the Board of Education authorize the Commissioner to send out the revised draft foreign languages curriculum framework for public comment.

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

The Chairman: Thank you very much.

Comm. Driscoll: Mr. Chairman, as they say, when you want something done ask, a busy person. And when I appoint the assessment committee, I intend to consult with this committee that's already worked so hard. I think it would be most advantageous for all of us to continue the work of this committee.

The Chairman: Mr. Commissioner, there is sort of a shameful conflict of interest here. I would like to read into the record for publication next month under the mailbag this very flattering letter that I received from Phyllis Dragonis concerning the efforts of this Board and myself personally in the stimulation of this group to rewrite the frameworks in the foreign language, and it also is accompanied by 212 letters from the various foreign language instructors. The group was so thoughtful that they gave me all of the letters which are identical in one box and one letter that I could read so that I didn't have to go through all 212. That technological break through is

gratefully appreciated, and I want you to put that into the record.

Comm. Driscoll: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: All right. We now move to item 6 on the agenda which is the improvement of the Lawrence School District. All members of the Board of Education have copies of the letter that I wrote to the Mayor of Lawrence indicating the nature of the subcommittee we appointed. We are advised by counsel that the meetings of that subcommittee have to be public. Roberta Schaefer, as chairman, is privileged to have any private meeting that she would like with Dr. Gaskins. And what I would like to suggest is that now that we have the plan prepared by Dr. Gaskins, the improvement plan for the Lawrence Public Schools, that Roberta sit down with her, review this, and then perhaps we can have as a part of our agenda next month your review of that assessment, and perhaps we could have Dr. Gaskins here and see how this plan

stacks up, what we make of the plan, is the plan sufficiently demanding, and then were you able in your meeting with Dr. Gaskins to develop criteria by which you would assess adequate progress toward the realization of that plan. I think it would be entirely appropriate if you were also to meet with the school committee of Lawrence. By doing this alone, you could have those meetings in private, but then we will make the whole discussion public next month by having it as a part of our regular agenda. If this procedure is acceptable to the members of the Board, we would then just postpone the improvement plan until we have Roberta Schaefer's assessment of it and until we have Dr. Gaskins here. Is that okay with you, Roberta?

Dr. Schaefer: Yes.

Comm. Driscoll: We have various grants before you, Mr. Chairman. If there are no questions, I would ask the Board to approve them.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the grants and the FY 2000 School Building Needs Report as presented by the Commissioner.

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

The Chairman: That brings us to the mail bag, and all of you can read the items there. If there is no further business, I will declare the meeting adjourned.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting at 12:00 noon, subject to the call of the Chairman.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll

Secretary to the Board