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Board Of Education Regular Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

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

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

Also Present:
Nancy Catuogno, Registered Diplomate Reporter

Commissioner's Presentation On &q#34;12 To 62" Plan

From 9:05 to 9:30, the Commissioner presented to the Board his Future Teacher Quality Enhancement, or "12 to 62" Plan. A $60 million endowment has been established by the Legislature and the Governor to support this initiative. Commissioner Driscoll highlighted the features of this plan which include Future Educators of America Clubs, to develop interest in the teaching profession for middle and high school students; Teach for Massachusetts, a program for attracting and providing signing bonuses to highly qualified college graduates and mid-career professionals to teach in our public schools; Attracting Excellence to Teaching, a loan reimbursement program for high-achieving college graduates entering teaching; and the Master Teacher Corps, a cadre of master teachers who will serve as mentors to newer teachers.

Commissioner Driscoll said teacher quality is the key to education reform, because it is the key to better student achievement. He added that teacher supply and demand will be a critical issue over the next decade. The "12-62" plan is now state law as Chapter 260 of the Acts of 1998. The Commissioner said that at a future meeting he will present to the Board proposed regulations for the signing bonus program for new teachers and the master teacher corps program, and will roll out activities and initiatives in the other areas over the next several months.

Comments From The Chairman

The Chairman referenced two letters which will be placed in October's mailbag. Chairman Silber noted the need to develop and implement statewide student assessments in the area of foreign languages. Dr. Silber reported that the Board had a meeting September 14 to discuss some items related to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. He proposed that since the

MCAS tests are diagnostic, the Board should guard against "false positives."

Comments From The Commissioner

Dr. Driscoll informed the Board of several grants the Department has recently received including a $2.8 million federal comprehensive school reform demonstration grant and a $10 million competitive grant from the Milken foundation. He reported that, across the state, the openings of school have seemed very smooth this year.

Statements From The Public:

The Board heard from seven speakers on the topics of recertification, professional development, teacher quality, special education and special accommodations for the teacher test.

Routine Business:

1. Election of the Vice-Chair of the Board

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED:that the Board of Education appoint Roberta Schaefer as the Vice-Chairperson of the Board.

Ms. Crutchfield made the nomination and Dr. Thernstrom seconded it. The vote was 8 to 0, with Dr. Schaefer abstaining.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Meetings of June 22 and July 1

Both Dr. Silber and Dr. Delattre referenced some changes that needed to be made to the minutes. The Commissioner agreed to fix those errors and a vote was taken to adopt them as amended.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED:that the Board of Education approve the minutes of June 22 and July 1 as amended.

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

Major Subjects For Discussion And Action:

3. Educator Certification Test

The Board discussed Governor Cellucci's request that the Board consider teacher test results when approving educator preparation programs. Specifically, the Governor asked the Board to consider establishing a program approval standard that includes a passing rate of 80% of the program's prospective teachers. Dr. Koplik reminded the Board that this issue should be viewed in a national context.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED:that the Board of Education instruct the Commissioner to establish a program in the form of draft regulations.

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

Dr. Koplik reported on the August 24 conference of higher education officials involved with teacher preparation, and on next steps that he and the Board of Higher Education are considering. Mr. Peyser presented a proposal for the Board to consider with respect to

alternatives to the master's degree for standard certification. The Board agreed to discuss the issue further in October.

4. Recertification of Educators

Commissioner Driscoll presented six recommendations to the Board for their initial review in preparation for changes to the current certification requirements. He explained to the Board that his intent is to put all the information in front of the Board to begin the discussions on recertification options. For example, he proposed to increase the number of professional development points (PDPs) needed over a five year period for recertification from 120 to 250. He also included proposals for better aligning individual educators' professional development plans with school improvement plans, and for increasing accountability. The Board agreed that they would give comments directly to the Commissioner over the upcoming weeks and that further discussion would occur at a future meeting.

5. Charter Schools

Commissioner Driscoll recommended an amendment to two sections of the Charter School Regulations dealing with the calculation of the charter tuition amount, based on the average cost per student in the district in which a charter school student resides. Public comment was received through two public hearings and in writing.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:VOTED:that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, section 1B; chapter 71, section 89; and section 7(b) of chapter 46 of the Acts of 1997, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, hereby amend the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00, by deleting from § 1.07 subsections (3) and (4), and inserting in place thereof the following two subsections:

§ 1.07 (3) The average cost per student shall be the total cost within a district divided by that district's enrollment. Total cost shall be defined as total current expenditure on education and the sum of school committee and city/ town spending on education within a given academic year, as reported on schedule 19 of a district's end of year report, in the following categories (defined in 603 CMR 10.99): administrative services; instructional expenditures; other recurrent school-related expenditures; food services; athletics and student activities; operation and maintenance of school facilities; employee benefits; insurance; rental/lease of school buildings and non-instructional equipment; fixed assets; acquisition, improvement; and replacement of fixed assets; long-term debt; payments to collaboratives; and school choice revolving expenditures. The total cost shall exclude the following categories: expenditures for students with disabilities receiving services in out-of-district placements, student transportation services, community services, state school building assistance reimbursements, payments to other districts and regional schools, adult education, reimbursed food services, federal and state grants.

§ 1.07 (4) For purposes of calculating the average cost per student, district enrollment shall be defined as the total number of students enrolled less those tuitioned out, as reported on the October 1 enrollment report. This number shall be adjusted by the proportionate change of enrollment in the district during the previous year, as measured by the difference between the October 1 count and average membership. School choice participants shall be counted in the enrollment figures of the receiving districts.

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

Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools Scott Hamilton briefed the Board on the review of management contracts for some of the charter schools and on the application process for FY 1999.

6. State Budget for Education

The Commissioner reminded the Board that FY 2000 is the last year of the foundation budget.

He said that in October, they will need to start their discussions about next year's budget proposal. Mr. Irwin stated that he would like $160 million more in the early childhood budget.

The Board also discussed the FY 99 Budget and noted in particular the $20 million for academic support services for students scoring in level 1 or 2 on the MCAS or who, in FY 99, have been identified as needing improvement based on other standardized assessment measures at any grade level. Mr. Peyser presented a proposal to the Board for possible use of some of the appropriated funds to pay for reading tutors for certain students who performed poorly on the third grade Iowa reading test. He suggested creating a "Reading Guarantee" program, which Dr. Silber described as, "an exciting proposal." Mr. Peyser said that it was only up for discussion and would be looked at further at a future meeting.

7. Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

Jeff Nellhaus, State Testing Director, gave a brief summary of some important statistics associated with the MCAS. He stated that 210,000 students took the tests at three different grade levels and in three different subject areas and that there were 20 million multiple choice questions to be scored by computer and 6 million open-response questions to be scored by hand. After summarizing the presentation and discussion from the Board's September 14th special meeting, Commissioner Driscoll recommended that the Board endorse the MCAS threshold scores (the numeric scores that differentiate the four performance levels set by the Board), as recommended by the panels. Dr. Schaefer clarified that at this time, the Board is not setting the "passing standard," the performance required on the grade 10 MCAS in order for a student to be eligible for high school graduation, starting with the class of 2003. After further discussion, a vote was taken.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED:(1) that the Board accept the Commissioner's recommendation for this year; and (2) that parents, students and teachers be informed that students whose performance is categorized as "Needs Improvement" have no assurance of having met standards appropriate for high school graduation, and need to take corrective action.

The motion was made by Dr. Silber and seconded by Mr. Irwin. The vote passed 8 to 1, with Dr. Delattre opposed.

8. Update on Lawrence

Commissioner Driscoll reported that there is a tentative agreement between the teachers and the Lawrence officials which still needs to be ratified. He informed the Board that 115 new teachers in Lawrence have been hired for this school year. Also, he reported that a large building owned by the Regional Employment Board has been leased for the Adult Education and Workforce Development Center and the Parent Information Center.

Other Items Requiring Board Discussion And Action:

9. School Building Assistance

Two votes were taken in regard to School Building Assistance.

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

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

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was
VOTED:that the Board of Education ratify the waivers granted by the Commissioner of the cost standards of 603 CMR 38.06, for the following previously

authorized projects:

Fall River - Doran Elementary School
Worcester - Roosevelt Magnet School

provided, however, that said waivers shall be subject to such terms and conditions as may be imposed by the Commissioner.

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

Other Business:

The Commissioner provided the Board with a list of grants that he approved over the summer per the authorization given to him in June. He also provided the Board with a list of proposed dates for 1999 Board of Education meetings, and asked that Board members get back to him with their comments.

At 11:45 a.m., on a motion duly made and seconded, it was:
VOTED:that the Board of Education adjourn the regular meeting, subject to the call of the Chairman.

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

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll
Secretary to the Board