COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Board of Education
*****REGULAR MEETING*****
AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
21 MATTOON STREET
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS
Tuesday, April 27, 1999
9:14 a.m. - 12:33 a.m.

The Chairman called the meeting into order at 9:14 a. m. The following were in attendance:

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT:

Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-Chairperson, Worcester
Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Dr. Stanley Z. Koplik, Boston
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Ms. Rebecca Urbach, Falmouth

Dr. David P. Driscoll,
Commissioner of Education

ALSO PRESENT:

Maryellen Coughlin
Registered Professional Reporter

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

THE CHAIRMAN: Before we get officially started this morning, Rebecca Urbach has suggested, and I think it's an excellent suggestion, that we take a moment to reflect on the recent deaths in Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. And if you could all just pause for a moment of silence, I would be very grateful.

(Moment of silence.)

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We have a full lineup this morning. Thank you. We're very pleased to be here and to see our superintendent of schools Gus Sayer and our principal Scott Goldman and our teacher of the year, finalist for National Teacher of the Year, Bruce Penniman, who is a English teacher here at Amherst-Pelham, and a young man -- is it William Gordon?

MR. GORDON: Phillip Gordon.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Phillip Gordon. I don't know how I mixed that up. Phillip Gordon, a familiar name to some of us, who's a student here at -- junior here, right? -- at Amherst-Pelham

Regional High School. So I'll turn it over to you, Mr. Superintendent.

MR. SAYER: Thank you. I'm here just to welcome you to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. We're very pleased to have you with us today. And I have all these people here to fortify me, and I think that's very symbolic of how things get done around this school district. The Commissioner asked me to just say a couple of words about our school district, and I literally don't know where to begin. This is -- we like to think of ourselves as being an unusual school district, not like any other ones in the state, but I'm sure that's not really, really true. But this is a district that's quite proud of a number of things. We have a strong academic tradition in this town which is bolstered by the presence of three colleges and universities that are located here and that enrich our schools in many, many ways. We're equally proud of the diversity of our school district. The community has many different groups of people who live here and who live here for many different reasons. But probably the one thing that unites people in our community is the desire to have good education for their children. There are many things I could talk to you about about our schools, but I won't try to do that. But I would just mention just a couple of things that we have. Phil, I think, can perhaps tell you a little bit about something that was just announced over the strains of the music, so you may not have heard it, a few minutes ago. But our J.V. JETS Team, that's Engineering and Technical -- Junior Engineering and Technical . . . JETS is so much easier, just was notified that it won first prize in the nation in a competition among J.V. JETS teams that just took place, 50 J.V. JETS teams. We also have the National Championship Ultimate Frisbie Team here, which says a lot, I think, about our school also. And of course we're very proud of the students we have who are very highly motivated, most of whom go to college right after leaving us. A recent study showed that almost 95 percent of them complete college within several years after leaving our school. We're proud of our teaching staff. We have many fine teachers here, but none exemplifies them better than Bruce Penniman. And we have really an exciting group of administrators here, relatively new in their jobs, who are doing wonderful things to help our schools develop. I would mention just a couple of other things. One is you're sitting in the midst of the fruits of the School Building Assistance Program. This is part of a new high school addition that was completed a year ago, and we're very pleased and happy to be in these fine facilities. And the other thing I would just mention for your information is that we were scheduled today to begin our MCAS testing. And it is your meeting, and I think only your meeting, that could stop that, and so we are starting tomorrow.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is probably as popular as we will ever get.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And we don't know if it's really popular.

MR. SAYER: I think Bruce is going to -- Phil, would you like to say something?

MR. GORDON: Bruce can speak first.

(Discussion held of the record.)

MR. GORDON: Greetings. I'd just like to thank the Commissioner for the opportunity to speak. Welcome aboard to our high school. I guess I would just like to speak about the high school support of student activities, as you've seen by sort of the displays around the library and any displays you've seen walking in the school. The student body is extremely diverse, and I think the faculty and teachers do a fabulous job of supporting that diversity. And I think from that springs many different interest groups after school, many different sports, and these teams and clubs end up being very exemplary and successful in their different areas. I'd also like to speak, just from my point of view, about the support of faculty and student involvement in after-school issues, in issues that have to deal with school

administration and curricula and policies. I've had the opportunity to sit as a student representative on the regional school committee, which I have a great time doing. I think it's very interesting to see adults sit on a committee and interact as I don't get to see them usually. I mean, you see how adults and

students, where in school they sit and there's a teacher and you sit in a classroom of students sort of -- you see them as sort of someone different and sort of a different type of person. But it's interesting of having the opportunity to sit on a committee with nine or ten other people, and you see that those people sitting on the committee aren't that different, and you see sort of the outcome of similar things that you see that occur between students. So I've appreciated the support that I've gotten as a student representing other students and the support that other students have received in their own -- in their own interests and in pursuing those interests after school. Thank you.

MR. IRWIN: Just quickly, could you tell us what the JETS did to win the national competition?

MR. GORDON: Sure. Our J.V. team consisted of five juniors and three sophomores, and we completed a 100 multiple choice question test, as a group, and this was judged state wide, and our score of 67 out of 100, which percentage wise isn't so great, was fabulous, and we actually tied the first place varsity team in the state as well, which consisted of seniors. And we had also written, after taking that test, five essays, again as an eight-person group, and those five essays were judged nationally against 50 other teams who also placed first in their respective states.

MR. GOLDMAN: Welcome to Amherst Regional High School. I'm just going to make one brief comment that Gus alluded to, and that is that I think we've been so successful with students primarily as a result of the faculty that we have in our school. And I think what's most impressive about the accomplishments of our students, I think, in looking back at the connection with the faculty, is that we try to offer courses in a heterogenous classroom environment. And to the extent possible, a lot of our program and the English department is completely heterogenously grouped. And for those of you who have taught in schools who are sitting behind me, as well as some who are sitting in front of me, you know that it takes a particular talent to teach all students well, and to do that in one classroom, and to differentiate instructions so that all students are pushed to their maximum potential but they have the benefit of working with each other and sharing their experiences that are very diverse, and building a richer learning environment in the classroom. And that wouldn't be possible without support from the community to continue to push us in that direction, without students who are interested in learning from each other, and without really solid teachers who feel comfortable teaching in that way. So as you think about our future direction, I want you to keep that in mind as you discuss education for the future. And again, I welcome you to our school. If you have an opportunity, I would love for you to take a look around after your meeting and walk around. And if there are folks available, I'm sure they'd be happy to talk with you individually if you had questions about the high school. So thank you for being here.

DR. THERNSTROM: I have a question on the heterogenous classroom organization. By the time my kids got to high school, there was the most enormous range in terms of academic attainment and interest. And therefore -- this is the Lexington High School. And therefore, there was self-tracking, that is nobody tracked you, but students themselves could sign up for courses at -- there was actually five levels in most of the courses. What do you do in a heterogenous setting with that spread of academic skill and interest?

MR. GOLDMAN: Well, first we have far fewer levels than that. And most of our courses where we do differentiate are just two levels, a college prep level and an honors level. We do have an AP option in the major academic disciplines. So I think that it starts with having a strong elementary background and insisting on working with all students and having high expectations for all students. Like other schools, we also have students who choose to pursue their interests on a deeper level. We have students taking advantage of the dual enrollment program, and we have several students attending U Mass., some of

the community colleges. Amherst College makes available some courses. We have a program here called the Alternative Learning Program, which is an individualized program where students can apply to go into more detail under the direction of a teacher who is willing to mentor those students. So

we're not trying to limit students' opportunities. But I think in a good K through 12 system, if that's what your expectations are from the time that students come into kindergarten to the time that they go through high school, and you're expecting them to fully contribute to the classroom environment, then that's what you'll get. And I think that we're working hard to really look at who is in our honors courses here and making sure that those courses are balanced, but that's our, that's our commitment. And we will meet with students and their parents to encourage them, if they haven't selected to work at a pace that's really challenging them, to do so, and then hopefully provide the type of learning environment in the classroom and support outside the classroom so that students feel as though it's worth taking that type of academic risk.

DR. THERNSTROM: And at what age can they sign up for a college course as part of their high school curriculum?

MR. GOLDMAN: Well, the dual enrollment program is open for seniors.

DR. THERNSTROM: Seniors.

MR. PENNIMAN: I'm not sure what it means that after a year of public speaking I'm the one who brought a script. I'd just like to add on behalf of the entire faculty and staff and student body of Amherst Regional, my own welcome to you, and to Amherst and our beautiful new facility here. The renovation and expansion of this building was a long time in coming. It took a lot of hard work from a lot of people, as well as two-thirds state funding, but we're very pleased with the result. We're also very proud of what takes place within the school and all the schools in the Amherst-Pelham District. Outstanding teacher creativity and ongoing community support have produced an exceptionally rich and deep program, and our students have an excellent record of achievement. Like other schools throughout Massachusetts, though, Amherst Regional is in the process of change spurred both by our own internal issues and by the state-wide education reform effort. I've had the privilege this year of traveling around the state working with teachers and prospective teachers at a great variety of schools and colleges and learning about the impact that education reform is having. I can report to you today from my observations that that impact has been significant and, for the most part, very positive.
Teachers throughout the Commonwealth are redesigning curricula, looking critically at performance standards and revising classroom practices. And most important, they are collaborating with each other in these efforts, pooling their wisdom and expertise for the benefit of all students.
That teachers are central to the success of education reform is hardly a surprise, though teacher quality has only recently become the main focus of public discussion about school improvement.
Last week I was in Washington with all of the other state teachers of the year celebrating the selection of the 1999 National Teacher of the Year. When President Clinton presented the award last Monday, he spoke at length about teacher quality. Secretary of Education Riley hosted a TV town meeting last Tuesday night focusing on teacher quality. And virtually all of the discussions among the state teachers, both formal and impromptu, related to teacher quality, preparation, mentoring, professional growth, evaluation and more. The news media too have picked up the theme. Last week's Learning Section in the Christian Science Monitor was a multi-page spread on teacher quality. Massachusetts was prominently featured in that excellent series of articles.

Significantly teacher quality is a principal theme of your agenda today. In particular, you will discuss proposals related to teacher certification and recertification, including some radical departures from past practice. As you undertake these discussions, I remind you that teacher leaders and organizations across the state are also involved in similar efforts and eager to contribute to the reforms that will upgrade the profession and quality of teaching in every classroom. I urge you to view this undertaking as an

opportunity for collaboration with teachers. Finally I'd like to offer you a little list. This is Penniman's five Cs of teacher quality. The first C is competence. A teacher needs a broad, liberal education, deep subject matter knowledge and solid communication skills, as well as the tools of the trade, a solid grounding in educational theory and pedagogy. This quality has been and should be

prominently featured in the teacher certification program. But there are others as well. The second is conviction. A steady belief in high principles and in one's mission as a teacher. Students must know what teachers stand for and that indeed that there are ideals worth standing for. The third C is compassion. In this age of accountability, we must not forget that many students come to us from complex, confusing circumstances. Some are bent or broken. We can't teach them unless we can reach them. This means developing relationships with students, trying to understand their lives, giving them second, third and fourth chances. The fourth key quality is commitment. The willingness to put in long hours, to stay in for the long haul, to weather the bad times, to become part of the community, to develop and sustain programs to meet its needs, to become one of the local heroes who are the pillars of
every school. And finally there is collaboration, a word I've used twice already. It's become popular to talk about competition as the key to education reform, but teachers really need to work together. Teaching has become a complex art, and no one has all the answers. I am here today because I have had rich opportunities for collaboration. All teachers need such opportunities which foster creativity, support, innovation and develop leadership. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to serve as the representative of teachers throughout Massachusetts for this school year. On their behalf, I wish you success on your difficult but enormously important work. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I and the Commissioner have a few opening comments to make. Perhaps prefacing mine, I wanted to announce that we have appointed, at least tentatively, pending background check, a new Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Planning whose name is Sandra Stotsky who will be coming on board at some point in the coming month. With respect to today's agenda, I wanted to make some opening, hopefully framing, comments about the general thrust and topic, which is accountability. And it's accountability, in the context of today's agenda, for schools and for teachers.
With regard to schools, we'll be continuing our discussion of an accountability system that will provide a basis for evaluating the success or failure of schools relative to our standards for student performance and relative to our expectations for improvement over time. In thinking about what kind of system we should put into place, I would encourage my colleagues on the Board to keep the following criteria in mind: An accountability system must be outcome focused, not compliance focused. In particular, we should be primarily concerned with student performance and improvement with a secondarily, albeit important, focus on the basic organizational and academic competence of the school. Implicitly such an outcome-oriented system must not be biased towards any specific school-design curriculum or teaching method. An accountability system needs to have integrity and a degree of independence so that all concerned can have faith that evaluations are made without considerations of extraneous factors, competing agendas or preexisting personal or professional relationships. An accountability system needs to be as straight forward and transparent as possible, not only for the sake of those people who work in schools and are subject to the system, but also for the sake of parents and other outsiders who are trying to understand what's going on.

And finally, although an accountability system must take into account the principles of fairness and due process, it must maintain its preeminent focus on the interests of children and parents. Therefore in cases where failure is patent and the chances of internal remediation doubtful, the system of accountability must not stand in the way of timely intervention. The second form of accountability we
will be discussing today involves teachers, specifically through the certification and recertification process. In this context, I'd like to bring to the attention of board members a so-called manifesto from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation entitled "The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them." The document has been signed by a number of policymakers around the country including Abby Thernstrom and me. You nod

your head. And Roberta Schaefer, okay. Let me quote some excerpts from this document. "Perhaps the gravest failing of our present arrangement of teacher certification is the many teachers who lack preparation in the subjects that they teach. Today's regulatory approach to entry into teaching compounds these problems. Because it places low priority on deep subject matter mastery and heavy emphasis on the things that colleges of education pecialize in, many teachers get certified without having mastered the content that they are expected to impart to their students."

Still quoting from the report. "The regulatory strategy's reliance on peer review assumes, of course, that good teaching can only be detected by observation by other practitioners, thus the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has designed an elaborate method for appraising teacher performance and certifying outstanding teachers. Here, as elsewhere, peer review consists mainly of judging quality by observing inputs and processes, i.e. appraising a teacher's skill in using conventional and popular teaching practices." The manifesto goes on to propose four basic principles that I think merit our close attention. "States should develop results-based accountability systems for schools and teachers, as well as students. States should empower school level administrators with the authority to make personnel decisions. States should enforce minimum regulations to ensure that teachers do no harm. And states should open more paths into the classroom, encourage diversity and choice among forms of preparation for teaching, and welcome into the profession a larger pool of talented and well-educated people who would like to teach." It's may hope that these principles will guide us as we enter into our discussions and deliberations in this area.

DR. THERNSTROM: Jim, I think it would be nice if every member of the Board had a copy of that statement.

(Discussion held off the record.)

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman. I know we have a long agenda. I do want to indicate that I met with the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee this morning at their request to go over a number of issues. And not surprisingly, the issues that they brought forward I believe are played out in virtually every school district here in Massachusetts. The first being the growing impact, overwhelming impact frankly, of special education costs, which in their case crowded out, as we hear, plans for programs that they had intended at the beginning of the fiscal year, which now, because of the $250,000 overrun in special education costs, now those plans have to be put aside. We hear that -- I heard it last week in Cohasset. We hear it throughout the state. And while I'm very pleased about the regulations that we're now out for public hearing on and will make some efficiencies, I think, and so forth, this issue of the cost of special education -- the report of the Superintendents' Association which shows that in growing numbers young children are coming into our schools multi-handicapped and so forth. And by not addressing the costs, we are pitting one group of parents against another, and it just isn't right, and so that was the first major issue brought by them. They also had concerns about just the fairness of the charter school tuition per pupil cost, which for students that go to charter schools includes a number of factors in the regular school budget, including special ed. tuitions and other things. Whereas the choice, which the school committee voted by default, by four/four vote, they are now a school of choice. And, of course, that tuition coming in will be that much less. The point, which I think is a crucial time for us here in the Commonwealth, the reliance on property tax. As we look at the new formula and as we go forward to try and see how we can best improve schools, this whole question of taxation. And then finally, they had a number of questions about the MCAS testing. And I'm pleased to announce, which I didn't know, is we do have it available in large print and braille which was one of their questions. So I thank them for that.

I can't help but comment when you come into a school like this, the dichotomy that exists between the appearances and what's really happening, and this occurs in schools throughout Massachusetts. Most

people would think as they come into this building that this is a suburban high school. And while they're very proud of the statistics on kids who go on to colleges, etc., there are 29 languages, different languages, spoken by the students in this building. And you saw -- in fact, our curtains have short-circuited a tremendous Cambodian display by the students, Cambodian students, here in this building. It's great to come out west and see so many friends. We have an old friend in Dean Bailey Jackson from the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts; Bailey. And a new friend from the west, John Schneider, who is chief of staff of the joint committee, worked for Representative Gardner, has left to study and work at U. Mass. Amherst. It's nice to see you John. Very quickly on my notes, and I won't repeat them. With respect to the budget, we are expecting the House Ways and Means to release its budget today at eleven o'clock, and I will get to board members the breakdown by, if not this afternoon, certainly tomorrow morning. We will FAX the breakdown to you. There's been a lot of activity with respect to awards for teachers. We've given the bonus -- the veteran bonus teaching first awards. It's a 50,000 bonus, which is $5,000 over ten years. We will be giving the new teacher signing bonus recipients -- we will be announcing those. We had 800 full applications for those slots, and we have 69 that we've offered, and we anticipate somewhere between 50 and 60 will be able to take advantage of that program. We did award the Christa McAuliffe award recently. And Dr. Shirley Griffin who has a great project relating to pollution around our ponds and lakes, which I think it will be a very replicable program throughout Massachusetts and very helpful. We're going to work with the new Commissioner of Environmental Affairs, Secretary Durant, Bob Durant, and the Department of Education will be working with him. And then finally, I just want to mention that I am undertaking a program of coaching and consulting whereby I have -- am working with a company that's had great experience both in private industry and in schools and school districts in this state, school committees in other states. Involved in that process will be not only interviews of all of the senior staff but also of board members. I believe, as I become full Commissioner, there is an opportunity and obligation, really, right now to establish our clear mission of the Department of Education as we go forward, and we'll be engaged in that process over the next couple of months. And I do want to mention that, as I did last night with a larger crowd, that our student member, Rebecca Urbach, has been accepted at Barnard College and will be attending Barnard College next year. So, Rebecca, congratulations. And finally, my commercial. I did bring with me because I was asked to, place mats from the City of Lawrence and the McDonald's restaurant in the City of Lawrence whereby McDonald's has graciously agreed to develop place mats for all of the students in Spanish with MCAS-type questions, as they get prepared in Lawrence for the MCAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DR. DELATTRE: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I also last week asked to be signed up on the Fordham report, which seems to me particularly good, and I'm glad that you emphasized in your comments the Fordham criticism of NBPTS and the utter lack of documentation and that there is any connection between the input-driven NBPTS and real qualifications to teach. It therefore comes as a particular disappoint to me that the 19 mentor teachers that were chosen by the Department of Education in Massachusetts to receive the $50,000 over ten years as mentor teachers were identified as mentor teachers by virtue of their having satisfied NBPTS criteria and not by virtue of their having satisfied any Massachusetts testing criteria. As you know, I've argued against our reliance on NCATE, NBPTS, INTASC and the other usual suspects in our efforts at education reform in Massachusetts. The Commissioner's report notes that each teacher worked for 200 hours to satisfy the extensive National Board requirements including ten assessments. Those are the input sort of assessments. And four two-and-a-half hour written tests of content knowledge and content application. As things stand now, this Board is in the dark about what those tests consist of, and I don't think we should be relying on them unless we are in a position to see what's in those tests. And furthermore, that we're in a position to see what the teachers who were awarded these positions and these supplementary funding did on those tests, otherwise we're giving carte blanche to a system that by our own signature we think inappropriate and inefficacious in education reform.

THE CHAIRMAN: I might add further -- and, Commissioner, I certainly want you to comment, if you'd like, afterwards. But in November the Board did vote on a legislative proposal which would have changed the criteria, the statutory criteria, regarding the selection of the master teachers or the mentor teachers who receive this bonus, this 10-year bonus, and that was -- I think, on the recommendation of the department, that was not submitted but rather was put in queue for some regulatory change or regulatory consideration by this Board, and that has not taken place yet.
And based on, I think, a January 15th memo, the intent is for us, after this first cycle which we've just completed, to examine these very questions and to revisit what criteria should be used for selecting the master teachers. I think that is absolutely necessary, not only in terms of ensuring that we are selecting the best people for this award, but also that we're faithful to Board decision-making going forward. And this clearly has been the policy of this Board, and it is something that we can certainly revisit, but without question has been the policy of the Board that we need to develop alternatives,

local alternatives, to NBTPS which we find to be more reliable and valid.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, I think that's always been the plan. And as we talked about -- as I talked about in the January memo, there was sort of a practicality this year. I'm not sure -- I don't want to lump NCATE and INTASC and the National Board program. And I'm not here to defend it. I can only say that it does have a less than 50 percent passing rate, for whatever that means. I suppose it means it has some rigor. And we know that our people passed, so that we know. And as I've said to the Chairman, I think it would be helpful to have a couple of the teachers who have gone through the program, at least -- and it doesn't have to be at a board meeting, it could be at one of these separate hearings that we're having -- and perhaps those that criticize the program as well to come and have a forum. Our interest and the intent, I think, of the legislation is that we add on top of whatever the process is. And by the way, the Legislation allows us to come up with another process other than the National Board, but it's the only show in town, as I would suggest the BEST program is now, at least the only one around that seems to be efficacious. We could -- and so the intent of the law is that we develop our own eventually, and certainly intended in the law is for us to superimpose, if you will, some kind of a content test or testing program that this Board is comfortable with. So I think it's the right
issue to raise, and we need to get at it clearly in time for next year so that we're not faced with this situation again next year by which we just used the National Board.

DR. DELATTRE: I understand the temporal problems and the history and the strain that's put us under. My own view, as I've said before, is that we would have been much wiser to have required as a necessary condition for these appointments a very high score on the Massachusetts Certification Test.

THE CHAIRMAN: One other point I'd add here, and this perhaps will lead into discussion later on, but I think in terms of developing means of assessing teacher competence with respect to certification and recertification, that the same kind of framework and the same kind of methods may be used, but perhaps with a higher standard, in terms of these groups of mentor or master teachers.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Leonard Lubinsky, Superintendent of the Erving Public Schools, addressed the Board on the issue of MCAS.

MR. LUBINSKY: First I'd like to introduce Christine Lewis, the principal of the Swift River School, and Laura Baker, the principal of the Shutsbury Elementary School, two people who work with me. And I want to say it's been a pleasure working with David Driscoll for many, many years, both as a colleague and as -- I'm not sure exactly what our relationships are when we're superintendents and he's Commissioner, but I guess colleagues still works. We came here because we wanted to encourage a broader view about schools, and I think what the MCAS tests called for, both to encourage more thinking about the character and social

relationships among students, something that's been brought to light pretty harshly recently. And also, the extent to which the MCAS tests don't actually get at the real work of students. Even in its own terms, the MCAS tests have been a problem for us in terms of looking at -- looking at the work of students, because we don't get to see the students' essays, we don't get to see the students' actual work, a little like the concerns that Dr. Delattre expressed about the teachers that you just approved, you didn't get a chance to see their work either. We really need to find ways to get -- to get the essays and the other actual work of students back for us to be able to work with students about their work, that's our job. And if we can't get that information and get it back
quickly, then we really can't do our work nearly as well. I've taken substantially less than my three minutes. I've tried to do that. I just got back -- I want to say I just got back from Europe. I'm not as coherent as I'd like to be. I did two important things related to Europe, though. In order to deal with our shortage of administrators, I just hired two new principals, one who's a principal at the elementary school of the International School in Prague, and one who's principal of an international school in Rome. I'm sure the certification people will help me deal with that. It would be terrific if my two colleagues can say just a brief word or two.

DR. THERNSTROM: I have a question for him, or actually Dave about receiving the information on individual students' performance on MCAS. It was my understanding that schools were going to be able to get back after MCAS was graded the responses of individual students.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, we have samples to show what proficient and what advanced is, but it would be impossible to get every, particularly -- I think we have plans, and Jeff is here, in the future to try to do that, but this first time was just impossible.

DR. THERNSTROM: I understand the first time, but I thought that was the long-range plan.

MR. NELLHAUS: In this coming year, we're exploring the possibility of returning the long compositions to begin with. And then over time -- you know, we're optically scanning all of the students' responses on the essay questions, so, you know, over time we will have the capacity to return work to schools. We're trying to think about the feasibility issues around doing that. The costs, the budgeting around that has to be considered. But I think, at least in this coming year, the long compositions will likely go back to schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: All right. That was my understanding.

DR. DELATTRE: The testimony is exactly right. You're exactly right. If there is not that direct access by the teachers, MCAS is a two-legged stool.

Ms. Christine Lewis, Principa of the Swift River School also addressed the Board on the issue of MCAS.

MS. LEWIS: I do want to say that it will make MCAS and the results more meaningful to us at the school level. I know there are purposes for getting the test scores and looking at the different schools. But at the school level I cannot tell you how many times this past year we've looked at numbers and letters and not known exactly why students have gotten those numbers and letters. And, you know, as far as cost goes, I know at the school level this year we are banned from copying any student work, and
of course I wouldn't do that, but we are very willing to copy work if that would be a possibility to cut down on the cost.

Ms. Laura Baker, Principa Shutsbury Elementary School addressed the Board on the issue of MCAS.

MS. BAKER: I come before you to ask that we not lose sight of the goals of education. I'll begin with a letter in the epilogue of Hiam Beno's book Teacher and Child. "Dear teacher: I am a survivor of a

concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness, gas chambers built by learned engineers, children poisoned by educated physicians, infants killed by trained nurses, women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates, so I'm suspicious of education. My request is help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane." Since the MCAS has come on the educational scene, the talk has turned only to achievement of knowledge, of skills. There's not time to talk about the larger issues of education, making a better world, developing caring human beings. Tests cannot be the measure of that important work. Only with clear expectations and structured active learning can we begin to see students exhibit these habits of mind and heart informing action. Action can be observed through performance, not assessed on tests like MCAS. Please have the courage to lead education in a way that ignites the passion of educators, a way that seeks to make our children more humane, a way that can only be evaluated by complex actions which exhibitions can capture, a way that puts the heart and the actions squarely in the center of our work.

DR. DELATTRE: I'd like to say a word about that, if I may. Some of us on this Board have devoted virtually our entire careers to character formation and education that is directed to the cultivation of both intellectual and moral virtue. I have never heard anyone on this Board express the view or give comfort to the view that the cultivation of the intellect independent of the cultivation of character is a desirable education condition.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, moreover, we see the two as inextricably intertwined. I mean, I don't see how you can talk about even separating the one from the other so that it's a choice, as you imply.

MR. LUBINSKY: I think we probably -- I think we probably share that and don't suggest that the Board thinks otherwise. We were talking about what the impact appears to be of the MCAS test on public perception, public expectation, and the consequences that we all feel as we deal with communities, with everyone about the MCAS tests themselves.

DR. DELATTRE: Well, there are educational systems that have been designed to produce intellectually powerful monsters. And it's been known, at least since Deuteronomy was written, that that can be done, so I certainly don't disagree with you that that's a very really hazard. What I want you to understand is that there's nobody on this Board who's unaware of what a dreadful hazard that would be or is in any way giving comfort or encouragement to such a conception of education.

Joan Schuman Executive Director of the Hampshire Education Collaborative addressed the Board.

MS. SCHUMAN: Good morning. Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Driscoll, Members of the Board of Education, my name is Joan Schuman. I'm the Executive Director of the Hampshire Educational Collaborative. I'm also here as the president-elect of MOEC, the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives. MOEC represents 29 educational collaboratives across the Commonwealth who in turn provide educational programs for over 5200 children and youths whose special education requirements cannot be met in their school systems programs. Chapter 40, Section 4 (e) passed and signed into law in 1974 encouraged local school committees to join together collaboratively to conduct educational programs and services to supplement or strengthen existing school programs and services more efficiently and cost-effectively. The majority of collaboratives came into existence to address school systems' needs for special or occupational education, designing implementing and delivering a menu of programs and services for low incidence handicapped populations. Some historically have played an important role in the delivery of high quality professional development. Under educational reform, many of us have been able to expand that role to meet the increasing needs of teachers and administrators in standards-based curriculum and instruction.
Our ability to continue to offer programming for special needs students in an inclusive setting, that is within the walls of the public school, is reaching a critical juncture. Across the state increases in the

general student population and in early childhood programs has had a severe impact on Collaborative's ability to obtain classroom space in public school settings. While the School Building Assistance Act and the Board's School Construction Regulations encourage and indeed provide incentives for school districts to make space available to Collaborative programs, there are no requirements for Collaborative programs to be maintained in a newly constructed or renovated building once the project is completed. We urge the Board to make adjustments to the School Construction Regulations when they come before you later this spring that would require school districts to retain Collaborative program space in school buildings, if needed, for the life of the bond issued to finance the project.

Let me now put on my Hampshire Educational Collaborative hat for a moment and to welcome you to Western Massachusetts, to the Pioneer Valley, and particularly to Hampshire County, and to comment on two issues of concern. Because we serve children and teachers throughout Western Massachusetts in our student and teacher training programs, we are extremely cognizant and appreciative of the many needs of our urban school districts. But as you look out on to the idyllic setting outside of the Lord Jeffrey Inn, where you were yesterday, and this magnificent new high school building, I must remind you that behind these lovely New England landscapes, as accurately reported by the Boston Globe two years ago, are some of the poorest, most violent and abused youth in the state. Many of these former mill towns have the highest rates of rape, battering and sexual abuse in the state. Public transportation is limited or nonexistent, and unemployment still high. As the fruits of the legislature's largess are parceled out across the state, we urge you to remember that the sparsely populated rural areas in Western Massachusetts have special needs that don't always fit in to funding formulas. Moreover, the school districts and towns don't have the infrastructure to meet the needs. Finally, in the wake of Littleton, Colorado and during this first week of MCAS testing, we urge you to consider the ramifications of the assessment testing on many of our students with disabilities and to move forward as quickly as possible with an alternative assessment program for these students, and to focus not only on the achievement scores but on the social and emotional needs of all students in all of our public schools, be they urban, rural or suburban. Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to appear before you today. MOEC would welcome the opportunity to present to you more fully the array of programs that we have, and of course the Collaborative would be more than willing to do the same. Thank you.

Dr. Rosalie Porter

DR. PORTER: Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here in the very school where my three sons were so well-educated, enjoyed themselves tremendously, and were helped into becoming very good citizens and responsible adults. I'm here to speak to you this morning on accountability and to focus attention on the importance of accountability for the group of students in Massachusetts schools who enter our classrooms with little or no knowledge of the English language. About 45,000 students in this state came to us as immigrants, migrants, refugees, or were born to families in the Commonwealth that did not use English at home. As a group, bilingual children's academic achievement and their progress in developing speaking and literacy skills in English have not been consistently assessed or reported district by district since the introduction of bilingual education in 1971. With the welcome passage of the Education Reform Act of 1993, an accountability system is now in place. MCAS defines what the Commonwealth considers students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school and evaluates student progress. The MCAS policy was announced as having the intent of testing all students. A report published in 1994 by the Bilingual Education Commission stated its very first priority to be that the 1993 Education Reform Act emphasis on accountability of educational outcomes for all pupils include the development of appropriate assessments of pupils in bilingual programs and the collection of data specific to bilingual students. My concerns for LEP students, Limited English Proficient students, are twofold. First, that they indeed participate in the testing. And second, that their performance Levels be compared with the two other defined groups, regular education students and students with disabilities.

To this end, I have conducted some preliminary reviews of the data published by the Department of Education to highlight the participation and performance of these students. I have given you attachments reviewing these, and I would like to just go right to the conclusion.

I support Commissioner Driscoll's efforts to promote accountability for the academic achievement of bilingual students in this state. I strongly support the Commissioner's stated goal of promoting flexibility and program choice for every school district in Massachusetts with English language learners, as was stated in his memorandum to this Board of December 8, 1998. MCAS guidelines for the assessment of English language learners are fair. It is essential that these guidelines be rigorously enforced and that districts be monitored for compliance. That is really my message to you this morning. Thank you very much.

DR. THERNSTROM: I have a question. Your last note that districts be monitored for compliance, what form -- are you already seeing noncompliance, or what form do you expect noncompliance to take? And, you know, what -- what do we need to be watching here?

DR. PORTER: Well, the first and most important piece is that the students actually be tested. And as you will see, in the very preliminary reviews that we've done, in the first two years of the third grade reading test, a very high percentage of children who had started school in Massachusetts in first grade were not tested. We can guess that perhaps the guidelines were not clear or they had not been sufficiently discussed with staff, but that is a fact. This year is the third year of the administration of this test. We hope and expect, since the Commissioner's guidelines have been clarified again, that the number of students who should be tested will be tested. From there, looking at performance levels, we cannot -- we cannot make any judgments about whether students are achieving state goals if they haven't taken the tests. This is a work in progress. The Reed Institute has the intention of following this every year, of doing a longitudinal study. As to how these districts should be monitored, how compliance should be enforced, this is really the responsibility of the Department of Education. I couldn't begin to say that.

Mr. Steve Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

MR. GORRIE: Good morning. And it is a pleasure to be here in the west, although I found it rather unusual that the first two people who greeted me this morning were from Boston. But I have made many visits in my capacity as MTA President to the west this year, and I'm glad to be here. Just very briefly, I thank you for this opportunity to speak. The MTA does have a strong interest in several of the agenda items today, but I will only address two, since a couple of them will be addressed in other venues at another time. The first is the new certification as well as the teacher evaluations. And it's the proposal about evaluations that troubles me the most. Commissioner Driscoll's one-page handout on this proposal states that the Department will be submitting draft regulations to the Board under which principals will have the right to require veteran classroom teachers to take a subject matter test as part of their evaluations. And that failure to pass that test would be grounds for dismissal. We disagree on two points. First, as a matter of law, we strongly disagree that the Board has the authority to give principals this option of testing the current teachers. Only the legislature has that authority. This Board should not attempt to subvert that democratic process by reaching beyond its statutory authority to impose a teacher test. To do so would -- in our opinion would lead to acrimony, lawsuits, but not necessarily better teachers or better teaching. And second, as a matter of policy, we believe that requiring veteran teachers to pass a test is not a good idea. As assessment experts have said over and over again, the best, most effective way to determine if a teacher is competent and knows his or her material and is doing a good job is to evaluate that teacher's actual performance in the classroom. Making teachers pass a paper and pencil test is poor public policy under the best of circumstances. And requiring already certified teachers in Massachusetts to pass an exam connected with a teacher certification program is even worse. Assessment experts have raised questions about that test ever since it was administered, and those questions have yet to be answered. Meanwhile, results from the teacher certification test have

been used by politicians to unfairly attack and criticize public school educators. Requiring veteran teachers to take such a test would damage morale, lead to conflict and acrimony within the schools and would make it harder to attract and retain qualified teachers.

We do support accountability for teachers, and we support an effective, fair and valid evaluation system. As a matter of fact, we have entered into many discussions with a group called Mass. Partners which I co-chair with Joanne Reece from the School Committee's Association, a group that consists of all the principal associations, superintendents, school committees, the unions, and this is one of our topics of discussion. If administrators need more training on how to conduct these evaluations, by all means they should receive it. And we urge you not to subject teachers to an unfair system just because either administrators are unwilling or unable to evaluate teachers or districts fail to provide adequate resources in the matter required under current law. We also oppose strongly a second proposal that is before you today, and that's the second cycle recertification plan. Let me tell you at the outset what we do support. We support requiring schools, districts and the state to develop professional development plans, and we believe the local school administrators have the right to require teachers to participate in professional development in accordance to those plans. Professional development should be offered at no cost and in accordance with local contracts. And we believe that the state does have a right to expect teachers to participate in additional professional development as a condition to becoming recertified. But it's at this point we part company with the Commissioner's proposal. It gives unprecedented authority to principals and other administrators and imposes a serious threat to teachers. In effect, it states the principal has control over the professional development that is required on the job. But also, the PD, or professional development, require teachers in accordance with state laws and recertification. And teachers who fail to satisfy the principal's requirements would not only lose their jobs but lose their certificates. I cannot think of any other profession where an employer has control over both an employee's license and their job situation. As with the teacher testing, it's a poor solution to a problem. In our experience, the problem with professional development is not that teachers do not take jobs seriously, but that all too often the quality of the professional development is inferior. We see both of these proposals as yet another slap in the face. We all want teachers who are capable, intelligent and professional and want them treated accordingly. We do not want teachers who are unhappy, resistant and looking for another line of work because they are treated as if they are incapable of making sound educational decisions for themselves. We urge you to choose wisely. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: If I could just make a quick correction. When you talk about teacher dismissal, it's failure to meet the performance standards, and I do not suggest something about failure of a test. I think, and we'll have a long discussion about this, but I think the Board does have some regulatory authority, and it's an overall process that I'm looking at. The performance standards language comes from the statute. So I'm not suggesting they fail a test they get dismissed. I'm suggesting a performance evaluation system, and it could very well be that a teacher gets transferred, for whatever reason, into a subject area or frameworks or whatever so that there's time. And, you know, the testing program simply points out, as a diagnostic tool, what the teacher needs to do. So I don't want to be caught in this idea that we're going to give a test on Monday and fire teachers on a Tuesday, that's not my intent at all. I do think, and I'm proposing that this Board consider a performance assessment, which could include testing if needed. But, you know, it's not as simple as you've stated.

DR. DELATTRE: It will surely be needed, Dave. There has never been a single piece of evidence offered anywhere that you can tell by a classroom observation what you can learn from a really good test.

On a motion duly made, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 30, 1999 meeting as submitted by the Commissioner.**

The motion was made by Dr. Thernstrom. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Irwin and Mr. Delattre abstained from the vote.

CHARTER SCHOOLS - Discussion and Possible Vote
Renewal of Charters for Benjamin Franklin Classical, Community Day and Sabis International

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As Ed comes forward, this is, as the chairman mentioned, the beginning of this process, that this Board has responsibility to consider the renewal of charters, and we are presenting three schools to you today: The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, the Community Day Charter School and the Sabis International Charter School. The first school obviously in Franklin, the second school in Lawrence, and the third school in Springfield. I do want to point out that the statute is pretty specific about the questions that need to be answered in the affirmative: Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? And has the school been faithful to the term of its charters? We've given Members of the Board the materials on all three schools, which are based -- and we're basing our recommendations on their annual reports, on site visits. They file an application for renewal. We have renewal inspection reports. We've looked over financial records. And then finally we've offered and allowed written comment from the general public, superintendents in the area and so on. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I turn it over to Mr. Kirby.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, perhaps, Ed, if you could just give us kind of a brief synopsis of the Department's recommendations with respect to these schools. One other thing, which I think I might add, is that the process here would typically, I think, entail a discussion at this meeting and then a vote at a subsequent meeting. We do have the authority by consensus essentially, a two-thirds vote at least, to consider any of these matters at this meeting if we feel there's no further need for deliberation or discussion. The one exception, I think, to that would be, in this case, the Sabis School, in that there are some outstanding -- there's some outstanding documentation which has not yet been submitted and which needs to be evaluated upon its submission. So for that one at least, I would hope that we could have a discussion, but the vote on that would certainly not occur until our May meeting. For the other two, the Community Day Charter School and the Benjamin Franklin Charter School, if the Board is so persuaded by the materials and the presentation, then we can go forward, and I think it would be possible for us at least to vote today on those two schools.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I just have a question, Jim, about what is outstanding for the Sabis International. What are we waiting for?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're actually, I think, primarily waiting for some updated financial information. The accounting -- the audited statements, as you know -- well, the fiscal year has not been finished, so the last audited statement we have is from June 30, 1998, and we're looking just to get some more current data as to the balance sheet and the income statement for that school.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And for the record, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board I am recommending renewal for all three schools. Again, pending further information for Sabis, so I would agree that it not be voted today. But the Board can decide whether it be this month or next month, but I am recommending renewal for these schools.

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ED KIRBY: In the way of introduction, I'd like to just make a couple of comments about the accountability process generally for charter schools. Now that we have the first charter schools nearly at the end of the accountability cycle at the point of renewal, we have the benefit of hindsight, and it is clear to me that the process is working. The three central questions, which the Commissioner has

already indicated, provide a clear and good framework for this process: Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? And has the school been faithful to the terms of its charter? We also have good components to answer those questions, and these components define the steps of the accountability cycle. In its first year of school, specifies the terms of its charter in an accountability plan. It then reports annually on its performance relative to those terms. The school is visited in its second and third years by the Department of Education in the form of site visit teams. And lastly, in response to the school's written application for renewal, each school is subject to a much more thorough and scrutinise inspection conducted by an independent contractor to the Department. It's also fair to say that now that we have the benefit of hindsight, it's clear that the process can work better in the future. We now have the opportunity to look back over the past four years and identify what could be better aligned. These components work well, but they could be better aligned, better timed, and each of them could be improved, I think, significantly, particularly in the area of accountability plan development. An accountability plan sets forth the terms of the school's charter. And in that most of this work is essentially contract oversight, the clearer the terms of that charter, the easier it is to accomplish the oversight. We'll address revisions and improvements of this process this summer, having ushered the first schools through renewal, and we plan to implement any revisions that we come to during the next school year. You have in front of you three recommendations regarding renewal that have, except for your consideration and vote, reached the end of this renewal cycle. In the format that we provided to you, the summary of review, we've attempted to be brief in the initial summary, but then also to provide you with the actual renewal inspection reports which were conducted -- which are the result of the inspections conducted in response to the school's application for renewal. By this, we hoped to give you further evidence of each school's performance, but also provide some insight into how the inspection process works. And with that, I'll just say that the Commissioner has asked me to be on hand to answer questions about how this process works or about specific recommendations.

DR. DELATTRE: Would you like a procedural motion to enable us to have a motion to vote on the approval of the first two?

THE CHAIRMAN: I would. I would appreciate that, yes.

DR. DELATTRE: Well, I'll make the procedural motion then.

DR. THERNSTROM: I second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion? Just to clarify, this is a motion which would allow us to vote on the Community Day Charter School and the Benjamin Franklin. All in favor? Opposed? Passes.

DR. DELATTRE: I'll then move that we approve the charters for Benjamin Franklin and Community Day.

DR. THERNSTROM: And I second that as well.

DR. SCHAEFER: Can I ask one question? And this is not just about those two. Is there going to be any effort on the part of the charter school group to kind of summarize what we've learned from these charter schools about what works, what doesn't work, anything that's replicable for public schools in general?

MR. KIRBY: Well, one of the purposes of the charter school law calls for charter schools to provide models for replication. Perhaps the first significant step in this regard is the production of renewal inspection reports. While our yearly site visit reports have always been public, they don't go into the thorough level of

scrutiny that I would want to see as an outsider about how a school works, and also comments about its performance. So that's one step. What we've also asked each school to do in its formal written application for renewal is to comment on what it has learned from the first term of its charter and how it would apply what it has learned to the next term, and we actually ask the school to provide a revised accountability plan to look at that. Additionally, we ask in the written application for renewal that a school comment on how it will take initiative, now that it's four years down the road, to disseminate what it considers successful practices in its school. It's safe to say that given that these schools are only -- these first schools are only at the close of their fourth year, and given the
struggles of start-up in the first one, two and three years, they're really trying to identify what is effective first before then going to a second step of dissemination. So what we've found in the written applications for renewal, especially in these earlier schools, is that there's comment on plans down the road for dissemination activities, but each of these schools also acknowledges that from their perspective it's still early on.

So renewal inspection reports are one way that we as the Department can get clear pictures of each school's operation out to the public, primarily through the web site. But there are also other opportunities, one which we've talked about, and hopefully would be able to pull off this summer, if

not next school year, is holding essentially an institute at which charter school leaders and teachers joined by district school teachers and leaders would convene to discuss various aspects of school performance, whether it be curricular content or school leadership.

DR. THERNSTROM: Jim, in our school and district accountability system which we discussed yesterday, are the charter schools eligible for the exemplary school program.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I mean, they're treated as any other public school. And actually, it may be worth somewhat further comment there, in the context of the evaluation system, Juliane mentioned several times that the model being applied to charter schools of inspection is being looked at as a tool for some part of the evaluation inspection system for all schools. And I would just add at a minimum in
reading the reports that I found the commentaries to be very insightful and very helpful in getting a qualitative sense for what the school was about, in a way that looking at data just doesn't provide.
So I thought it was extremely well done in that sense, both in terms of the narrative itself, in terms of the questions that were posed, and in terms of what appeared to be very useful and meaningful insights into the strengths and weaknesses of these schools. So I thought that was really quite strong and something that certainly deserves further examination and attempts at replication as we move to broader scale evaluation of schools and districts.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Just a question on the -- what am I looking at here -- the site visits. Can you tell me specifically some of the key things that you look for as a team when you go in for the site visits for the schools? Because it strikes me that we're talking about one day twice, so I'm interested in knowing what it is that you look for.

MR. KIRBY: What we do in the site visit process -- and you're referring to the annual site visit process where the Department and a team of voluntary citizens who are usually school leaders -- school teachers from around the state lead by a member of the Department's charter school staff --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Do you go in at any other time? Do you visit sites any other time than that?

MR. KIRBY: As a staff, we will visit schools informally, but these are the formal opportunities.
The site visit is based on a protocol primarily of classroom observations and interviews. When I say interviews, they're interviews of each of the major constituencies of the school, from the board of trustees to teachers, parents and students, as well as the school's head. The interview protocol within each of those meetings is designed to get answers to the questions that we're asking about academic success of the

school's academic program, as well as organizational viability. They differ depending on the constituency, because you want to ask the Board slightly different questions than the school's teaching staff. The flaw in the annual site visit format is that it's far too brief. And it was in fact our motivation for seeking a more thorough method to close the process, and that led us to the inspection method. What we found, looking back now, is that the inspection reports are consistent with our second- and third-year site visit reports. However, it's clear to see that the inspection reports are able to pursue all of the questions that are raised by a day long site visit that the day long site visit
team just can't get to.

DR. KOPLIK: I think there are some things in the evaluation that may be picked out and shared with the Board in a special way because they represent, at least for me, some very powerful statements.
One in particular that I came across, and it follows on the point that Roberta was making about highlighting some of these things. I found this particularly powerful. I found it powerful when an evaluation team says, and I will be pretty close to verbatim here, "It is hard to imagine a school setting in which the parents and the staff have a more common understanding of the academic and moral and social and cultural characteristics of their purpose." And this is a school of about 310
students, recognizing that that's a relative good number of students, but maybe smaller than many of the other schools that we'll be looking at in our evaluation technique, but that is a powerful union, and as a necessary precondition for an effective school. So we ought to go in and distill that a little further

and find out what were the mechanics behind that to allow evaluators to make what I determine to be a very powerful statement, based upon observation, based upon conversation and a mutually reinforcing purpose between parents and staff.

DR. SCHAEFER: I just wanted to clarify one point that Abby made about are these schools eligible for the exemplary school program. I think that while we would like to see all charter schools succeed, we also need to recognize that some of them may also fall into the category of under-performing at some point. And, yes, we need to make clear to the public that they will be held accountable across the board good or bad.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yeah, but that's implicit in the law, that if you're under-performing --

DR. SCHAEFER: With charter schools, I mean, it's not -- you know, I think people have a misperception about what will happen.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I agree.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this is actually a useful point to talk a little bit about, circumstances which we may confront as we evaluate other schools which perhaps are not so happy as the ones we're confronting today, which is the case where we may run into a school that it is for whatever reason not performing either up to what our standards are for public schools generally or certainly what the expectations are based on the charter itself. In my interpretation of what our options are, we have several. Certainly one is simply not to renew and to close the school. But I think there are other options that reside in between renewal and closure, and I think this gets to the kinds of issues that we may be dealing with in terms of schools that are under review or chronically under-performing.
Certainly I don't think it makes any sense at all for us to continue the life of a charter school that is -- that we would deem to be chronically under-performing. However, there may be under-performing charter schools that clearly have the potential for turning themselves around and for living up to the
expectations established in their charter, and in those cases I think we can use the renewal process as a vote to renew the charter as a means to establish certain conditions, perhaps to renew the charter for less than five years, to put other limitations on the charter renewal. So that I think we have a fairly broad range

of options in taking the right measure as opposed to simply a binary decision about up or down on the continued existence of the school.

DR. THERNSTROM: But, Jim, I would hope that an under-performing charter school would be identified as such before the actual renewal question came up. for all schools, they would be identified immediately, as would be the case for all other schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: Right. I mean, we don't need to get to that up or down.

MR. KIRBY: Just on that point, it has been our intent with the second and third year site visit process to not only attain our own evidence about a school's performance, but also to, through a site visit report, provide the clearest statement we can back to the school about where a team of outsiders thinks the school stands relative to its charter. As I said earlier, the hard part about the site visits is that you can raise the important questions, but you have not enough time to pursue all of them. And this gets back to my introductory comments, where I think we're going to address over the summer the timing of
these different components in such a way that whenever we conduct a site visit or an inspection it will give the school clear and fair warning. I think it's fair to say, though, now if you review site visits reports for charter schools that have struggled, that the reports provide a clear statement back to the school that they don't yet have much demonstration of performance and need to -- need to respond.
The other point, just to respond to Dr. Schaefer, that these schools are strong cases for renewal. As my predecessor Scott Hamilton mentioned, I think at the December meeting to you, we encouraged the first

applicants for renewal -- encouraged strong cases to apply upfront. We thought it would give us an opportunity to work out the kinks in the process as well as give the Board an opportunity to review the process. There will be much tougher cases coming down the road, especially between now and December 1st, when each of the 14 fourth year schools will have to be voted on.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just having said that, I wouldn't want to leave the impression that somehow we're taking these in rank order of some preconceived notion of the best schools and the worst schools. But schools that were perceived to be in good shape were encouraged to come forward earlier so that we could kind of run them through the process. One other thing just on the point of the achievement of these schools. I think it's first of all important to remember that the evaluation of these schools were taking place in the middle of the fourth year of these schools existence, and it's important to try to understand the meaning of that, because these are start-up organizations, and certainly any start-up business, but certainly a start-up school, goes through a lot of very difficult growing pains in order to get off the ground, and these schools certainly were subject to all of them, yet after three and a half years the performance both in terms of the qualitative judgments made in these reports and in terms of the data that's available through MCAS and other means suggests that these schools are not only aspiring to excellence but are in many cases achieving it. Community Day Charter School, if you look at their fourth grade MCAS scores, essentially shows that the school, if you were o rank all the elementary schools in Lawrence, was the top elementary school in the city, and very near the state average, which for the City of Lawrence is a very significant achievement. The Benjamin Franklin Charter School,
I think their fourth graders have the top science score in the state, which is again a very dramatic achievement for a school that's been in business for three and a half years. And at the Sabis International School the eighth grade scores on the English language arts were the highest in Springfield and just above the state average. And these are snippets of information, but I think they're reflective of the achievement that these three schools have realized over a very short period of time, and I think they're to be commended for it. Is there any further discussion?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the conditions set forth below, herby grants a revewal of a**

public school charter to each of the following schools for the five-year period from July 1, 2000, through June 30 ,2005, as recommended by the Commissioner.

Commonwealth Charters:

1. Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School
Location : Franklin

2. Community Day Charter School
Location : Lawrence

3. Sabis International Charter School
Location : Sprinfield

Each said charter school shall be opeerated in accordance with the provision of General Laws chapter 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just want to publicly thank Ed and Jose Alfonso. We lost Scott Hamilton, as everyone knows, and they've had to pick up the slack of one less person, and so it's been a tremendous responsibility for them, and I think they've done a tremendous job. So thank you Ed and Jose.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I would also just comment that the School Works contractor who did the inspection visits also deserves our thanks for a fine job. And congratulations to the schools. With that, let's move on to the next item, which is teacher quality, within which there are five subcategories. Point A is the proposed system for teacher certification based on performance.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I mentioned earlier that we have to deal with mission, and part of my attempt here, perhaps through impatience, is to try and get some of these issues before the Board. And while this is one page, it represents a number of significant topics that this Board needs to discuss in detail, all the way up through recertification. And today we wanted to focus really on -- we will answer any questions on any part of it, but really we wanted to focus on the process by which we look to find performance-based ways of getting from provisional certification to provisional with advanced. And we certainly will be glad to answer questions on all other parts, but I thought we would begin there.

TEACHER QUALITY

a. Proposed System for Teacher Certification Based on Performance - Discussion

MR. ALAN SAFRAN: Thank you, Commissioner. We're not here to lecture the Board. We're really here as a resource to answer any of your questions that we're prepared to answer today and to take back to the Department for further research any questions that we cannot answer. A month ago the Commissioner asked me and Greg Nadeau to spearhead an effort to look a proposing an alternative system for teacher

certification that's not based on inputs but is based rather on performance. And over the last month we've talked to a lot of people, done a lot of research. From your left, Celine Toomey is here, Ann Duffy is here, both consultants with the Department of Education, Greg Nadeau to my right, and we've come up with this plan. Jim talked earlier about the need to create more paths into teaching, part of your opening statement. And there are four factors, I think, converging to create an urgency to attract more people to begin to consider the career of teaching. Those four factors are the rising rate of enrollment growth, the impending retirement of veteran teachers, the pressure to reduce class size, and the tightening of the intake valve on teachers by the enactment of the Massachusetts Teacher Test and the high standards to which the educators who take it are held. Those four factors mean we need to do a better job to attract, retain and train people who want to enter this profession. We've got to create some new paths, as Jim says, to get them involved. One of the ways to attract, of course, is to create better working conditions, another way is to create bonuses. But another way to attract new teachers is to reduce the barriers to entry. One of the barriers to entry as it currently exists under 1994 regulations as implemented by the Department is that anyone who wants to get a standard certificate to be an educator in Massachusetts after they hold a provisional certificate with advanced standing must in those five years get a Master's Degree. A couple of problems with that. One problem is that it costs money and it costs time, and that becomes a deterrent even to entry into the profession and an encouragement for those who may have stayed to leave the profession.

The second is that Massachusetts degree programs are not, as they're currently structured, outcome based, and their variety and their quality varies dramatically. Those two factors suggested to the Commissioner and to us that we need to create an alternative that does not require a Master's but would permit it. So the chart you've got in front of you, and I think everyone in the public here today has, is an alternative path to standard certification. It would not replace the current path under the regulations. It would under the regulations be considered an equivalent route to standard certification.

It's one of its strengths, I think, besides the fact that it offers what's crucially lacking for beginning teachers, which is mentoring and professional peer support, and another piece of it being the performance assessment. One of its other strengths is that it does not replace the current system. It creates a little bit of a market competition to see which is a better process for educators to proceed through, take a Master's Degree in content, take a Master's Degree in education, take this alternative route, and then measure over time the results in student achievement. On that last point, I just want to say one word. Some of the elements of this model are modeled on the state of Connecticut which had ten years ago developed a system and done student testing at a state level in grades four, six and eight. Connecticut finds that for teachers who have mentors in their first year, as this plan proposes, and who have a measure of their performance in year three, that second only to the factor of family income as a predictor of student achievement, this system shows up in student achievement. That's really the first document after the chart in your packets. Connecticut shows from the 1997 test scores that teachers who do this, it shows up as student performance on their state tests. Powerful argument, and we're happy to answer your questions.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Could I just add, Alan, in your mail bag I have a report from Don McCallion, who is the personnel director at the Framingham Public Schools, who really took it upon himself to do that study that I included. And one of the things which we need to know more about when you talk about the factors that's causing us to look at an increasing problem in recruiting and getting enough quality teachers, etc. is this issue of resignation of teachers in their first few years. Now, there's a lot of -- in fact, they're outstripping retirements two to one. That may change when and if early retirement is resolved by the legislature. But we don't know if that's because they don't want to go for a Master's Degree. I don't know how much of that is a factor. I don't know if it's because they can in this economy get a more lucrative job. We don't know if it's because they're not getting the kind of mentoring and support which we hear. We don't know if it's the mobility that we hear a lot about as well. Don has raised a number of questions, and I hope we'll be able to figure out how to go at that issue. But that is a growing problem, too, is the retention. And for whatever reasons there are, this plan tries to address that as well.

MR. IRWIN: I have a question. On this two-part assessment system, it's fairly vague here. I can understand the written content examination. But when you get into the second part of the assessment of a teacher's performance, what would lead to that, what would be involved with something like that?

MR. SAFRAN: Part of the thickness of this Board package are the four examples from Connecticut and what they require of their teachers in developing a portfolio in the four major content areas of math, science, English, and history and social science. Taking a look at that in some depth, I don't think it's an acceptably high challenge for Massachusetts. As the Commissioner said in his January 15th memo to the Board, we would like to do a performance assessment in which we require Massachusetts teachers, and I'm quoting from the memo, to show precisely what curriculum frameworks content standards they are addressing in their portfolio materials, and train assessors to evaluate content accuracy as well as skill in teaching it. By doing so, we would assure that teachers were not only able to teach in their discipline, but also that they were teaching material that is emphasized in the frameworks. So you'll see in this portfolio materials that the Connecticut teachers are required to do in year three, the videotaping of their classroom, providing a unit, a lesson plan, samples of student work, evaluating the work that the students produced, commenting on not only the students' work but their own performance in directing the students' work in their classroom. That's what a performance assessment is. It's in fact a mini and less content challenging performance assessment than the National Board, which is actually very strong content challenging. And I've got an example of their mathematics assessment here. That's the idea for the third year teachers in Connecticut. It's in these handbooks. I think ours should be tougher, more content driven. But the elements of it, the videotape, the comments, the lesson plan, the unit, the samples of student work, really are what the package of performance assessment is based on.

MR. IRWIN: And who would be the assessors?

MS. TOOMEY: Teachers. That's the way that Connecticut does it. They train teachers to become assessors so that that offers a worthwhile professional developmental opportunity for veteran teachers, and also offers them, you know, an opportunity to be paid for it. They would be trained, and they would then have a good sense of the system and a sense of what the expectations of performance are for beginning teachers as well as themselves.

DR. THERNSTROM: Dave, you said we're heading into a serious problem here and need to hire a substantial number of new teachers because of both retirement and retention problems, can you put some numbers on those? What are we looking at here? What are the dimensions of the problem?

COMMISSIONER RISCOLL: Well, it looks as if at very near future -- and again, I mean it when I say that the early retirement legislation seems to have caused a queueing up, if you will, because there's a number of -- as you know, 50 percent of our teachers are eligible to retire in the next five years, and some of them are hanging on hoping for an early retirement incentive. We're talking about 6,000 teachers a year, and that may go up, that we need -- we will be needing in the near future.

DR. KOPLIK: Let me add to that question and Dave's answer and in a sense throw out a challenge to Dave and to the Department. It's an issue that I've been thinking about a little bit myself and would be glad to weigh in. But in addressing the teacher supply / demand issue, it seems to me that it's a problem not just for Massachusetts, it's a problem that has varying consequences and implications across 49 other states. And the way to address the --

DR. THERNSTROM: What's the 50th?

DR. SCHAEFER: 49 other.

DR. THERNSTROM: Oh, other states. I thought you were leaving one out.

DR. KOPLIK: But the issue becomes one of portability with regard to teacher retirement plans. And as long as states hold on to the sacredness of their own, it is an incredible barrier and an imposition on the unencouraging mobility across state lines, and I think we should move away from that kind of parochial thinking. And it may be that there are people in Ohio who want to come to Massachusetts, or Massachusetts should be free to give up its people to Florida or New Jersey or some other place, because I think in the end things would sort out and people would be attracted to opportunities in states. And I'll put on the optimistic hat, and I would think that for the next 10, 15 years we will have numerous positive opportunities overshadowing opportunities in other states. The challenge then becomes -- and I know you're on the retirement board. The challenge becomes one of addressing this, I think, at a national level, and there's going to have to be some concert between states and a willingness for states to perhaps buy somebody's invested retirement benefits in another state, or surrender some money to another state if a particular teacher decides to go some other place, because it's not just a vesting after, say, ten years in a retirement system. You talk to teachers five or six years into their career, all of a sudden, well, gee, I can't leave because I'm so close to vesting, and the vesting aspect clearly imposes handcuffs on people and reduces mobility. The mobility thing needs to be addressed in terms of the numbers that the Framingham study showed and the numbers that Dave just expressed. We really should focus on trying to solve that problem, and maybe we can develop a model here that we could broadcast to some other states and get some other participation.

DR. SCHAEFER: I wanted to talk about the mentoring options. I discussed this issue with you all a few weeks ago. I think the full mentorship is a good opportunity for teachers, and we also talked about the possibility of doing that at the elementary level, of having a teacher serve as a mentor for a number of classes, one teacher. Having the district or the school release one teacher for that opportunity for a year, again an interesting professional development opportunity. But I wanted to know, on the partial mentorships, is there evidence that one teacher, an experienced teacher, meeting with a new teacher on an after-school basis, without ever observing what that teacher is doing in a classroom, has some impact, has some help for that new teacher.

MS. TOOMEY: The partial mentorship model would include some limited release time. And in most states what is done is that kind of partial mentorship model, that includes limited release time, some professional development and some work after school. And so most research shows that retention is aided and that classroom practice and the ability to teach to, you know, diverse students and teach content are all aided by the support of a mentor. Those are all based on basically a partial mentorship model. Very few states -- and it's really an investment of financial resources -- are able to offer this full mentorship model that we're offering. This is something that is really new.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So the partial mentorship model would also involve observation?

MS. TOOMEY: Yes, absolutely. It would involve just a few days per year that would be broken up into several different block periods.

DR. SCHAEFER: But the full mentorship would clear have a more beneficial effect in terms of retention. Could you -- I mean, we've talked about this before, but I don't know -- can you at some point run some numbers for us as to what the cost of each of these, you know, models would be.

MR. SAFRAN: Absolutely. We've done a little bit of that. And for the Board's reminder, the Governor requested about five and a half million dollars for mentoring in his House One Budget, the Board requested two million. The sentiment from House and Senate budget people is that there will be some significant state

commitment to mentoring in this year's budget. We'll see what happens. It would be about a nine million dollar cost if all new teachers got paired up with a full mentor. Now, we propose in this model a sharing of that in the first year, but eventually having the state share go down and the local share go up, because it's part of what a district should be doing for the professional
development of its new teachers, and secondarily for the professional development of it veterans.
So we think it's about a nine billion dollar cost item in one month.

DR. SCHAEFER: For how many teachers?

MS. TOOMEY: That's really based on about 3,000. So based on the new figures that we have, obviously the cost may rise somewhat.

MR. SAFRAN: We're not only, I should say, looking for state support for that, Goals 2000 offers an opportunity for support for mentoring. We've applied under Carol Gilbert's leadership, and I thank Carol, for a state grant from the federal government that's referenced in the Commissioner's notes today. That would also provide some additional support, both for data collection that's been discussed here and for the possibility of supporting mentoring.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Can I just ask a quick question, because I may have missed it. Roberta, were you referring to a different full mentoring whereby --

DR. SCHAEFER: No. No.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You're not talking about a teacher being freed up completely and then having five -- let's say five mentees?

DR. SCHAEFER: Well, that would be for the elementary level, that's what I was suggesting.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I wasn't sure if you were suggesting that for the model, because that

is something we did not talk about. But obviously if the district -- they have done that in other states and some large cities whereby they free people up sort of on a rotating business, and they spend a year. Now, that becomes expensive, but it is five times --

DR. SCHAEFER: Right, you're covering five teachers, as opposed to for the middle and high school level you're talking about one-on-one, one teacher for --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. Our full mentoring really is one-on-one, assuming that the teacher is full time, that is the mentor is still a full-time teacher, but they have the one period of the day.

DR. SCHAEFER: Right, but would it be such a substantial difference if you had it at the elementary level, because I gather that there's a problem, you can't do the full mentorship at the elementary level.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's very difficult.

DR. SCHAEFER: Right. So that if you had one teacher released to have five mentors over the course of the year, would it be such a substantial difference in cost than having, at the middle and high school level, having five mentors for five different teachers.

DR. DELATTRE: There's a real advantage to not having the mentor released from all of his or her own classes, because you want the reciprocal observation. Not just the mentor visiting the class of the new teacher but vice versa.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yeah, that's correct. That's right, Ed. A lot of the models we get involved in we seem to take some of our better teachers out of the classrooms, which is a problem, and it's a problem to local parents, frankly.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'd like to know a little bit more about case study seminars, and I'd also like to know a little bit more about what might be part of an on line professional development portfolio, except a self-assessment -- besides a self-assessment.

MR. NADEAU: We see that, particularly since we're removing some of the barriers of entry into the classroom and the requirements for training prior to entering the classroom, the need to have a more expansive support system for first-year teachers becomes even more apparent.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm with you. I literally want to focus on content here.

MR. NADEAU: The content of the case study seminars we see as being something that would vary from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. There would be basically, as we're conceiving of it now, six seminars that would happen per year for groups of 50 teachers, that we would group the teachers by small grade span and by subject grouping, and that we would put out contracts to educational collaboratives and groups like the Field Center for Teaching and Learning and other groups like that to host and facilitate these case study seminars. At the beginning there would likely be more of a focus on presentation by expert educators to the groups. We think that we can also get volunteer presentations that the costs don't need to be anywhere near what a higher ed. course would be.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So you might have folks who have implemented a successful model come and present and involve folks?

MR. NADEAU: Exactly. And then as we get to the later stages of these seminars, that the focus would shift more to the actual first-year teacher beginning to present case study models themselves of the experiences that they're having in the classroom and reflecting around on that. The second half of each evening seminar would be less structured as a group conversation and more as an opportunity for individual networking. A big part of what we're trying to get out of this is to establish a culture of professional collegiality among first-year teachers where we introduce first-year teachers to each other in a geographic region who have common interests, give them MassEd.Net accounts, have them
exchange their e-mail, start to connect each with similar educators so that they can start grouping themselves amidst collaborative groups to be able to work on curriculum and other matters.
So that's a big part of what we're trying to establish in the first year, and we're hoping that that will then -- the state may not need to then facilitate that process in subsequent years; it will just take on a life of its own.

MR. SAFRAN: What really can only be called a crisis, I think, in the urban districts is the evidence that the urban districts lose a third of their new teachers in the first two years and a half by year four.
This mentoring from a veteran and collegiality with peers who are facing the same issues is so crucial and so absent, particularly in the urban districts.

MR. NADEAU: There was one other piece both on the mentoring and the case studies. We see these not as mandates, as mandatory things where we're going to take attendance and say if you didn't go to the seminar then you don't get your subsequent certification.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Why not?

MR. NADEAU: We're really looking at -- you know, when we mandate, often what we get is mediocrity. And what we want to do is we want to take attendance to be able to really hold accountable the facilitators of these eminars. That if they have low attendance, that's probably an indication that they're not making these seminars worthwhile. But fundamentally these are things
that first-year teachers should see as support, as something beneficial, something that we're not requiring, something that we're offering to them. We want them to come at it that way. And we want the providers of the seminar to have a sense that if they don't make these worthwhile, if they don't attract first-year teachers, they won't get subsequent contracts to be doing this work.

DR. DELATTRE: Let me make a couple of suggestions and requests. First of all, it's clear that there's got to be an alternative to the Master's Degree, nobody dissents from that. You may want to give some thought to the possibility of some tuition relief for people who pursue Master's Degrees in the academic and scientific disciplines, not in schools of education. But that said, first with respect to vendors, case studies and all of this, let me urge that you've just appointed, subject to background review, a deputy commissioner for academic affairs that is far more qualified than any vendor we're going to find or hire to design and implement such things. And to do so in advance with the kind of quality where if people
don't attend it's a comment about them, not about the program. In that context, I'd like to see all the syllabi and materials from these intensive summer programs offered at U. Mass. I would welcome a report from the deputy commissioner on the quality of those, but I'd also like to see them for myself.
Finally, it's well-known that I'm skeptical of portfolios, that I'm unpersuaded by the claims for Connecticut, which after all has portfolio completion and an undue reliance on standards we've already criticized, punitive standards we've already criticized this morning. I hasten to add all these documents in Connecticut were written by people who apparently can't spell forward. But this Board in 1995, in '95 started down the path of portfolios in the Principles of Effective Teaching and the Principles of Effective Leadership, as I talked about yesterday. We, in my view, very wisely retreated from that. Although we never rescinded it, we retreated from it by our real emphasis on teacher certification testing and on MCAS.

If we move in the direction of portfolios in any way that resembles Connecticut, we will be in a position where teacher certification will be portfolio contingent, and the implication will be taken to be that if it's good enough for teachers, it's good enough for students, and that's the way assessment of student work should be done too. And then you will get the real inattention to intellectual refinement that's the other edge of the sword that wasn't mentioned this morning. So I'd like every member of the Board to have a copy of the Principles of Effective Teaching, which I take to be a misnomer, and to have all those materials from U Mass. on this intensive summer program for teachers. And I hope that however this is implemented we won't contract out when with the new deputy commissioner we can do a whole lot better ourselves from within.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I ask a couple of follow-up questions? First in terms of the intensive summer institute itself. On the assumption that we put together -- I think it's intended to be six weeks. Whether it should be six weeks or eight weeks, or whatever the right length is, a short summer institute as intensive preparation for entry into the classroom following passage of the educator -- the teacher test, is that basic model, do you think, sound in terms of both being open enough for people to enter the profession without undue barriers placed in their way and effective enough, again pending
the evaluation of the curriculum itself in the summer institute, to give us some reassurance that this is the right path to go to get to the at least provisional with advanced standing?

DR. DELATTRE: In my view, you can accomplish a great deal in six to eight weeks if you have people who are well-educated to begin with in the disciplines. It helps to know something about the circumstances they're going to face. If you're preparing a person -- when I got to Boston University, for example, and

learned the ins and outs of the Chelsea Partnership, I found that people were telling prospective teachers and students, "If you can handle yourself and teach in Chelsea, you're ready to teach anywhere," and that's just nonsense. That's nonsense. So that if you know something about the circumstances, and the nature of the it's going to take longer or shorter to help a person be responsibly prepared and not to give the person the impression, well, you've had this six weeks of classroom management and now you're ready for gunfire.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Mr. Chairman, we didn't answer Pat's question, so, Greg, if you could do that, and then Ann should comment on the summer institute.

MR. NADEAU: Okay. On the on line professional development portfolios, we expect to begin rolling this out next fall, to roll it out as part of MassEd.Net versus part of the renewal process. When the 24,000 teachers who urrently use MassEd.Net as their e-mail re-register for their e-mail in the fall, they will actually be configuring their portfolio at the same time. What they'd do is they would go through a process in which they would fill out templates in order to generate an individual needs assessment for their individual professional development plan. Part of that would focus on the school improvement objectives of the school improvement plan. So they would need to say -- they would need to actually go, make sure that they were aware of what their school improvement plan's objectives were and the implications of that school improvement plan on their individual professional development plan. The other piece that this makes possible is that principals will be able to directly view the material that's in the individual professional development plan. And as it's updated, as the activities are put into that portfolio, the principal will have access to be able to see all of the teachers in their school, what professional development they're engaged with.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Is it self-selection? Does the principal have any input? Are their performance conversations that are going to happen?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, that of course is something we need to --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Do we've a system here?

COMM. DRISCOLL: Well, that's what the Board needs to -- I mean, I've made recommendations on that, and that's also on today's agenda.

MS ANN DUFFY: If I may, I'm working as the Department liaison with the University of Massachusetts Partnership to develop the summer training program for the signing bonus recipients, which this year gives us a great opportunity to pilot the model that Mr. Peyser outlined with a six- to eight-week training program which provides not just the survival skills of classroom management but also a solid foundation so that we could get to a point where we're recommending candidates for provisional with advanced standing before they enter their first year with a limited intensive summer program. And the summer program that we've developed with U. Mass. is a very aggressive model that's based not at all on a seat time curriculum counting but on a national performance that the teachers are doing with summer classrooms. So that they not only have to demonstrate the student performance that they're able to achieve in a practical way over the summer, but they also have to demonstrate mastery of the competencies required for certification by the end of the summer through a type of intensive portfolio process which could serve as an easy model for other vehicles for provisional with advanced standing in the future. And I'd be happy to submit to the Board the work of the U. Mass. Partnership for curriculum and also on the assessment model for that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think to just follow-up on what you just said and what Ed was saying earlier, my sense is that there is fairly broad agreement in terms of the components by which you get to provisional

with advanced standing, but there remain questions about the content of those components, and especially the institutes. The summer institute in terms of its curriculum, in terms of its evaluation method, I think those are things which the Board ought to be apprised of as we go forward, and certainly the new deputy commissioner ought to be intimately involved with. The second thing, which is somewhat related in terms of its procedural character here, is that we do have a Joint Commission on Teacher Preparation, which is also getting started -- actually May 7th is its first meeting, looking at these very issues, and so we need to not only maintain kind of open communication between both boards and the Department and both entities, but we need to try to drive as quickly as possible, certainly on the joint commission side, but also on the board side to come to some resolution of this in order to have something in place so that essentially the next cycle we go through we've got something that we have some confidence in. Ed.

DR. DELATTRE: Whatever else we do, let's don't lose the distinction between a proposed system for teacher certification and the standards criteria and so on for recertification. Anything that allows recertification to slide into portfolios is simply the death of the elevation of teacher quality.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think -- my next point was that I'm less comfortable with how we go from advance standing to standard certification and how we go from standard certification to recertification. I know I'm sort of anticipating the conversation that's about to happen here, but I think that's exactly the point. That while I'm more comfortable we have the components in place for getting the provisional with advance standing, I'm not as comfortable we have the components in place, let alone the content, to move beyond there to standard certification and recertification. And I just think that involving certainly the new deputy commissioner, involving Members of the Board, the joint commission, that we need to sort of intensively be working on this over the next several months.

DR. THERNSTROM: I want to go back for a second to the mentorship question. We've got some figures here on the cost of full mentorship and partial mentorship, but I note that with respect, for instance, to the Community Day Charter School that at zero cost they have got a system of mentorship. The description here is beyond the bureau of professional development. "However, teachers operated in two-person teams with one teacher designated the mentor, the more experienced teacher, the other simply the teacher. The mentor is expected to guide and support the less experienced teacher and help him or her adjust to school and the highly academic curriculum. Mentors also communicate," blah, blah, blah. I mean, I don't know why this isn't a model that we could be looking carefully at that, you know, is just simply built into the system without these attached costs.

THE CHAIRMAN: You make a good point. Now, there was a discussion earlier about phasing out essentially the incentive to put these in place. I mean, I agree completely with you, not only because I think it just represents what seems to be common sense and good practice, but also because my sense is that the internally generated programs, mentorship programs, which are embedded in the individual culture of the school are more successful than ones which are somehow imposed or created from --

DR. THERNSTROM: And pervasive throughout the school.

MR. NADEAU: To that point, there is some real reason to believe that districts ought to be able to support these mentoring programs themselves, both in terms of the hundred dollar per student earmarked out-of-state aid for professional development, which with 25 kids would be about $2500, that's one potential theoretical source of funding within the school district. The other is that the salary differential between a experienced teacher retiring and a first-year teacher coming in, obviously the district is effectively saving money at that point, a big portion of which could go into mentoring. With that said, it's not happening to the degree we want it to happen state wide. And what

we're looking for is what are the catalysts that the state can really provide to create incentives for districts to start to take ownership on their own mentoring programs.

DR. THERNSTROM: But my point here is that this is a matter here of organizational structure within a particular school that might provide a model for other schools given the success of that school.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think perhaps this might be an opportune time to move on to part B of this discussion, which has specifically to do with recertification, and there's a memo in your materials dated April 20 from the Commissioner on some second cycle options.

DR. SCHAEFER: So we have reached agreement in terms of a possible path for alternative certification of the summer institute given the right --

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I guess I'd put it a little bit more guardedly. I believe, and we didn't take a vote. I believe that we need to move -- we obviously are moving to put in place a summer institute this summer for a select group of individuals. I think we ought to look very closely at the success of that model, its content, and whether it makes sense to adopt that kind of model as the basis for getting the provisional certification with advanced standing. I think there's a certain -- there's a certain logic behind the components of it. But until we see the content of it, I'm not comfortable at all with endorsing it.

DR. SCHAEFER: Right. No, no, I wasn't suggesting that we're endorsing what the current content is since we haven't seen it, but rather the model of the summer institute followed by mentoring.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I guess I'm only -- I'm only prepared to kind of go up to the point of provisional with advanced certification. And then I think beyond that, which is -- and the mentoring comes in and the other programs come in as you move from advanced standing to standard certification. And I think there are, in my mind certainly, and it may not be true of all members, but in my mind there's still a lot of open questions about what those elements ought to be and what the measures of performance ought to be in order to get the standard certification.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So what would be the next step for this group? Do we need more information? Do we want to see curriculum from the institute? Let's give them some marching orders here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think we need to get the new deputy commissioner involved. We need to get materials available as they become available from the institute. We need to get the joint commission engaged and move the thing forward. I don't think we're at the point of making a decision. I don't think we will be until the fall.

DR. DELATTRE: Get this '95 stuff from this board into the hands of the Board.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. You've asked for that. We'll get that.

DR. THERNSTROM: And put that whole question on the agenda.

MR. BAKER: There's a ton of research out there about mentoring that says the last thing you should do if you want good mentors is pay them to do it. The time served as virtually no value. And that real mentoring is not something you can buy. And I think you ought to hink real hard about alternatives to financial supplements as a device -- I mean, Big Brother Association, Big Sister Association, all the major mentor programs that have succeeded in this country have not been paid. And I would argue that they've succeeded because they're not paid. And people ought to think really hard about whether or not money is the right way to buy mentoring.

MR. NADEAU: The full mentoring that we're putting the major focus on is not additional compensation for the mentors. It's the replacement cost of teachers so that there can be a co-teaching between the mentor and the first-year teacher. So it would not have compensation for the mentoring in that case.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I must mention as a commercial that there is such a thing, and of course you're dealing with the Hal Lane bill later, there is such a thing as collective bargaining. And, you know, Lawrence doesn't -- the Community School doesn't have to deal with that. It's a reality, so.

MR. BAKER: I kind of figured that was in there somewhere.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, it's a reality. So when we talk about partial mentoring, and we started talking about time after school or time off, the hours, I mean, that's going to be a logical extension of that. But they're right, he mentor does not get paid any money in our model. It's just that it does cost the district money, so we're suggesting a sort of a prime the pump with the state, and then eventually --

DR. SCHAEFER: To address the issue of collective bargaining head on, full mentoring would probably be a better route because it does not necessarily require the after school.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I want to jump from 2 (a) to 2 (c) and (d). I want to get some of the votes out of the way. Then we're going to do the grants, the approval of grants, then we're going to take up 2 (e), which is the discussion and possible vote with respect to the Lane bill. I think we will then at that point take up the recertification second cycle options. At that point I think we'll do a time check and see where we are in terms of the other items and whether we should continue to discuss them here or take them up at a subsequent meeting. So with that, let's go to 2 (c), which is a regulatory amendment which is proposed by the Commissioner.

c. Recertification : Proposed Amendment to 603 CMR 44.00 - Emergency Regulation (Hardship Waiver) - Vote

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We've had a few requests. It's been less than a dozen. In fact, probably less than a half a dozen. But we have had a couple of cases, where we didn't have the ability to deal with it in regulation, of some teachers who because of their circumstances, personal circumstances in the case of one teacher who was required to help his spouse who was terminally ill and right after school and so forth. So they've written to us in these few cases, and hey seem to have some legitimacy. So what I'm asking the Board to consider is an emergency egulation which would allow me to deal with these hardship waivers on the issue of recertification. As you know, current teachers who have a certificate who don't recertify by June 18th lose it, or at least don't get their materials in by June 18th or prove that they've gotten their materials in by June 18th. So it's very significant. This would be very few cases. I certainly would share those with the Board. I could impose other conditions, which I will do depending on the circumstances, but I am asking for approval of an emergency waiver.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. C. 69 section 1B and G.L. c. 71, section 38G, hereby amend the Recertification Regulation, 603 CMR 44.00, by adding the following provision:

<u>603 C.M.R. 44.08 Hardship Waiver or Modification</u>

(1) Upon a showing of extreme hardship, the Commissioner may waive or modify the requirement of completion of the requisite number of professional development points as set forth in 603 C.M.R. 44.03 (6) and 603 C.M.R. (7) . A showing of extreme hardship may include serious illness or other catastrophic circumstances that are beyond the control of the educatior. No modification or waiver will be granted beyond without satisfactory evidence that the educator has made a good faith effort to obtain the required number of professional development points but that extreme hardship has prevented the educatior from doing so.

(2) The Commissioner, in his discretion, may impose reasonable conditions upon any modification or waiver granted.

(3) The descision of the Commissioner shall be final.

Further, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L c. 30A, Section 3, the Board finds that the immediate adoption of this amendment is necessary for the preservation of the general welfare, in order to address a small number of cases demontrating extreme hardship , and that obervance of the requirments of prior notice and public comment would be contrary to the public interest, because said amendment must take effect before June 18,1999, the statutory deadline for recertification of teachers who received standard certificates prior to October 1, 1994. The Board directs the Commissioner to provide notice and an opportunity for public comment on the emergency regulation, in accordance with the requirements of G.L. c. 30A, section 3, within the next three months.

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

MR. IRWIN: David, what amount are we looking at?

COMM. DRISCOLL: Less than a dozen.

THE CHAIRMAN: I guess the question that I have about this is, in terms of waiving the requirement, waiving or modifying the requirement, does that essentially mean that the individual gets a five-year certificate, or does it mean that essentially the deadline is extended some number of months, or years for that matter?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The latter.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. So what we're talking about here then is not a waiver of the requirement but rather an extension of the deadline so that they would have time to reasonably meet the requirement?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, since it's statutory, I have to call on Rhoda. I like to do it my way, but it's often the legal way.

MS RHODA SCHNEIDER: If I may, the Commissioner actually just answered it. The June 18th deadline is statutory and admits of no waiver, that's why we drafted the regulation as we did.
Essentially what the Commissioner would do is where warranted grant the renewed certificate but impose conditions that in ssence extend the time period. For example, someone who has not accumulated the necessary professional development points under the Board's current regulations would be granted the certificate as renewed on condition that within a fixed period of time they do a certain amount of additional development.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And then what happens if they don't?

MS. SCHNEIDER: We would track that. It will be a small enough number of cases that we can follow-up on those. That will be part of the condition, and it will be very explicit foreach individual case.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So that the person knows consequences if this is not done?

MS. SCHNEIDER: Precisely.

MS. URBACH: Is it also up to the Commissioner then to decide how much time each time with each individual?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It will be an individual. And again, without names, I'll disclose to this Board what we've done in these cases.

DR. DELATTRE: As you know, I think a lot of the professional development requirements of the current cycle don't have much to do with either profession or development. And given that these are genuine hardship cases, the one that's illustrative here is the tending of a spouse with terminal cancer, I would rather that the waiver simply were a matter of granting the recertification without conditions. If you think the person has done as much as he or she can in good faith, I don't see any point to having additional conditions hanging over the person after June the 18th when the very same conditions may obtain in the person's life. If you think the person is sufficiently accomplished for you to grant a waiver, I'd just waive it, and then let the person take up recertification under the new standards and criteria that will be adopted by this Board for the next five-year cycle.

DR. KOPLIK: Maybe this is a question for Rhoda. In the statute, is the authority for licensure granted to the Board of Education or to the Commissioner.

MS. SCHNEIDER: To the Commissioner under standards and regulations adopted by the Board.

DR. THERNSTROM: What would be the implications of adopting what Ed suggests here? There's got to be a ripple effect here, you know, some fall out.

COMM. DRISCOLL: Well, I would just like the flexibility. I agree with Ed. You know, I could see in most cases, great cases of hardship, I would agree with Ed, but I just would like the flexibility to look at each individual case, because I don't want to be giving blanket waivers when in fact there may not have been a hardship, so I just want that flexibility.

DR. DELATTRE: Yeah, all I want is that if you decide that there shouldn't be any further conditions -- I don't want us coming back and saying, ah ha, you didn't do what we approved because there were no further conditions. If you decide it's not that kind of hardship and there are conditions, that's fine with me, but I want you to be able to go either way.

THE CHAIRMAN: There's another regulatory, or actually legislative proposal.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. I'm asking that we request a legislative amendment that would allow those candidates -- those educators who are certified in another state who want to come to Massachusetts be given a temporary license for a year. Right now we're finding, and last year it was most prominent in and around the hiring of new teachers for September or hiring teachers for September, and we

had these cases where the best candidate in mathematics and science, and we had three cases that I remember, were outside of Massachusetts, but they weren't about to -- they weren't able to take the test and so forth to fulfill the requirements and become certified. And there were other certified candidates, so that in fact the school districts by our own statute were required to take what they considered inferior candidates. So what I'm looking for is some flexibility. I did try this once before, and it didn't work. Now we're also hearing during the school year people are trying to hire people from other states. They certainly don't walk around with our testing schedule, which we've
changed, in their hip pocket, so that they -- so they run into this problem of having a deadline of appointment, and they have a very good candidate from outside the state, but the person does want to forego their own tenure or whatever it happens to be while they go through the process of taking the test. So it would be for one year and one year only, but I think it would be very helpful to school districts as they recruit people from other states.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a board member that would like to make this motion?

MR. IRWIN: I'll move the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Second.
DR. THERNSTROM: I just want a comma put inside a quotation mark, but other than that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I guess my one thought here is that there may be circumstances -- in fact, there may be many circumstances in which a certified teacher from out of state had plenty of opportunity to take the test. I mean, I can certainly conceive of a certified teacher in New Hampshire or Rhode Island or Connecticut who was given an offer to teach in a Massachusetts school with plenty of lead time sufficient to take the test, and so I guess my suggestion would be to change the language here to authorize the Commissioner to grant this waiver in cases where the candidates in question are
unable to satisfy the testing requirement in a timely manner. So rather than grant a blanket waiver to any out-of-state teacher transferring into the system, to say that the waiver is available based on your judgment in terms of their capacity to have taken the test in a way that would have been timely relevant to there --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So you would amend it to give me the authority under statute?

THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, that's okay with me. I would fall back on the fact that
they have to fulfill this requirement within a year. And so it's a little difficult for me to go out there and find out, you know, if they Should have or could have or would have, but that's fine with me. I guess it doesn't do any harm, that I can think of, but I'm not --

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that there may be some administrative complexity, and I guess I want to give you the flexibility to use your judgment about, you know, how much --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I guess I should accept flexibility.

DR. THERNSTROM: But, Jim, as Dave just said, this is very temporary, and capacity
to take the test is a very squishy standard. I mean --

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, but if I live in Providence, and I took the job in January -- I mean I accepted an offer in January to teach in September, you know, there is time for me to take the test, and I'm not sure why we should grant on a blanket basis certified teachers from out of state that kind of waiver. We actually discussed this in an earlier board meeting I think back in November or December, and we decided against

offering waivers for all people transferring into the state, and I think we needto, just at a minimum in terms of being consistent with a previous decision, we ought to focus more on the judgment of the Commissioner here rather than making a blanket waiver.

THE CHAIRMAN: So assuming that the language is drafted as discussed and the motion is on the table as amended, all in favor? Opposed? Okay, passes unanimously.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It is suppose to be tab 7, but it's in front of tab 7.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I move for blanket approval or sheet approval.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yeah, I second that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Seconded. Any discussion? Any objection? Without objection -- yes, Stan.

DR. KOPLIK: Why do we do this? I mean, I'm sitting here, and I don't even have a rubber stamp, but that's what I'm being asked to do. We ought to really think about some delegation of authority here. I've got 11 grants here. I don't know any of them. I don't think any people here know any of them. I don't think we should do it. I don't think we should vote for things that we're totally uninformed about.

DR. THERNSTROM: I assume that there's some regulatory mandate --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, this is unusual in the sense that you do know something about these because this is -- but I would agree with you --

DR. KOPLIK: Maybe they do. I don't.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Okay. I would agree in most cases you don't. In this case, because it's the academic support services, we did do it in rounds, and we presented previous rounds to you, and this is the final round, if you will, of these 11 grants. But perhaps the new subcommittee that's been established for finance, we could find a way to do this in a way that makes more sense than frankly -- usually on the way out the door we're asking you to grant, so I agree with your point.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask you the more technical question, which is the Board required to approve these grants by statute?

COMM. DRISCOLL: By statute or regulation?

MS. SCHNEIDER: It's by statute, Commissioner. Although we could -- previous boards have asked us to review this, we have done so, and in each case the board concluded they wanted to continue to exercise this authority themselves. It's something that if the Commissioner and the Chairman agree, we could look into again and work with you or with the subcommittee on school finance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'd be happy to carry on this conversation.

DR. KOPLIK: That subcommittee might be a vehicle. Roberta can do it.

DR. DELATTRE: But we have approved prior grants under this heading because of the MCAS level one and two policy we adopted. Now, if we don't approve this today, is that going to effect summer programs, support services, academic opportunities for these 1300 students?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes. Yes. And I don't think that's what Stanley was suggesting.

DR. KOPLIK: We'll do it today, but on a go forward basis --

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we vote on this? All in favor? Any abstentions? Passes. Jumping back to number 2 (e) is a discussion which we postponed from the prior meeting, or last month's meeting which is a consideration of legislation submitted by Chairman Hal Lane of the Joint Education Committee. There are recommendations for approval of several sections having to do with teacher dismissal and review, the transfer of teachers and management rights and limitations of collective bargaining. There obviously are other sections in the bill, and one of the reasons we postponed discussion and vote on this matter was to allow further consideration of the entire bill so that this panel could pass judgment on any sections which it felt were deemed worthy and wanted to express its approval to the legislature on. So with that, let me open it up for any comments. Yes, Bill.

MR. IRWIN: Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting when we did talk about this, one of the things that I suggested is that the Hal Lane bill is just one of a number of bills that are in front of the legislature concerning education. And I'm not sure how many bills are out there on education, but for us just to take the Hal Lane bill and just pick three parts of it to endorse without knowing what other educational bills have been filed in the legislature, I think it's faulty on our part, because I think we need to get a picture of all the bills that have been filed, and perhaps we can come back with a suggestion and recommendation to the legislature on an overall, all encompassing package that we would endorse, different parts of different bills that would reflect what the basic philosophy of the Board is. Instead of just taking one bill, we should look at all the bills that are out there. I feel strongly about that too.

(Dr. Thernstrom is no longer present.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think -- just one comment on that and then I'll give it to you, Roberta. Obviously the Board in November makes legislative proposals on whatever it wants to the legislature, and that is obviously the typical time in the year in which we intervene, if that's the right word, in the legislative process. I think this was considered to be a special case in that obviously it was submitted by the Chairman of the Education Committee. And secondly, that it has been, I think it's fair to say, among those people who are involved in education policy in the legislature and outside, been considered to be not only one of the more interesting bills that has been submitted, but one that perhaps has significant chance of moving forward through the legislative process. And therefore, it is at a sort of qualitatively different level than all of the other bills that may be pending in the hopper.

DR. SCHAEFER: What is the status of it now? Where is it in the legislative process?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's in committee. It's been filed, and I don't believe they've scheduled a public hearing on it. Do we know, Connie?

MS. SCHNEIDER: May 20th.

MS. LOUIE: It's tentatively scheduled for the latter part of May, but it appears that that date has been changed to June.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So probably June?

MS. SCHNEIDER: So probably not until June.

DR. SCHAEFER: So it may be discussed before our next board meeting, but may be not.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It sounds to me like it won't be. It won't be discussed until June.

DR. SCHAEFER: Okay. Well, at the last meeting Pat mentioned Section 1 of the bill as being something that the Board should consider endorsing. I would argue that Section 34 and 36 are part of the issues that we've been discussing all along and that fit with the Board's work. As I mentioned last time, I'm a little bit less sure on 32 and 33 because I think it implies that we're endorsing the Educator Dismissal Review Board to replace what's currently in place, and I'm just not -- I don't know enough about that, what the implications of that would be, and maybe somebody can elaborate on that. But I would like to see us go ahead with taking a vote on Sections 1, 34 and 36. I think it's really important for the Board to go on record on these kinds of issues that we've been aggressively pursuing, and this is an opportunity for them to be actually enacted into law.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I would support that, and I also would support Bill's suggestion that we look closely at other legislation that's out there, because if there's a lot of it and we don't know what some of the components are as a Board and haven't had a chance to talk a bit about them.

DR. DELATTRE: You may recall that when Mr. Lane spoke to us I told him that I thought Section 1 was too thin. That no matter how much you taught an administrator about evaluation, if the administrator didn't know what he needed or she needed to know about child development or the academic content of the classrooms being taught, that the evaluation was bound to be misleading, and urged that the other sorts of study be included in the discretionary grant. Since it's not, if we do vote, I'll vote against on heading 1. And even though with Roberta I don't know fully what the situation is with 32 through 34, if we vote on this, I will vote against it as a whole because of my view that the media coverage will say that the Board endorsed the Lane bill. And if you notice Section 15, it requires that performance standards all be consistent with the Principles of Effective Teaching, which I have complained about ad nauseam, for a long time, in the last two days. And Section 23 requires that professional development plans include professional development in accommodating divers learning styles. If it talked about multiple intelligences, it would be different, but it doesn't. So given elements of the bill with which we are likely to be associated if we vote in favor of any part of it, I'll vote against it if we vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you'd vote -- I'm just trying to understand, you'd vote against any --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: The whole thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: -- individual --

DR. DELATTRE: Endorsement of any part.

DR. SCHAEFER: But after you've made your statement, I'm sure that nobody in the press will get it incorrect this time concerning what sections you endorsed.

MR. BAKER: There are somewhere between 12 and 15,000 bills that get filed every year, and somewhere between 2 and 500 that pass. And of the 2 to 500 that pass, 400 are renaming of streets and parks and special day esignations. There may be somewhere between 50 and 100 bills that get passed every year that can be considered, you know, sort of policy of a substantive nature that matter. And the way those 50 to 100 bills find their way through the process is enough people whose opinions matter

told somebody that they had an opinion on it and that their opinion was whatever it is. And I think the risk you run if you decide to review all the bills before the education committee is, believe me, the education committee is not paying that much attention to all the bills before the education committee. They're going to pay attention to the Chairman's bill and a couple of other bills that are considered to be important, of which obviously this will be one. I think doing, you know, an analysis of everything that's before them may have some value. But in the end, Bill, it's only going to be a few bills that actually find their way out of the committee at all. And then those that find their way on to the floor are going to be a function of those that are considered to be important enough by those people whose opinions matter to be rendered pertinent and relevant to this year's discussion. And if the Board chooses to take no position on anything until it's done a thorough analysis, the legislature will be gone for the summer. And if you want to have an opinion on something you care about, you probably ought to give it to the people who ultimately are going to decide what moves up into the position of being those things that move and what doesn't. I think there are grave downsides to, you know, choosing not to have positions on things cause you don't know everything you need to know. I mean, there are a lot of pieces of legislation that matter that move every year, primarily because those folks in the legislature
who collect the opinions of various people and start to categorize them and chart them and organize them discover that there's a fair amount of consensus, about eight or nine component parts, of all the stuff that's before the committee, and that's what moves. So I would say we should take some
positions and support them.

DR. KOPLIK: It seems to me also that David in testifying is at a stronger position when he testifies on behalf of the Board and doesn't render a personal opinion. A bill of this nature, clearly there will be attention focused on it, and the Commissioner's testimony will be very important. I asked Dave whether it was May or June. When he says the Board has considered all or parts of he bill, and it is the Board's position that there's Board endorsement of these particular themes or sections, the Board has reservations about these others, I think people will take that seriously. I think that before we get to the June testimony on a bill of this consequence, I think we should measure those places where there is majority support among Board Members and make that statement. And also, I come back to the issue of giving the Commissioner direction. He should not sit testifying before a committee and not have a
sense of the Board on this and try to recall, well, we'd a discussion in Amherst, a couple are for this section, not that section. You can't do that. I think you've got to come across with a statement, a compelling statement, of what you support and what you don't support. And there may be bills, as Charlie says, maybe there are five to eight, maybe, that we should look at and give David a sense of direction that we're for them or against them. That's what we're suppose to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, in terms of the process here, I mean, this has been on the agenda for two months, and I think we ought to vote on it. I suggest that we take the individual sections for which there seems to be at least one Member of the Board in favor individually, so that Board Members can express their opinion on each individual section. The sections that I've heard are Section 1 which involves the professional development discretionary grant for superintendents and principals; Section 32 which allows dismissal of teachers on the basis of two unsatisfactory evaluations; Section 33 which
would establish the Educator Dismissal Review Board which would replace arbitration as a means
of reviewing dismissal decisions.

DR. KOPLIK: And that Board is in the Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be in the department. It doesn't exist now. This is a new creation. Section 34 which would allow principals to refuse transfer of teachers into their building, and Section 36 which would place certain limitations on collective bargaining agreements. So I think I actually mechanically here need a motion for each one of these. I'll start with Section 1. Would anyone like to
move --

DR. SCHAEFER: I will move Section 1.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'll second.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? All opposed?

Mr. Irwin and Mr. Delattre opposed .

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's raise hands. All in favor? All opposed? Vote six/two, vote in favor.

Mr. Irwin and Mr. Delattre opposed

THE CHAIRMAN: Section 32, is there a motion?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I will move it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Second?

DR. SCHAEFER: Seconded.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor?

DR. DELATTRE: Wait, wait.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry.

DR. DELATTRE: You promised me, Roberta, right? The media are going to get it right?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And I'll promise you too, Ed.

DR. SCHAEFER: Yes, we'll have a meeting with the press immediately after the board meeting to make sure that the numbers are correct in your account, you know, when you write it up. We would really appreciate it very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? All opposed? Seven to one.

Mr. Irwin opposed

THE CHAIRMAN: Section 33.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'll move it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Second?

DR. SCHAEFER: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? All opposed? That was more complicated.

MS. URBACH: I abstain.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was five / one.

DR. DELATTRE: Two abstain.

THE CHAIRMAN: Five / one with two abstentions.

Mr. Irwin opposed, Dr. Delattre and Ms. Urbach , abstained.

THE CHAIRMAN: Section 34, need a motion.

DR. SCHAEFER: Motion to approve.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I second.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? All opposed? Seven to one in favor.

Mr. Irwin opposed

THE CHAIRMAN: On Section 36.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I move it.

DR. SCHAEFER: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? All Opposed? Seven to one in favor.

Mr. Irwin opposed

MR. IRWIN: Mr. Chairman, on that also, if you're doing this, if the Board in their wisdom has seen to endorse all these, you should probably call for an endorsement of Section 11 also where that's part of your --

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to move that?

MR. IRWIN: No, I would not. I am going to vote against it but . . . This is the point I'm trying to make in all of this, is that we're picking and pulling little parts of the bill apart. And it all -- I think in the Representative's wisdom, when he put this together, I think it all came in together. Now what we're doing is we're just point I'm trying to make with this and Section 11. Now, you've endorsed everything else, then you should probably try to do that too. But I'm not going to vote for it, no.

DR. DELATTRE: That's why I voted against 33.

MR. IRWIN: That's what I'm saying we're pulling and picking , and it's not --

THE CHAIRMAN: Does anyone want to make a further motion on any other sections associated with this bill? If not, let's move on to the next topic which I believe is -- actually, I'll tell you what.

DR. DELATTRE: Let's think about calling it. It's getting late.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to do one thing. One item on the agenda which essentially is to take up the discussion we left off yesterday about accountability, I'd like to postpone further discussion of that. I would

like to, however, suggest that in preparation for our next meeting in May that the Commissioner in consultation with the Chair and any other interested board members provide at least two alternatives for our consideration in each of the following areas, and what I'm trying to do is break apart this issue into some components rather than trying to treat the whole thing as a single entity.
The first has to do with the components and design of the rating system, of the school rating system. The second has to do with the model or framework for school and district inspections. And the third has to do with the organization of the Department's evaluation efforts.

DR. SCHAEFER: Mr. Chairman, can I suggest that maybe an ad hoc subcommittee?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's a good idea. Why don't I consult with members afterwards to find out who's interested and let's put something together. But I think it's a combination of collaboration between board members -- representatives of the board and the Department and breaking down the question into at least these three major components and providing alternatives to the Board so that
instead of debating a single and discussing a single alternative that we're able to break it into pieces and make some decisions. Does that sound reasonable to Board Members?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes, please.

PROPOSED MCAS TESTING SCHEDULE FOR FY 2001 AND BEYOND - Continuous Discussion

THE CHAIRMAN: It seems to me, if I'm not mistaken, there are two items left. One is a discussion of the MCAS schedule. The other is a discussion of recertification options. And I'm sensitive to the time here. It is 5 of 12. I'm also sensitive to the fact we've had a lot of discussion on some of these issues. I'd be interested in hearing some opinions from the Board as to whether we should adjourn and defer these discussions until a later date, the next meeting in particular, or whether we should take one and not the other.

MR. IRWIN: Jim, if I could, we had the discussion on the MCAS issue at the last meeting. And after reading over what's been presented to us, if everybody goes to the Table 1, I'm really, really impressed with this. Go to the third page, which is table one, which is the revised MCAS testing schedule, and I just want to say that I'm really impressed with the job that was done with this because we're looking -- actually we're making progress with this with the fall and winter testing, which really is going to make a difference with the schools as far as when the testing is done, and not going to lump all the MCAS testing into one time. But also it's going to work out well as far as the way the grade systems are set up, and I really am impressed this, and I think this is what we talked about at the last meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I take it by your comments, you would like to discuss the MCAS section.

MR. IRWIN: Yes, I would. I think that we need to move forward on it.

DR. SCHAEFER: What's our time schedule?

COMM. DRISCOLL: Well, I think the sooner the better naturally. But the problem is, even though it starts in 2001, there are major changes that need to be prepared, and so I would love to have this voted. I do think the issue of moving the reading to the ninth grade needs to be discussed, perhaps not today, but certainly at the next meeting. That's a significant change that we did not include in our March recommendation, and that has ramifications for the competency determination. I mean, we're really proposing that ninth graders take a tenth grade test, I guess, is what you're saying. And so for those that fail it, they have an extra year. And for those that pass it, then they have one less burden to pass

in the tenth grade. I think it's kind of interesting. I like it. I recommend it. But I do think it has ramifications. But I would like to get an overall sense perhaps if there is anything we need to do between now and the May meeting. Notwithstanding the ninth grade, clearly the fall/winter of the middle school grades and the introduction of a three, five, seven reading and the sixth grade math are crucial issues, and the science being moved to grade five. So if we're more or less in the right direction, that's fine, and we can vote it in May. And if we can't decide that ninth grade issue by May, that's okay too. But clearly the three, five, seven in reading, moving science to the fifth grade and the sixth grade math and the winter middle school, we need to start working on that.

MR. NELLHAUS: I'll just add that one of the reasons we need a decision relatively soon is that we need to do field testing during the next school year, and we need to do development work this spring and summer in order to move into field testing, so that's the reason for at least some consideration of this in a timely fashion.

DR. DELATTRE: Yeah, I just -- I wanted to ask again. I've been unclear. This reading test that's slated for the fall or winter of the third grade, that doesn't entail or suggest that we're not going to do the Iowas in the spring, right?

MR. NELLHAUS: This series of reading tests would be MCAS tests.

DR. DELATTRE: Yeah, I understand that.

COMM. DRISCOLL: The answer is, yes, it would replace the Iowa. The proposal is to replace the Iowa.

THE CHAIRMAN: I mean, I think that issue is obviously a significant issue, in addition to the ones that you mentioned. I think there's a lot here for us to talk about. So I'm putting on the table here whether we should talk about it now or whether we can defer it. I mean, I'm happy to talk about it now, but it will take some time, because I think there are some serious issues that are raised and important policy questions that need to be addressed.

DR. DELATTRE: Yeah, but some of us have to get back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I tell you what, I'd like to do one quick thing first, and then let's pick this up, and we'll close at 12:30. And if anyone needs to leave earlier, we won't be taking any votes.

DR. DELATTRE: There won't be any votes?

THE CHAIRMAN: There won't be any further votes. The recertification second cycleoptions, I don't want to discuss it now, but the question I want to raise, and I think perhaps with Rhoda and Dave here specifically, is that the second cycle begins essentially in July. And the question in my mind is that it seems quite clear we're not going to have closure on what the recertification process should be before that time. Do we have flexibility under the statute to essentially delay the definition of that, those second cycle requirements, beyond the July date, or do we have to take some action, do we have to submit legislation to get that kind of flexibility?

MS. SCHNEIDER: Mr. Chairman, the statute, as I said earlier, sets June 18th as the closing date for the first cycle. Without the Board taking action to amend the current recertification regulations, they stay in effect, which means that teachers, administrators and others who are subject to recertification will operate on the expectation that the old, i.e. the current, rules apply, I need 120 PDPs or whatever. It's actually more of a logistical than a legal question. You could, and at the rate things are moving, presumably you will, amend the recertification regulations to tailor them toward Board policy objectives, and they will look different than the current regulations, and what we'll have to do logistically is figure out the bridge for people who have

already begun their work on the expectation that these were the rules and now the rules have changed. It's not an impossible task.

THE CHAIRMAN: But are we in any jeopardy at that point, having changed the rules in the middle of the game, to being subject to not only criticism, perhaps, but legal challenge in terms of the validity of the process.

MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes. The question is whether it would be a successful legal challenge. And we can, I believe, figure out ways to minimize the chance of a challenge at all, and certainly of a successful challenge.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a cleaner way for us to do this through some statutory change whereby, for instance, we start the clock for the second cycle at a different date, a later date, even as we perhaps end it at the same date, or set the five-year clock just back or forward a couple of months? I mean, is there a way to do that or would we need to do that?

MS. SCHNEIDER: We can always seek legislation on this or anything. The question is whether we could get it passed in time and in a form that matches what the Board would like to do. You are much more in control of your regulations than you are of any statutory change.

COMM. **DRISCOLL**: Well, I think I get the sense of what -- and I have this same sense as well, and if I could just bring up the broader issue of all of these issues, be it performance-based certification, be it recertification, be it all these -- the Principles of Effective Teaching and Administration. We have an awful lot on our plates, and I talked to the Chairman at the break about how we're going to manage all this. So one of the issues here is whether or not there are options we could bring back to the board in May after researching it of various options that you have, because what I'm sensing is that, you know, you're not comfortable to put something in place, so -- and it won't happen before June. For one thing, we'll need the public comment. We can put emergency regs in, but that would be -- on a subject like this, I wouldn't advise it since it effects so many people so personally about their license. So why don't we research it, Mr. Chairman, see what kind of flexibility we can build in, and we'll communicate to you between board meetings about some of those options.

THE CHAIRMAN: So let's jump back to the MCAS discussion, and we'll -- it's 5 or 10 after 12 depending on the watch.

Dr. Delattre is no longer present

COMM. DRISCOLL: By the way, I've handed out the House budget, and I'll save the commentary until we've done a complete analysis, but at least a couple of things jump out. The House has eliminated the 20 million dollar academic support line item, and the House has reduced the line item for assessment and the line item for technology and has put extra money in early childhood education, which they obviously took from 90 million dollars that is the difference between what districts need to fulfill the formula this year and what was projected as part of the law. So we'll give you a full analysis this week. MCAS it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe if you could give us a quick overview of the model here, although I assume that it's fairly straight forward enough.

MR. NELLHAUS: Right. Well, let me just summarize some of the major items that we're proposing here. First of all, we're proposing that we take what's currently an English language arts test that has a reading

and a writing component and actually develop two separate tests so scores can be reported out separately in reading as well as writing. So that's one major element of this proposal. And then we would have the testing of reading in grades three, five, seven and nine. So, in other words, we would be testing reading more frequently in a more timely way and every two years, essentially, to get a feedback on how students are performing in that area. The writing test would have to be enhanced in some way. We couldn't report a student's score in writing based on one writing prompt that we have now, so that would have to be enhanced, and we can talk about some options for doing that. The other part of this proposal is to add a math test at grade six, and that's important because we see a fairly significant decline in students' performance in mathematics between grades four and eight, and we feel an additional grade of monitoring performance in mathematics would be important. And then finally, we're talking about moving the science test which is currently in grade four to grade five. And again, that's primarily to spread the testing out away from all of the testing occurring at grade four. Additionally, the science framework, at least the revision of the science framework, is breaking down to standards PreK to two, three to five, so we will have a nice set of standards upon which to base that
science test, a clear break at grade five so we can develop that particular test. So that's the changes in a nutshell.

DR. KOPLIK: With all the changes, when you sort through, have we added or subtracted to the number of hours of testing?

MR. NELLHAUS: Overall we've added because we've added a math test, and we have added a reading test. However, I think by spreading the testing out over more grade levels we've greatly reduced the amount of testing at any particular grade.

DR. KOPLIK: When we talk, Jeff, about administering a reading test at a particular
grade, say grade three or five, how many hours are involved in that test?

MR. NELLHAUS: That test will likely be about three sessions long or two sessions long depending on the length of the session.

DR. KOPLIK: Typically a session is?

MR. NELLHAUS: 45 minutes or an hour.

DR. KOPLIK: About an hour?

MR. NELLHAUS: Yes.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So we're talking two to three hours?

MR. NELLHAUS: No. It's an hour and a half. Three 45-minute sessions is about two hours, a little over that.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I can make a couple of observations and then questions, I suppose. It seems to me that reading and writing in particular are skills that are built sort of continuously over time, which means that you're probably safe to administer the test at any point during the school year. On the other hand, in other subjects where there are sequencing issues about when certain material is covered and in what order, it seems to me quite difficult to break into the middle of the year and say we're going to administer, you know, the math test or the cience test or the history social science test in the middle of the year. I mean, I think it's hard enough for us to try to establish a mile post at the end of the year in these particular rades for what ought to be covered. It seems to me even more problematic to say, well, now we're looking at the middle of the year or some other point in time, or we're testing them on

material that you really covered in the previous school year or the previous two school years. I wonder if you could comment on that issue.

MR. NELLHAUS: I was just proposing that in grade eight because of the problems of students moving on to another school year. You know, if we're testing them in the spring, you know, getting those students results to the high school has created problems. And also, knowing that the next test those students need to take is the competency determination, we'd like to get results back to those students earlier, so that would call for testing them perhaps in January or February so we could get results back into the schools before the end of the school year. That does create a problem in terms of what that test will cover. And certainly it may not be able to cover in science and history and mathematics all of what a spring test would cover. So we would basically have to identify those standards or those areas that would not be tested, I think that would only be fair. And we would have to do that, you know, by working with our curriculum frameworks committees or our assessment development committees to identify those areas that would not be included on those tests.

THE CHAIRMAN: My understanding is that there's a fairly high correlation between responses on the open response questions and the multiple choice questions. Why couldn't we either as common practice or specifically for eighth graders provide faster turnaround for the multiple choice responses students have and the grading of that performance, perhaps not for the individual students but for the schools so that they would have the feedback, over the summer perhaps, so that when it comes time for deciding what classes to place students in and what kind of, you know, curriculum they ought -- or what kind of courses they ought to be enrolled in, that there is some data that's available for them to make informed decisions.

MR. NELLHAUS: In fact, we plan to do that beginning with this round of testing. Next September we plan on sending the item analysis report to schools in September, right at the beginning of the school year. Now, as long as we have a testing program that's scheduled for the end of May and the beginning of June, we're just accounting for all the materials by the middle of June, so there's no way we could turn around and give them the results with that sort of schedule. But we will this year provide them within a few months results on all of the open response and the multiple choice questions through the item analysis.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why wouldn't that be early enough for the schools to use the information productively for individual students?

MR. NELLHAUS: Well, it is. It's just that for the 8th graders they have moved on to a high school, and I think there's some issues in terms of locating those students and getting the materials to them. We can look at the logistics and try to determine ways in which to do that.

COMM. DRISCOLL: There's always trade-offs. And one of the issues -- for example, a vocational school this year after accepting all of its students found when the scores came out that 95 percent of the students they accepted had failed. There seems to be no incentive for the eighth grade schools to own these results before they send kids off to vocational or whatever it happens to be. So that may not be a good reason for testing, but it does seem to me that these kids -- many students in this Commonwealth leave one building -- or most leave one building to go to another from eight to nine, and sometimes they leave the public school system, etc. So it's a really nightmare to trace it, that's one thing. But secondly, and more importantly, it seems to me the results coming back when they can to the eighth grade entity that then sees what the results are for their students causes a dynamic for that building of some accountability, and also placement issues for where they're going the following year. It is a tricky business. Jeff knows -- I want to move it back, and he keeps telling me there's not enough curriculum.

MR. IRWIN: One of the things that would allow for if we do it, though, is it would allow for remediation during the summer months between the eighth and the ninth grade, which is so important because there is a large transition from the middle school into whether it's a vocational technical school or a high school, and it still puts it back on the sending school, the sending middle school, to provide this remediation before they go to whatever high school they choose to go to.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, again, I think it's an easier issue with reading and writing, and perhaps with math. I'm not actually sure what's on the eighth grade assessment. I think that's actually kind of a pivotal point. In terms of math curriculum, it's not just arithmetic at that point.

MR. NELLHAUS: We're testing some algebra.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right, so that's a pretty trick decision to make about where to apply the assessment and what should be on it. Shifting gears for a second, the third grade reading test, and particularly the Iowa, the role of the Iowa. I'm not convinced at this point that we should abandon the Iowa, for two reasons. One is I think its purpose -- my understanding of its purpose is that it's more focused on testing basic skills rather than testing what's called high expectations, and that may be a subtle difference. But just, I think, in looking at the results in terms of proficiency on the Iowa as opposed to proficiency on the MCAS, it gives you some sense for the disparity between the expectations. But it's very important that in early grades that we're able to identify -- the schools certainly are able to identify, but that the state is also able to identify those students, those schools who lack even the basic skills. And so administering an Iowa test, which is I think more directly focused on that particular issue, might be of value. So I wouldn't want to abandon it for that reason. Plus, the fact that it provides -- prior to establishing the correlation between MCAS and other external measures, it provides, it seems to me, the kind of control group or universal sample that allows us to compare the validity and the meaning of the MCAS results against some external standard, however imperfect it might be, that will be of great value in understanding what we're actually measuring or not measuring. And so I'm not criticizing the objective of driving MCAS down to the third grade and replacing the Iowa. I'm just concerned about the timing of it.

MR. NELLHAUS: I would just remind you that the MCAS, although it's a high expectations test and tests high standards, also has multiple levels of performance, and we do have items on that test that are accessible to students who are at a more basic level. Certainly we have the needs improvement category. So we're getting information on students who have attained at least basic skills, and maybe, you know, we've also identified those students that have attained basics but not beyond that. So the test does serve that purpose as well. I think one of the big reasons we're -- one of the issues around administering of the Iowa is the confusion in the reporting. A parent receives results on the Iowa that says proficient, and they receive results on the MCAS that say needs improvement, and it has caused some confusion among parents and educators as to which one is right. So, you know, we're talking about a system here where it will create some consistency in the reporting and understanding of the reporting system.

DR. SCHAEFER: And parents will say, well, this is a nationally normed test and why is the state of Massachusetts asking more of our kids than any other state if you can stick with the Iowa and the kids have done well on that. I think that we really have to weigh the potential for confusion over that and what parents' reactions will be to keeping it for the purposes that you're suggesting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I suppose we could -- I'm not sure exactly what the restrictions are in terms of the reporting of Iowa results, but I suppose we could alter the standards by which you get into the various performance categories still using the Iowa test so that it ends up being more consistent, even though obviously individual cases are going to vary. But they would probably also vary even using the same instrument twice.

COMM. DRISCOLL: If I could, a couple of things. First of all, we need -- one way or another we need to verify the MCAS through correlations with Stanford 9s and Iowas and other things. Secondly, I don't want to lose sight of the fact we're not now going to sit back -- I suppose it's a little early, but we're not sitting back and waiting until the third grade MCAS to find out whether kids can read or not. This is coupled with a major initiative that we want to launch in really, I suppose, PreK, but K to 2, and we've filed for grants under the Reading Excellence Act, and we have requests for state funding under early literacy. We want to develop a whole program K to 2 which involves professional development and training for teachers and then an assessment program really done locally where it needs to be done. And I would submit that every primary teacher, that's what they worry about, is whether the kids can read or not. But we want to couple the third grade MCAS test with a program that comes up through grade two. And in fact, we're talking about requiring, and certainly in under-performing schools, requiring them to report on that assessment, and we can ask for it at any time. But we want to try to make it more of a local responsibility because it's so individual. But we want to be able to identify kids much earlier than grade three. So that's part of the overall thrust.

THE CHAIRMAN: A couple other little things. It seems me that history social science in the fourth grade might be moved to the fifth grade as well.

MR. NELLHAUS: We considered that, and that certainly is an option for the Board to take up.

THE CHAIRMAN: In moving that up a year, it might also make sense to have a reading test in the fourth grade as well. Because having the gap between three and five seems to me to be a crucial weakness, in that that's exactly the age -- in fact maybe even a little late, but exactly the age we want to make sure we're capturing anyone who is not reading at grade level. And if we lack the information in grade four and need to wait until grade five, I think we're creating more risk than we should, so I would certainly prefer a trade-off where we did grade four reading but we postponed history social science from grade four to grade five. And then the last issue has to do with the grade nine reading. I mean, if in fact we're administering the grade ten test to ninth graders -- I guess I'm a little bit confused about why we would do that. But the second thing is, if in fact we start administering the test as a ninth grade test, rather than a tenth great test, then I think we may be establishing a standard for graduation that's too low. I guess I'm concerned that we may slip into saying, well, graduation requirement really is based on a ninth grade reading level.

Mr. Baker is no longer present

COMM. DRISCOLL: Statutorily it has to be based on the tenth grade anyway. The question that I raise is what -- it's clear in schools that have distinct biology, physics or whatever, that there's a distinction between grades. I'm not sure on the tenth grade English -- let's just say the tenth grade reading, whether the significance between ninth grade and tenth grade is that significant. So that -- it raises a lot of issues, there's no question about it.

THE CHAIRMAN: One of the real strengths of the MCAS reading test is its use of literature. One of the weaknesses, I think, in the test is perhaps it may use too much literature, maybe only literature. But the fact that it uses real literature in the test is that the reading passages themselves are fairly challenging. Rather than just having challenging questions, it has challenging texts, again that are based in literature. And I think if you go back to ninth grade you're likely to lose that just because students wouldn't have had enough time to be exposed to enough literature at that level to be able to perform well.

MR. NELLHAUS: Let me just remind you why we are proposing this. We were just looking at the fact that we had all of this testing stacked up in the tenth grade, and we wanted to reduce the testing time for tenth graders at least somewhat, as we did in the other grade levels, and this is the only option that we came up

with. And, you know, granted there are some issues around doing it. Maybe we could think them through a little bit better for the next time we discuss this and have some answers, more well thought out answers, to some of the options around the way that ninth grade test might be structured.

THE CHAIRMAN: The other thing just in terms of process, because we need to obviously reach some closure on this. We've already had a couple of discussions. It seems to me the next time we come back, especially when we're ready to make a decision, I think we need to be presented with some options to choose from, ecause it's hard, and it may be even inappropriate for us to sort of amendment it on the fly without understanding implications of making one change on the larger system. But if in talking about it we could have a couple of options that have a sort of integrity of their own, we could choose, you know, which one we prefer.

COMMISSONER DRISCOLL: Also, it -- so as to make sure that it complies with what you just said, from our end there are easier trade-offs. In other words, if it's clear consensus that we're going to, and I think there would be, just a guess, that we're going to add a sixth grade math test, then let's decide that by May, because then the work can begin. The ninth grade reading, that is administering the tenth grade test in the ninth grade, while it has a lot of -- that doesn't really mean a development issue, because we have it. We either give it in the tenth or we give it in the ninth or we give it in both or whatever, so maybe we can play with it. Because I think the sixth grade math, and I don't know how you feel about the middle school winter, those are kind of crucial, and then introducing a reading. So maybe we can do it by priority. It isn't a question of amending it on the fly, I agree with you, but I think some decisions would be most important to make now, or that is in May, and others -- maybe we could even come up with a time schedule along with the options.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'd like to suggest on the eight grade trying to give it as late as possible in the eight grade while still being able to get it back so that it has an impact for summer remediation, and that they can get it in the eighth grade so that they are at that school still and we don't have trouble tracking them down, but that it still could have an impact on the summer.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was;

VOTED: that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting at 12:33 p.m. Subject to the call of the Cha

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and second by Dr. Koplik. The vote was unanimous.