

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
350 MAIN STREET
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2000
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The following were present:

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION PRESENT:**

Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-Chairperson, Worcester
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Acting Chancellor, Boston
Mr. Marcel LaFlamme, Monson
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Welcome to everyone. This is intentionally a more informal setting than we usually have thanks to the recommendation of our facilitator, Pat Crutchfield. The idea here is to have a free-flowing discussion that is unrelated to any specific item of business that we typically have on our agenda. The idea of this forum is to have a more wide-ranging discussion about the principles and some of the higher-level issues we confront as we pursue Education Reform. Perhaps we can come to some agreement or consensus around the major objectives, the major means to reach those objectives, and some sense of priority or strategy as we begin pursuing them. I hope to also have a chance to flesh out the details around the specific issues or initiatives that the Board ought to be grappling with over the next several months.

Another general area to keep in mind is the proper role of the state versus districts and schools, and the role of the Board versus the role of the Department, in trying to evaluate the kinds of things that we would establish as issues for the Board as compared to the kinds of issues that other parts of the system might grapple with. You received the memo I sent out which describes, in particular, my basic framework. I've tried to articulate the primary goal for the Board as raising student achievement across the state, and identifying three major means or categories by which we would pursue that objective: (1) accountability for results (2) structuring for effective school management and (3) leadership for educational excellence. Hopefully this can be a framework and a starting point for our discussion.

Pat is going to be moderating the discussion. The microphones are necessary in order to record, and you do need to speak fairly directly into the microphone so the recording can be made. Other than that, try to pretend that this is a normal conversation.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to introduce Lyle Kirtman to the audience. Lyle has been working with the Board and the Department, particularly with the senior staff, and has interviewed all Board members last summer. He has worked with Jim and me successfully to focus the agendas and so forth. I think a lot of our progress has been due to his help. Secondly, I would like to mention that Judy Gill, Acting Chancellor, will be replacing Stanley as Acting Chancellor for the time being. She will be joining us. When she comes in I'll introduce her. Thanks.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Why don't I talk a little bit about process? Jim and Dave called me one day and asked me how we might go about having what I would call a convergent conversation. My assumption is that we have divergent perspectives, priorities and ideas about what we need to accomplish over the next several months, but I don't believe that we have ever been far apart as Board members when it comes to our overarching goal of student achievement.

I've done some low-tech stuff here. I have asked for four flipcharts, and on the top of each of the four I've written one word, and in one case two words. The ones written in red are basically the headlines of the matrix that we all have copies of, and we're going to consider some questions about that. The fourth flipchart is for a parking lot, and I'm giving everybody Post-its. There will be extraneous things that come to mind as we have discussions which will start out diverging and end up converging. And if it's off any of the things that we are talking about today, I'm going to ask you to put it on a Post-it and we'll

put it on the parking lot. The purpose of that is to be able to get these things back into our conversation at some other time, okay?

When this is over, somebody will make wonderful typed copies of all of the information we generate, and get things back to Dave, Jim, and me. We'll have a convergent conversation and then come back to the Board with an overview of major themes, followed by another conversation about next steps. Does that seem reasonable, given that we have a matrix by which we are going to progress?

One of the first questions that Jim asked relates to his broad categories, his major themes, which are: accountability, restructuring, and leadership. The first question we need to consider is: Have we captured the essentials that will have a positive impact on our overarching goal to raise student achievement? In other words, are we there? Have we captured the essentials as we look at these three major categories?

DR. THERNSTROM: Pat, it isn't a separate category, but it does pertain to all three, the element of communicating with the public precisely what we are doing and why.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm going to try to capture it for us to see, and I'm glad we have someone with faster fingers than I have. You would say across all three of these, we need to make sure we communicate with the public.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes. It's part of the process of school improvement. It's not a Board project, it's not simply a school project or a district project, it is a public project. And to the degree to which that happens is, in part, our ability to communicate what we are doing and why. Good results at the end of the day are going to depend in good part on our effort to do so.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I agree with that statement. One of the considerations in even going through this exercise was to try to create some context for the actions that we do take. Right now, I think the perception is that there are a bunch of discrete decisions that the Board makes that may or may not be related to each other. People then draw their own conclusions about what the relationships are. Part of this process is to create some kind of master plan, if you will, or strategy, for which there's some reasonable consensus on the Board. Then, when we do take actions we can put them in some kind of context. But even having said that, it certainly will be clear that we have to consciously communicate the actions that we take into some kind of framework that makes sense.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm a participating facilitator so let me just intervene here to say that out of this discussion and out of what we are doing, I would envision a communications plan so that the "what" and the "why" and the thinking behind what it is we are moving forward with can be put out. I know that we work very hard at doing that, but we need an organized systemic plan around each of these to communicate to public. Once we are clear that would be a boon.

DR. THERNSTROM: Absolutely. I was in New York the week before last, debating an issue in the New York Public Library, when somebody turned to me and said, "You've got a totally punitive plan in Massachusetts in terms of your testing and accountability." That's a communication failure on our part.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: The question on the table still is: Have we captured the essentials that will impact our overarching goal to raise student achievement according to these three major categories?

DR. SCHAEFER: I thought about it some and I think that it does. I think that these areas do cover what we are trying to do.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, yes and no. Effective school management is not something that's a structuring question and it doesn't seem to me that the A, B, C, and D adequately cover the kinds of reforms, changes, that I would like to eventually see in school. Maybe as we take each one of these we can get into some depth on this. But really, significant change is obviously going to be a very complicated process and it's not going to involve simply a checkoff list. Have we done A, B, C and D? Have we just done A and B? All these elements interact with one another and I think that there are additional ones as well.

DR. SCHAEFER: What's not encompassed under the 2, under the restructuring, somehow relates to 3.

DR. THERNSTROM: It does.

DR. SCHAEFER: To the people. And that may be more essential than anything that we are able to do under 2.

DR. THERNSTROM: I think that's absolutely right. Good schools basically have good leaders and good teachers. Period.

DR. SCHAEFER: Under the leadership category for teachers it's more than creating standards for a mentoring system. It involves making more of a profession out of teaching beyond just mentoring. It's providing opportunities for teachers to do other things besides being in the class. We talked about this before in terms of the evaluation teams being able to go into other schools. It's almost like it's a leadership institute for teachers as well, not just for administrators.

DR. THERNSTROM: It's also expanding the process of drawing high-quality young people into teaching and making them feel as if they are joining a profession that truly is a profession and in which they can make a difference.

DR. SCHAEFER: And in which they'll want to stay.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes, stay in kids' lives and, in particular, stay in our urban systems.

DR. SCHAEFER: And not have to go on to be a principal or administrator of some sort in order to be able to advance. They will want to stay as teachers because there is a lot to be done there.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think the Commissioner has been looking specifically at the issues around this, although I'm not sure if you're still using the terminology, but to differentiate staffing models.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: TCAP, Teacher Career Advancement Program.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Providing advancement in teaching to allow teachers to not only have more fulfilling professional careers in context of their teaching, but to exert some leadership among teachers. I think that's definitely more than what's here.

MR. LaFLAMME: Just to expand on that same idea but perhaps from a different angle. If we are asking what else can teachers do, what else can students do as well. We are saying raise student achievement as our overarching goal and we have a breakdown of empirical ways in which we can measure that. Perhaps if one of our priorities is to increase opportunities for teachers, then the same idea can go for students. In a sense, that connects to accountability and results. I'm thinking of character and citizenship education specifically as an opportunity for that kind of thing. I have a lot of information about programs, Amesbury, in particular, in which they bring together the idea of student government and citizenship education within the classroom. They are integrating the social studies framework with a system in which students are an active part of daily policy-making decisions at the school. I feel like we should be giving visibility to possibilities like that and encourage their implementation, not necessary that specific model, but things like that.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It sounds like leadership has a lot to do with community building.

DR. THERNSTROM: There's another issue here, too, which is managing the day, the school day -- time on task, organization of the day, length of the school day.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Is this restructure?

DR. THERNSTROM: It's not restructure under any of these, A, B, C, D. I'm utterly convinced that in many schools there are too many days and too many hours in which not enough learning is taking place. I'm also fairly convinced that the school day is too short for many students.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The difficulty in changing those particular variables has always been that within the context of the existing structure of any district, and of the existing collective bargaining agreements in any district, you have to pay for every minute. The price is quite dear. Generally speaking, it has only been in cases where you're able to start with a fresh sheet of paper, whether it's through a pilot school or charter school or some other kind of new institution within the district or outside of it. Then you are able to break the clock in a way that doesn't force you to spend all your resources to add an extra hour or two.

DR. THERNSTROM: I think that's not true, Jim, for two reasons. Look at today's New York Times front page article on how many schools are now having longer days one way or another, especially urban schools, after-school programs. It takes a lot of money, of course. Districts are fiddling with their budget and taking money from one place in order to put it in after-school programs or in simply longer school day programs. I don't think that this is a closed question at all.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm sorry, I didn't see the article, but are we talking about programs that are actually an integral part of the academic program?

DR. THERNSTROM: Both. There is a school in New York where they are spending four and a half hours a day in fifth grade on reading and literacy. Now, they are able to do that because the school day is much longer. These are kids who really need it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Was this Kip Academy?

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes. Kip is a public school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm aware of that, but they seem to have a special arrangement with the district compared to other schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: That's a longer discussion.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But that in and of itself --

DR. THERNSTROM: They don't have an arrangement that other schools can't get. Go on.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My point here is there may be some autonomy arrangements between districts and schools which are different than the models we are currently using here in Massachusetts. Maybe we ought to be looking at them.

DR. SCHAEFER: That are not charter schools.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But these schools do exist in New York City where the rules just don't apply. Either that or they are not enforced.

DR. THERNSTROM: The rules are worse in New York City.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But for these schools, they are allowed a certain amount of space for a variety of reasons.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think we need to ask why, or how can that be.

DR. THERNSTROM: Because they are doing a good job and actually they are not allowed so much space. They are taking the system and working it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But my understanding is that's primarily then a function of leadership rather than a function of structure, per se.

DR. THERNSTROM: But they need the hours they have gotten working with the South Bronx kids, and ditto with the Central Harlem kids.

DR. SCHAEFER: We need to look at those models then and see what is there to see if there's any applicable or replicability.

MR. LaFLAMME: Moving onto a separate issue, looking under accountability in the matrix in front of us. The only mention that I see of what I'm talking about is the last bullet under C, "percentage of newly certified teachers entering through alternative paths." Perhaps this is implicit, but it seems like we are not talking about recruiting more teachers. The numbers and the demographics of the teaching profession today is something that we need to address. Whether it's recruiting from colleges or whether it is signing bonus programs or any number of things, I think that is very closely tied to accountability for results.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I know the Chairman and I have talked about this since last August. Clearly the means on the matrix are for instances. It isn't meant to cover everything. I think the question was: Are you comfortable with 1, 2 and 3 covering the field? And some of the issues you've raised do bring it up to another level which is what we are talking about.

Maybe I should take a second to introduce Judy Gill, the Acting Chancellor of Higher Education. Welcome, Judy. How was the traffic?

DR. GILL: Not too bad. I'm still learning how to roller skate and I'm not always so successful.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So it wasn't trying to find Malden? That's often a challenge in itself. Thank you for coming.

When you raise the larger issues like Marcel raised, whether we need to look at student achievement as being beyond just test scores, or you raise the issue as Abbie did, whether it's about resources or time on learning, there are larger issues that this Board ought to be thinking about to allow creativity at the local level. The idea of the means was to get this discussion going. The issues are the larger policy matters that the Board wants to get at. We have talked about good teaching and leaders but, ultimately, what does that mean for us.

MR. LaFLAMME: Perhaps the more "for instances" we have on the table the better.

DR. THERNSTROM: David, it seems to me we are saying there really are two categories, not three. First there's creating effective schools. Part of creating effective schools is restructuring management and part of it is leadership. There are other elements as well. And the second category is the accountability element. How do you create good schools? How do you know when you've done so and what do you do when the schools have failed? It's really two categories.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: You just mentioned three, though. Help me.

DR. THERNSTROM: Maybe there are three, then. But it isn't these three.

DR. SCHAEFER: You know that you have good schools when student achievement has been raised.

DR. THERNSTROM: You can argue about the measures, but the measures are for defining what solid education looks like. Creating good schools, how do we get there, and what kind of system of accountability do we have? It seems to me those are the two categories.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So how do we create good schools? How do we know when we've gotten there? And what of schools that don't get there?

DR. THERNSTROM: That's right, which is the accountability.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So that's three pieces.

DR. THERNSTROM: All right. And what Roberta is saying is we have already settled the question of how we know when we have gotten there because that's the accountability piece we have already put in place. It's basically MCAS.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe these two pieces, accountability and creating effective schools, make more organizational sense. On the accountability piece, I think there would at least be two subcategories. One is measuring. How do you know that you're achieving? And the other is: What do you do when schools aren't achieving? That happens to be a big deal in terms of the policy questions the Board is going to be confronted with in the next year. We're going to start to identify those schools that are low performing. We are going to have review panels looking at those schools. This fall, we may be sending in inspection teams to evaluate the schools. Some schools are going to pop up when the response from the review folks is: "This school is in trouble." Which throws back to the Department and the Board the question: What are you going to do about it? I know I haven't grappled with that and the Board has not grappled with that. And while many of these things are very case-specific, there are some general issues that we need to start talking about in terms of parameters, the kind of interventions that we ought to be taking, and where the Department and Board's roles begin and end.

DR. SCHAEFER: That's the whole punitive part.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I wouldn't use punitive, I would use intervention.

DR. SCHAEFER: But it appears that way; that's why people categorize it as such. On the flip side, what are we doing in terms of the positive? I think the whole issue of teacher recruitment in the variety of ways that we have been discussing is already implemented. We are making more of a profession out of teaching. I think those are very positive elements that we can point to and say, "Here are some really important changes that we would like to see in the way of public education."

MR. KIRTMAN: Pat, you said at the beginning this is about goals and directives and also dealing with the direction of the Department. Things gets a little confusing between what is the goal and the role. So is the goal to have these things change to a certain measurement? And what is the role of the Department? Because I think you had talked about best practices or research that's out there. Is that a means to an end that would be under these kinds of examples? Or is that a role of the Department to have a goal or objective to do that kind of research or documentation?

DR. THERNSTROM: And there's a related issue Jim has implicitly brought up. There's the Board. The power of the Board is limited. Do we talk about the things over which we have limited or no power when we think they belong in the package of Education Reform? Issues have to be on the table.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: One of the things this goes back to is where does leadership come into these particular three questions? One of the things that we don't have control over is the day-to-day operation of schools, and the implementation of the policies and the models that we send out into the world. We need to not lose sight of the need to bring the educational leadership in the state along with us in terms of communicating our thinking and looking at roles and goals and bringing folks along. They have a lot more power on the day-to-day impact than we do.

MR. IRWIN: That brings us back to the leadership role of the Department, the leadership role of school committees --which we haven't talked about, and also the leadership role of parents. This all gets back to the communication part we spoke about in the beginning. Without the Department communicating to the school committees, the parents, and the teachers, and taking a leadership role, we won't be as successful. The Department has to take a leadership role in order to accomplish these things.

DR. THERNSTROM: So where are we?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think that we have begun to take a look at the questions Abbie posed: How do we create great schools, how do we know when we get there, and what do we do when schools aren't achieving?

DR. THERNSTROM: What do we do when schools are achieving, because one of the issues is how do we clone them? How do we spread the word? How do you turn them into models for effective education? That's a very difficult process, in fact.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. So how much this change the original three categories, I guess, is where we are.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm not sure. I'm trying to draw a tree diagram of this.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I was thinking trees myself.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Based on what I have drawn at the moment, we get back to the two categories which Abbie mentioned. They are helpful because I think they are clearer than the three that I've put down here, at least in terms of trying to communicate to anyone outside of the inner circle about what we're talking about. So for instance, under accountability, I think there are, at least, two subcategories which I've mentioned already. One is measurement, the other is intervention strategies or approach to intervention.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes. How do we know when we have gotten there.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And then strategy.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Intervention strategies.

MR. LaFLAMME: And it would seem that coupled with intervention strategies are what Abbie was talking about.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I put that in another place. Under creating effective schools, I put restructuring and leadership. We have also talked about recruiting talented professionals. That doesn't mean just principals; it's people across the board. And then replicability, because that's related to creating effective schools more than accountability, even though it may come out of the accountability process.

DR. THERNSTROM: There was another point which Roberta mentioned which is heightening the sense of professionalism within the school.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes.

MR. LaFLAMME: And how it ties into professional development. You could couple that with recruitment.

DR. SCHAEFER: You want the leadership thing under effective schools.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Absolutely. Under creating effective schools, I have: restructuring, leadership, recruiting talented professionals, replicating successful schools.

DR. SCHAEFER: But do you still have as your goal to raise student achievement?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes, that should be our overall objective.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Could you repeat the four?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Restructuring, leadership, recruiting talented professionals, and replication.

DR. THERNSTROM: I don't think it's a question of simply restructuring the leadership of the schools. It may involve restructuring the job of the teachers themselves, moving some administrative tasks out of the hands of teachers into paraprofessionals, which I know TCAP is working on because I have talked to Anne Duffey about it. There are a lot of questions here about how schools are organized and managed.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Now, this raises one of the underlying questions which we haven't directly addressed: What's the right balance between encouraging a restructuring of schools and encouraging development of leaders within schools while at the same time not running the schools?

DR. THERNSTROM: You're encouraging creative thinking about what can be done within a school for effective learning.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think Jim's question is more to the notion of balance in role. What's our role in doing this and how do we balance all of the reality of entering into this relationship? We are stepping outside of a box.

DR. SCHAEFER: Because we have given grants for restructuring schools, right? So that's apparently not enough.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think we are recommending zeroing out that line item.

DR. SCHAEFER: Obviously, it has not been enough, so something like providing alternative models and making districts understand what the possibilities are out there. I mean, you're saying creative thinking, but we have to provide some examples, a lot of examples, of what's been done.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think we need to do more than that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In my opinion, there is a role to be played in doing research and communicating the results of that research, especially around effective schools. There's a lot of that out there. I'm not sure we need to reinvent this. Maybe a lot

of this is just communication rather than original research. But there's that component. But then there's this other piece which is somehow creating enough flexibility within the system to allow people to actually implement the kinds of changes and best practices that we are advocating or suggesting might be a good fit. This is the thing that is the most difficult nut for us to crack. It's ultimately a policy issue which may or may not be within the realm of the Board's authority to do much about other than to take a position on. This does get back to my basic thesis which I describe in the memo. My concern is -- and this is especially true in larger districts but not exclusively so -- that there's not enough freedom of action at the school level in order to implement a lot of these things that we are talking about, even if the people at the school level really wanted to do it.

DR. SCHAEFER: Jim, I notice you have been reticent to use one word *union*.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Collective bargaining is particularly difficult because it's at the district level instead of the school level. It is not so much an issue of union versus nonunion as what's the most effective level of bargaining, if you will, in terms of maximizing school performance. I would argue that if teachers in a school wanted to organize, it's better for school performance if they are organized at a school level rather than a district level. When you have multiple collective bargaining agreements across a district it makes it very hard for individual schools to take control over their own destiny, at least the way most of these things are.

DR. SCHAEFER: If the principal is unable to choose the teachers he wants because of a collective bargaining agreement, then obviously that severely limits the control that he has on the school at that level.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Well, we seem to have segued into the question about the role of the state, the role of the Board, the role of the Department relative to districts and schools and it's a sticky wicket. I think, Jim, you and David and I talked about spending an hour on the first two questions and then moving into a conversation about our priorities and next steps. We got started about 4:15 so I'm going to do a time check here. I want to say about 5:15 we ought to segue into the next step.

DR. SCHAEFER: Let me come back to the union issue. Is the Board in a position to make a set of recommendations about where we see obstacles that relate to collective bargaining? Can we put that out on the table so that the public is aware?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Obviously, the Board can do anything it wants. As you know, there was legislation a year ago that related to the extent of collective bargaining and limitations that were suggested. As a model it suggests there is some legislative hook, and we obviously can make recommendations to the legislature as well. We have not used the Board as a bully pulpit around these or other issues. Certainly the Board is capable of making pronouncements, and maybe that's appropriate. I don't know. My general inclination is to try to focus on those things that we actually have some direct responsibility for. However, when get back to the original point about communication, it does make sense for us to be communicating in context for all of this. That may be part of it.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I wonder if it makes sense for us to be communicating and having conversations with the unions about obstacles to some of these issues.

MR. LaFLAMME: A unilateral sort of conversation with the public.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just by way of example, the national leadership of AFT has made the statement that they are interested in exploring very limited streamlined district contracts with more specific school-based contracts. I don't know if this is a good idea. In one way it adds to the vast complexity of negotiating contracts. I can see them saying that most of the work rules and most of the issues around how time is spent and conditions under which people work should be established at the school level, not the district level. I think that makes great sense. That's a union position and I think there may be some basis for discussion around these lines. I'm not naive enough to believe we can cut through all that in five minutes and come to a decision which upsets the status quo significantly. On the other hand, I don't think it's total polar opposites.

DR. SCHAEFER: If we don't raise it then we are avoiding what we consider to be extremely important issues that are obstacles to moving forward with Education Reform. I understand how difficult it may be, and it will not make us very popular, but I'm used to that.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Why do you think it won't make us popular? I think we should raise important issues that are obstacles to the goal of raising student achievement. I don't think that the unions are opposed to that goal, so I wonder about a conversation around our common ground.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Under number 2B, I did try to raise those issues in talking about expanding school-based management rights and particularly the right of principals around hiring authority and in particular the issue of transfers. Just as an aside, Tom Menino made the same reference in the State of the City seeking a concession from the union with respect to the transfers into schools and giving principals authority to reject transfers, even taking seniority into account.

MR. LaFLAMME: We have broken this up into ideas and then the next-step format. But, is that something that we might want to identify for further action? It's one thing to have it on the table, saying "that's a good idea," but is that something we can go at?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What's the antecedent to that pronoun?

MR. LaFLAMME: The idea of that sort of a conversation.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: With the unions.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, before we go to 2B, I'm still struggling to try to get at these larger issues.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: If someone can clarify them, I will put them up there.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It seems to me the Board has talked about creating these conditions. There are issues where your authority is limited. It's sometimes limited by the legislature, sometimes limited by a whole series of things. But I heard you talking about creating the conditions for creativity to take place at the local level, more flexibility and so on.

We do have programs out there and we have federal funds if you want to be a coalition school or whatever it happens to be. I want to push back on that a little bit, because I think the issue that Hal Lane built, for example, was immediately rejected. Here's a guy who had been very popular for a long, long time. And whether Mayor Menino is successful or not he already made a statement. So I will go back to what Pat talked about and try to tie the two together.

One is to try to create the conditions, and the other is to have the conversation so it doesn't get stopped. It doesn't matter if it's bilingual education or transfer of teachers or testing math teachers; we need to do this. I'm not saying we should not stand for what we believe in, but do I think we ought to think about the unions.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: There's the myth and then there's what happens.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I don't know whether that's true or not. I think Pat is absolutely right. There's nothing to stop us from having the conversation and then perhaps creating the condition. If we create the confrontation, we don't have to worry about that. That's happening in all the districts when they bargain.

This is a way for this Board, not only in these three other areas but in establishing the conditions, to take the lead, to make a decision as to what it is that's important and will make a difference for kids. What I've captured that you've been talking about is very heartening to me, which is this focus on going in the right direction..

MR. IRWIN: I think the problem is far more complex than just saying it's the union's fault. It's an easy way out for us to say it's the union's fault that all this is happening. Granted there are unions out there that are totally prehistoric as far as I'm concerned, but there's an awful lot of other things out there that are helping kids and helping schools. We need to get beyond this "us versus them" mentality and perhaps sit down and talk to them about what the issues are and where we're going. We can get a lot more accomplished that way than we can by standing up and taking a stand on different things when we don't really know what is going on.

For instance, when we were dealing with the whole Lawrence issue we never came out once and thanked the teachers for backing off on a lot of rules they had up there. It's called negotiations and collective bargaining. You give up one thing to get

other things. Imagine if, in their wisdom, school systems ever got together and hired a professional negotiator. So just to blame unions is not always right. There's a lot of other social ills in the school.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think what we are hearing around the table is that we need to have a conversation. I would agree with Jim that it's not five minutes, and I agree with you it's not a confrontation.

MR. IRWIN: Let's put some things on the table and talk about them and see where the myths and realities are. If we do, maybe we can go forward.

DR. THERNSTROM: I'm in agreement. I just had a wonderful briefing by Anne Duffey of the Department on the TCAP program, the Teacher Career Advancement Program. She told me about ideas that are coming out of the schools. Some of them might be doable and others may not. The most imaginative were not necessarily off the table at all as a consequence of union opposition. There's the possibility of much more flexibility and interest on the part of the unions in changing some of the existing processes for more effective education than is usually implied.

DR. SCHAEFER: It's obviously not just collective bargaining issues, there are legal issues that are impediments to Education Reform too. I'm sure that our general counsel could prepare a whole list of them. Abbie, you have written on this.

DR. THERNSTROM: That's true.

DR. SCHAEFER: Maybe another piece of it is to identify those legal issues that are having this impact and then look at them to see if there's anything to be done there.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would underline that point because I think restructuring has two basic categories. One has to do with providing space for individual schools to manage themselves more. The second does have to do with the overarching legal and regulatory framework. There are a lot of things that we, the Board, are imposing, consciously or unconsciously, sometimes under the direction of the legislature, sometimes not, that we need to reevaluate. This is obviously something we have direct control over, much more control than we do all these other issues. I certainly think it ought to be an important priority for us to clean up our own house. While I don't want to prevent us from criticizing other people, by the same token, we need to hold ourselves to the same standard. Part of this has to do with looking at the rules we are promulgating and the effect they have, especially around prohibiting the restructuring that we say we want.

DR. SCHAEFER: But some things, like expulsion of students are things that are in the courts. We need to identify them and understand what we can do to get around them.

DR. THERNSTROM: As you said, I have written specifically on that question. The limits are not clear in the following sense-- good administrators, in fact, work with parents effectively to channel disruptive kids into special programs. If we look at the existing law as an impossible impediment we have to see that it isn't the end of the story.

DR. SCHAEFER: We need to make more public the alternatives as to how these cases can be handled so that principals don't throw up their hands. Maybe that's part of the leadership training.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It's back to the notion of punitive measures again. If you're a hammer, the whole world looks like a nail, everybody looks like a nail. There's got to be another paradigm for you to be able to respond to as opposed to reacting. And if we've got folks who are reacting to the letter of the law, and that's the extent to which they can react, then there's no responsiveness and we are in trouble.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Excellent and experienced leaders do know how to work with and around the existing rules.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The question is: How do we create an environment where that is the norm rather than the exception? Part of it is elevating the leadership skills of the people who are running the schools, but part of it is lowering some of the barriers that make it hard.

DR. THERNSTROM: Absolutely.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That's not so much a leadership skill but a critical thinking skill.

MR. IRWIN: It also gets back to the best practices. We must find out what the best practices are and communicate them out.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. It's ten after five, and your facilitator has lost track of the three categories.

DR. THERNSTROM: We reduced them to two.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Listening to the challenges, maybe going to accountability.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Accountability and restructuring.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No, to steal some of David's language, creating conditions for effective schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: Why not just creating effective schools? Let's get rid of the verbiage.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's fine with me. The only problem is you have the role of the district, the role of parents, the role of the school committee. How do you stick SBA in? All these things are conditions. For example, what if this Board adopts a policy about the size of schools under SBA? If there's a policy regarding size of schools, that's a condition where, if you just say effective schools, you're not dealing with districts and the rest of the world. The focus is the school but then it's all these other things.

DR. THERNSTROM: All right. I was just trying to eliminate words.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What's the second category?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Accountability.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We have two categories which we are in agreement on in terms of our focus on raising student achievement. What are our priorities within those categories? What are the things we need to be thinking about and when? How are we going to do them?

DR. SCHAEFER: Under the conditions, Jim already listed four.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I have categories. Restructuring --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Under which one?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Under creating the conditions. These are just categories I would say. There's no particular action or issue, they're just categories. Restructuring, leadership, recruiting.

MR. LaFLAMME: Could we maybe include development with that?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Under leadership you mean?

MR. LaFLAMME: For example, TCAP is a development complement to recruiting.

MR. KIRTMAN: Wouldn't you say recruitment and development?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm fine with that. I was thinking about TCAP and some of those other things we were talking about earlier in the context of leadership. Even though they obviously relate to developing the quality of the individual, I was putting that in the context of leadership, and then replication.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Okay. Now, just to finish the things I have written down. Under restructuring, I think I mentioned this earlier, there are two issues that we have identified. One has to do with school-based management.

DR. THERNSTROM: We need to see those.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Under restructuring you have what?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: School-based management. And then regulatory reform.

MR. LaFLAMME: Should we couple legal with that?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe legal and regulatory reform. And then under replication -

DR. SCHAEFER: Don't we want to put in there the conversation with the union?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm just thinking wondering hierarchically where that all goes.

DR. THERNSTROM: Under restructuring, what about the whole question of how the school day is managed? Structuring of teaching itself, including the length of the day and the length of the year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I was thinking of those things as being in the context of school-based management. There are issues having to do with flexibility and actually being able to implement those kinds of things.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: You want to put what else under restructure?

DR. SCHAEFER: Conversation with the union.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That's a great term.

DR. THERNSTROM: That could be under school-based management.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Anyway, replicability, I had two things under there. One had to do with research, but it may be identification of best practice or something like that, and then communication or dissemination.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Incidentally, on your original you have all of those plus finance. This follows your more independently managed schools. I don't know whether that's under school-based, but you have it listed as school finance system as it relates to grades.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Does that include everything? Does that bring us up to where we are? Yes, it does. Is there anything that I don't have up there that needs to be up there?

DR. SCHAEFER: Are we going to do a separate one for leadership?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. Okay. I need another place to put these things then. So leadership. What else do I need?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Recruiting.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Do you want me to put things under leadership?

DR. SCHAEFER: Developing a teaching profession.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just structurally, it may be useful to think about this. I'm not sure how many categories to have here, but we have principals, teachers and Marcel made an interesting comment about engaging students in leadership roles.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Let's do administrators.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We have school committees, we could make a full list.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: How about if we get those right? I'm not denying they belong up there, but we have a lot to work on just with those three categories. Anything that needs to go under recruitment and development?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only comment I would make is we have a lot of initiatives underway right now with respect to both recruitment and development. And while the jury is still out in terms of what dividends it pays, there's no question there's a lot of activity underway that's targeted right to it. Maybe that's why we are sitting here silent.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: If we list current activities, maybe what we ought to be doing is making sure we collect good data.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's a very good point. We are doing things but are they working?

DR. THERNSTROM: Data? Yes, I agree.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We might as well throw in evaluation as well.

MR. IRWIN: Isn't measurement and evaluation the same?

DR. THERNSTROM: Is that evaluation of the recruitment?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We have to be measuring around current initiatives to see whether it's working.

DR. THERNSTROM: I would like to see us evaluate --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We should evaluate everything. However, in that specific area we've got several initiatives already underway. I think one of the problems is that we've got that leadership page over there and we have a hard time filling in the blanks. That's a great challenge.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I have said as much myself.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The issue may be not be what we do, but the process we enter into to figure out what we do.

DR. SCHAEFER: I see an overlap. Leadership, teachers, I think there may be overlaps when you talk about development. I think that may be why we are struggling with that at the moment. Leadership development for administrators is different from that. That's something that clearly has to be worked on because there's a tremendous shortage of these people.

DR. THERNSTROM: But wait a minute, Roberta. Good principals are in part a matter of recruitment strategies.

DR. SCHAEFER: I guess I'm confused because when I think of recruitment and development, I think we're talking about teachers.

DR. THERNSTROM: It can be both.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would put it beyond just teachers.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: If we thought about recruitment and development as recruiting and developing educators, then this take us out of this --

DR. SCHAEFER: Then there's an overlap there.

DR. THERNSTROM: In fact, the whole issue may be recruitment and development. You recruit the right people, get the right training, you don't have something separate called "creating leaders."

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My only response is that we need to create a focus on leadership where there hasn't been one. For that reason alone, I think it's worth the emphasis.

DR. SCHAEFER: Being a principal is very different from being a teacher. It's not a natural transition. I think that people go into it because they see it as the way to promotion. That doesn't necessarily mean that there are not going to be good principals. So at that level, when you start, you're not recruiting people usually for principalships.

DR. THERNSTROM: It says recruitment/development. The "development" part covered what you just said.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We need to rework not only details but some of the planning as well.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think if we can get words on the board and get them organized in substantive broad categories, we'll get them back. We can make meaning out of them. We have some time to do that.

MR. KIRTMAN: On the question of leadership, I'm wondering what role you feel the Department should play. Jim is saying that the role of the Department is the focus on leadership. What do you think the role of the Department is around leadership? You just said this is part of one of the more important things.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I will give you two things. One, which the Department is already working on, is revisiting the professional leadership standards, the principles of effective leadership. The second thing is stimulating the development of different kinds of leadership training programs. In particular, most of the leadership training programs, the structured ones anyway, tend to be university based. You take some classes, come out, you receive whatever the credential is, and you're pretty much done.

Within districts, there's a wide variety of things that districts may do in terms of developing principals. They may put people through assistant principalships and that sort of thing. However, my observation is that those district-level programs hardly exist. To the extent that they do exist, the assistant principal gets all the grunt work while the principal is doing the highfalutin' stuff. It's not necessarily training in terms of educational leadership.

That's the thing I'd like us to focus on here. Not so much the management issues, although there are management issues, but there are issues around educational leadership and how to lead a group of professionals and evaluate good teaching. There's a whole lot that we don't expect of most principals, and we sure don't prepare them for it. There needs to be preparation for principals that's more practice based and that's in the schools.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right back to creating the conditions for effective schools.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Not to blow my own horn here, but Pioneer Institute has a leadership program for charter schools which has some seminar work outside of schools but is focused in the schools. It involves consultants coming in and observing principals and providing feedback on the job and that sort of thing. That general approach is going to be more productive over time than the university-based seminars.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Because you're talking about practice as opposed to theory and application.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It's an art, it's not a science.

DR. THERNSTROM: Is Pioneer collecting data?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We are collecting data. We are in the second year. A year from now I will let you know the results.

MR. LaFLAMME: In the vein of getting words up on the board, under leadership, perhaps, we should add: linking citizenship education to academics and the effect thereof in promoting leadership in students. You don't have to put all that.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It's over on another note, actually.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One of the things I thought I heard you saying, Marcel, had to do with engaging students in the business of helping to drive achievement in the school. That may be what you're saying here as well, but I don't think it's necessarily externally focused. I'm not excluding that, but focusing it rather on on engaging students in raising the levels of academic achievement in school.

MR. LaFLAMME: I would say that doing that is as important if not more important to citizenship education than community service.

DR. SCHAEFER: It's directly related to --

MR. LaFLAMME: It's directly related to.

DR. SCHAEFER: -- your own community.

DR. SCHAEFER: Right, and your job in a sense.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to go back to Jim's point about how difficult it is to develop leadership in schools. There are some best practices here and there, but back to Lyle's point: What should our role be?

Let me go back to the larger question again: How do you provide conditions that promote creativity? It also gets back to communication and those necessary conversations. One of the larger issues is that principals face an untenable position in many cases. They are asked to meet the buses, monitor the lunch room and-- we've now asked them to review every professional development plan of every teacher through recertification. If our new principles go through, they might be evaluating every teacher every year. Then there's the myriad things the district asks them to do, let alone go to 766 hearings, et cetera, et cetera. In many places it's really untenable. On top of that, they have to deal with all the parents and complaints and kids that are suspended.

DR. THERNSTROM: And all the incidents during the school day.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: All the incidents during the day from getting a peanut from a kid who's allergic to kids bringing a weapon to school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And you only get paid a couple thousand dollars more.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right. I think this is one we need to spend a lot of time and a lot of focus on. When we start talking about leadership, we have to start to understand the importance and dignity of good educational leaders. We know how crucial they are. So I don't think this is just another thing on the list; this is a huge issue around restructuring.

Part of TCAP, by the way, is looking at ways to deploy adults in a building to do some of the work of principals. Jim, I think, this is really an area we have to put our minds to. We can talk about the universities being the same old same old, but, on the other hand, particularly in this state, we have tremendous resources in our universities. Can we have seminars? Can we bring people together to talk about things? We have to pay tremendous attention to this area. As we know, we are not even getting candidates. It is a real problem.

DR. THERNSTROM: I agree with that completely. Most good schools that I've seen are good top down. The quality starts at the very top and it's utterly essential and extremely difficult. The job is murder.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It's about leader-full schools as opposed to schools that have leaders.

DR. SCHAEFER: If you have leadership at the top, that person can attract good teachers.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And it is not always punitive. Bill Edgerly gave us five \$10,000 awards. He and I are visiting five schools that had the highest percentage increase in MCAS. When we talk to people in the schools it becomes so clear. It gets back to this issue. There are great leaders here and because they recruit people well, they bring good people in. We're meeting, observing and videotaping the kids and faculty. We're sitting and talking. We're going to make a video out of the

whole experience across the five schools. In one particular case there were people who had not been successful but under the new leadership blossomed.

MR. LaFLAMME: So how do we translate some of that into Jim's original matrix? Do we want to say mentoring as far as the practice-based development --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Where do you want me to put these words?

MR. LaFLAMME: Under both, perhaps.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Actually, all three.

MR. LaFLAMME: Not mentoring instead of university-based programs, but in addition to them. We can certainly identify those as well.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: You want me to identify university-based programs?

MR. LaFLAMME: Yes. And then under 3A, Jim lists pilot educational leadership institute.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm going to put it under both teaching and administrators.

DR. THERNSTROM: It seems to me, Jim, that what you want to do is get this organized on a new piece of paper. Then, we'll want to figure out the specific issues that tie into these questions such that we are discussing them in a concrete context. We can then take this and look at the agenda items for the Board as you envision them and see what fits where.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's exactly what we are hoping to do. It's more than just fitting the agenda items into the matrix that comes out of this; it's developing agenda items.

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes, it's both.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Just beginning with a conversation that helps us get things on newsprint was a goal for tonight. We can then come back and say: What do we mean by this?

DR. THERNSTROM: And also: What are the concrete issues these questions are tied to? Which are profitable to discuss?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right, and what are the overlaps, what are the implications? Okay. What else do we want to see if we can capture tonight?

MR. LaFLAMME: Just under restructuring, right off the original matrix: more independently managed schools, new charters granted, and expending performance-based regulatory reform. They all fall under that category. Specifying performance-based is important.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: He is just making sure Jim's list gets in here.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I didn't pay him for this.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: You should. We don't want to lose stuff from the list, that's important. Did you say something about charter schools?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You have that under more independently managed schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: If you think we have dropped something from the list, get it back in at the point this is redone.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I promise you it won't come back looking exactly like what I originally passed out.

DR. THERNSTROM: I think we are at a point now where we need to turn this over to Jim. We've done what we can.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't think it would be useful to talk about it now, but I'd like you to think about, as you sit with this for a while, identifying some ways of measuring whether we are achieving the objectives that we've established here. You might want to go back and look at those measures and think about some of the things we talked about here to see if there are any measures to determine whether we are making progress.

One of the frustrating things that applies to public policy in general is the fact that there's a whole lot of activity, and stories to tell but little real information to tell you whether you're making any progress. So everything may sound good and even be logical, but we need to go to the next step to figure out whether it's actually working.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think that the most powerful research that I ever worked with is research in which the narrative is powerful and the numbers are equally powerful.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You need both, no question.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Absolutely. The marriage of qualitative and quantitative research is powerful. That's what we need to look at as we begin to collect our data.

DR. THERNSTROM: But Pat, Jim's question is are there numbers -- what are the data? When you're talking about good leadership, other than the long-term MCAS results, you know, are there other data?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: There's plenty of other indicators that can translate --

DR. THERNSTROM: But that's what he is saying.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm agreeing.

DR. THERNSTROM: What numbers are we talking about and what is their availability and what's their reliability?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And who is collecting them and when do we start.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We are meeting tomorrow, as you might recall, at 9:00 behind that partition. I'm afraid we're going back to the old format, the horseshoe table. With that, we are adjourned until tomorrow. Thank you very much.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. by the call of the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll
Secretary to the Board