COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
*****REGULAR MEETING*****
FITCHBURG HIGH SCHOOL

740 RICHARDSON ROAD
FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2000

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Ms. Jody Kelman, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Concord
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington

Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

ALSO PRESENT:

Nancy Catuogno-Varallo, Registered, Diplomate Reporter

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the November meeting of the Board of Education. We are, as you know, not in Malden, we are in Fitchburg. Let me first turn it over to the Commissioner who will introduce our hosts.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you very much. As you know, by the regulations of the Board, we do need to come to central Massachusetts once a year and for some reason, I'm not sure if it's Roberta's fault, we have been in the Worcester area for a number of years. It is great to be in the Fitchburg/Leominster area at this beautiful facility. We had the opportunity yesterday, thanks to the superintendent, to get a brief tour, and this really is a phenomenal building. At this time, I'd like to introduce our hosts. To my left is the principal of this great high school, Bernie Welch. To his left is Superintendent Phil Fallon, and to my left is the Mayor of Fitchburg, Mary Whitney.

MAYOR WHITNEY: Good morning, and I thank you very much for having your meeting here this morning. It is indeed important for me as Mayor of the City of Fitchburg to welcome you to this City of Fitchburg and to this beautiful facility. What is more appropriate than to have the Board of Education in a building that has just been completed? And we are extremely proud of this building. I feel that education is very, very important and, obviously, the city of Fitchburg is very proud of this building, and I'm proud that

you have chosen to have your meeting here. I thank you very much for coming and I welcome you to the city of Fitchburg and this beautiful facility.

MR. FALLON: Good morning. On behalf of the school committee and the superintendent of schools, we welcome you here to Fitchburg High School. Again, I also thank you for bringing your State Board of Education on the road, if you would, so people in this area would be able to sit in. We are very, very pleased to host this at our new high school. It's a wonderful facility. Just a quick point of view as far as what happened in this situation. It started in 1998, construction, it took two years to build, it was funded through SBAB, 80 percent paid for by the state, thank you, and 20 percent paid for by the city. We have 230,000 square feet and presently we have 1,320 students. The capacity is 1,400.

I want you to know that the school system in Fitchburg is doing quite well, and one of the reasons it's doing well is because of Education Reform. In 1993, I can tell you that Fitchburg was placed on a different level because of the way that the new formula came forward, and now we are able to be on a level playing field. And if you look at our test scores, you will see that they are going up. And as far as accountability, that is going up.

So I thank the Board, I thank the legislature for Education Reform, and I want you to know that we believe in the high standards, we believe in the testing, and hopefully what we can continue to do is to have high support as far as funding is concerned, because if we have that combination, then we don't have any problems at all of being accountable. So for those who were not here last night, if you would like to see the facility after the meeting, we'd be glad to show you around. And again, thank you for coming here this morning.

MR. WELCH: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Fitchburg High School. On behalf of 1,350 high-school-aged students and a staff of about 94, I welcome you to this wonderful facility. They say that all good things come to those who wait. Well, in Fitchburg we have been waiting for 30 years for this facility to open. And we are very, very pleased not only with the final product, but also, more importantly, with the quality of education that we attempt to produce on a daily basis. We are very, very proud of our young people, our students, their parents, and the community at large. We are deeply concerned with education and we certainly want to thank you folks for coming out to the north central part of the corridor here in Massachusetts to hold this wonderful meeting, and we know that your continued support is going to be appreciated by all of the community members in the Montachusett area. So thanks for coming, enjoy your day, and I will certainly be around to show this wonderful facility off to all of you. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you very much. The principal was bragging last night about what great kids he has, and I have to tell you from a firsthand basis today, meeting the faculty and the students this morning, they certainly are terrific kids. It's a great tribute. And obviously, as Commissioner, I can't take sides, but I do wish you well in the Super Bowl on Saturday at Springfield Central. You are the seven point favorite, so good luck.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Before we move on to the agenda and the public comment which precedes it, I want to make a couple of statements, a couple of notes. One is that there's been some discussion about scheduling our January meeting for the afternoon rather than the morning. We've had some discussion in the past about trying to change the schedule around and accommodate schedules of other people who may be interested in our proceedings who can't come during early morning sessions. We are not going to schedule it at this moment; however, we will in the course of the next couple of days be finding out whether we can schedule our meeting for January 23 for 4:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 a.m. So it would be from 4:00-6:00 or 7:00 p.m. We might also attempt to schedule one of our forums for earlier in that afternoon preceding the meeting so we might be able to begin the meeting at 1:00 and then go all the way through to 6:00. Please

check your schedule to see if that's possible because we'd like to try to schedule an afternoon meeting in January.

Second, I'm appointing today, or actually reappointing, a committee to do the annual performance review of the Commissioner which is an annual task that is also related to his compensation. At the December Board meeting, the committee will report back. Committee members will be myself, Roberta Schaefer and Bill Irwin, and we'll be meeting over the next three weeks in order to complete the review.

And finally, I wanted to make some comments about some relatively recent developments, particularly around MCAS. Since our last meeting, the 2000 MCAS scores have been released and the political debate over high-stakes testing has intensified, yet again. But even though the scores are not yet meeting our expectations and the controversy continues, I remain convinced that we are on the right course.

Over the past three years, there is a pattern of modest, consistent improvement across the grades in both English and math. Since 1998, with the exception of 10th grade English, failure rates were down and scaled scores are up. For now, as important as the data, is the mounting evidence on the ground that standards-based reform is working. In most districts, MCAS -- including the consequences that are attached for students and adults -- is causing schools to broaden and elevate their curriculum for all students. It is giving effective school leaders the information and leverage they need to drive change and improve the quality of instruction. And it is helping school districts confront the structural barriers to reform that for years have stood in the way of educational excellence.

Of course, not everyone sees MCAS the way I do. There is a chorus of critics that believes high-stakes testing is punitive, especially with respect to poor minority students in urban districts. High stakes are not punitive, if our standards and assessments are fair, as I believe them to be. A high school diploma is not an entitlement. It is something that must be earned through effort and achievement. Moreover, acquiring a diploma is not what education is about. Education is about acquiring knowledge and skill. And it is unfair and I believe unethical to hand young people a piece of paper and tell them they are ready for success when they are not.

The critics, however, say the high failure rates -- especially among minorities -- prove that the test is simply too hard or inherently unfair. To be sure, if you look at percentages only, the picture is not very hopeful. But when you look beyond the percentages to the actual numbers, you will quickly realize that this is a problem we can in fact overcome.

For example, 60 percent of black 10th graders failed this year's English Language Arts test. That translates into just over 2,000 students. The vast majority of these students are concentrated in a relative handful of districts and schools. These districts and schools are receiving substantial sums of new money as part of the state's $40 million targeted MCAS remediation grant program, which, by the way, in this year's budget proposal that is before us today, would be increased to $55 million. In short, we know who these young people are, we know where they go to school, we know what they need help on, and we are providing resources necessary to deliver effective accelerated instruction. We can get these students over the bar as long as we continue to focus our energy on teaching and learning. With that, let me turn it over to the Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of brief comments. First of all, I do want to note that Bill Irwin, a member of the Board, has been selected by the National Association of School Boards of Education to serve on the Governmental Affairs Committee. Bill has given long service representing this Board and was cited at the national meeting this fall in St. Louis for his distinguished service.

Secondly, we did put out an RFR and we have selected the diagnostic assessment for mathematics teachers, ALEKS, which is developed by the University of California at Irvine. It's a diagnostic tool, takes about 90 minutes, although there's no time limit. As soon as we develop the contract with ALEKS we'll be highlighting it and using it as per the Board's policy.

Finally, I just want to mention an E-vent we had. We often talk about Massachusetts being from Williamstown to Provincetown, and in fact our E-vent was an opportunity for school councils across the state to communicate with us technologically. We had literally thousands of people across the state all hooked up at once asking questions and chatting on various issues around reform. This was the first time it's happened in the country, and it was a very successful first start. I think there are some changes that we need to make as well, but I think it's a terrific first opportunity for us to communicate with school councils across the Commonwealth. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I will turn it back to you for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Walsh and Pat Sweitzer of MassPartners

MS. SWEITZER: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner, Members of the Board, it is my honor to introduce formally to you MassPartners, and I'd like to do so by first clarifying a misperception that appeared in The Globe about my work and that of MassPartners being to maintain the status quo. And I will do that by giving a little bit of history about myself and about MassPartners. We are not about maintaining the status quo. For 20 years I have worked in western Massachusetts to improve economic opportunity. From that economic development lens and the entrance of my own children into the Commonwealth's public schools system, I became active in Education Reform. I'm encouraged by what I see in schools today, as you were saying, Mr. Chairman, but I'm disheartened by the battleground that is developing over our children. MassPartners is an effort to collaborate among people and organizations that have historically held oppositional viewpoints, and it's beginning to work. While we do not always agree with each other, these organizations have made a commitment to put aside their differences and to help make Education Reform a success. The members of MassPartners are the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association. We come to you today united in our concern about the educator licensure regulations, and I will turn it over to Ann to talk about the specific concerns.

MS. WALSH: We urge you to delay action on these regulations to allow time to rectify deficiencies within them, problems that could be avoided with a more cohesive review process. When the concept paper for the new regulations was issued, the members of MassPartners together and as individual organizations tried to respond thoughtfully. The intent of the concept paper was right -- to begin a dialogue with people in the field -- but the dialogue is fractured with pieces of information drifting back and forth between the Department and the field. Time and time again, MassPartners has requested opportunities to work with the Department to resolve our different opinions. We found no real give and take, no honest dialogue, and no viable way of collaborating with the Department. We recognize that writing regulations does not require a democratic process. However, we believed that the concept paper was an honest show of interest by the Department and Board to be inclusive.

When the actual draft regulations were issued in April, over 400 comments were submitted, including ours. There was no feedback mechanism that even acknowledged our concerns. We were advised that the action on the proposed regulation is overdue, but the self-imposed schedule is causing them to be insufficient. On November 10, final draft regulations were posted on the DOE website inviting comments within six days. The regulations do not reflect the opinions of those of us who are closest to the children and the schedule

does not permit meaningful dialogue or resolution. We have substantive concerns about these regulations that will impact the foundation of classroom life -- the skills and ability of people who will teach our children and lead our schools. As a parent of three public school children and as the representative of public school parents across the Commonwealth, I urge you to take a step back, to sit down with MassPartners and give thoughtful consideration to these major stakeholders. It is a fair request to delay this vote and chart a new course of collaboration that can reinstate confidence in our state policy and regulatory system.

Steve Gorrie, President, Massachusetts Teachers Association.

MR. GORRIE: For the record, my name is Steve Gorrie, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and as many of you know, I'm not in the habit of making futile suggestions. I don't believe in tilting at windmills. Nevertheless, despite the Chairman's stated intent and the Board's stated intent to vote today on the proposed teacher certification regulations -- and despite the attempt to ignore pleas to delay the vote from virtually every level of the education community -- despite all of this, I still feel compelled to speak on this vital topic. My testimony today may be futile, but the action this Board is about to take will most certainly be futile if the goal is to fulfill the promise of Education Reform and strengthen public education in this state. The proposed regulations will not strengthen our schools. Shortcuts to certification can only weaken our schools by undermining the quality of the teacher corps. I do not think I'm being unduly alarming. What is alarming is lowering entry standards. And what is alarming is mislabeling candidates as fully-licensed educators when they have not earned that status. What is alarming is devaluing the pedagogical skills that teachers depend on for their success in the classroom. And what is alarming is this Board's latest proposal for a Department of Education Performance Assessment that purports to be the equivalent of a master's degree.

The April draft of the proposed regulations created a "district performance assessment" that was also supposed to be the "equivalent" of a master's degree. Districts said then that they did not have the time, money or capacity to create and administer such an assessment with any integrity, and they argued that, in any event, a performance assessment simply cannot be the equivalent of a master's. Now, however, the same Department of Education that failed to provide the guidelines, monitoring systems or anything else to help districts create teacher induction programs -- programs required by law since 1993 -- this same Department of Education wants us to believe that it will soon have up and running its own much more ambitious performance assessment with all the rigor and depth of an advanced university degree program. But what performance assessment? What will it include? How will it be structured? The proposed regulations give no clue, except to say that the performance assessment will be, and I quote, a "performance assessment".

Such lack of specificity coupled with the DOE's dismal track record -- this is truly an alarming situation. So once again, I am asking that this Board postpone its vote. Your final draft has been available on the DOE website for approximately a single week -- over the Thanksgiving holiday, I might add. Posting something on a website, even during a non-holiday week, does not mean it's been disseminated. And even those who did access the document were confronted with 51 pages of text that gave no indications of anything that had been revised from any of the previous drafts. This is no way to conduct the business of public education, and it's no way to strengthen our schools. We ask that you go back to the drawing board. You need to go back to the drawing board and you need to consult with, and listen to, professional educators before you promulgate such regulations. That is the only right thing to do -- and there is still time to do it. Thank you.

Kathleen Kelley, President, Massachusetts Federation of Teachers.

MS. KELLEY: I do protest my three minutes. You've had a break from me for three Board meetings, so I think I should have 12 minutes. But seeing that you're not in a good mood to do that, I'm going to try and

get all I have to say in three minutes. I want to make a statement on behalf of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, whom I represent proudly. And we do join in urging that this Board postpone action on these regulations. Let me state for the record that my organization has never opposed alternative routes to licensure or certification. That's not something we've opposed. Let me also be clear with you that we believe strongly in this Board's ratcheting up the standards and content of subject matter. That's something we proposed in the Teacher Quality paper, it's something we believe in. But let me tell you why I cannot support the current regulations as they exist. There are key elements missing. I believe the document is flawed and incomplete and I think some of the things that you're trying to accomplish will be undermined if you don't take a hard look at what is missing.

Let me make three general comments. First, in seeking flexibility in attracting teachers and bringing teachers into the profession, you really must ensure not only the flexibility, but also rigor. In the proposed routes I do not see the rigor that I think will maintain high standards for teachers coming in by alternative routes. I believe clearly that the performance assessment that's in each of the routes is not identified at all. There are no details, there is nothing that accompanies this document or is part of this document that gives us an understanding that there is going to be a serious, serious performance assessment. And that's a critical issue when you're talking about licensing a teacher to teach children. The equivalency of the master's degree. I don't know what that means, and I think that has to be spelled out. Seminars by approved providers, it's unclear to me what you're talking about in terms of the rigor and the number of hours and the kinds of regulations you will set up to ensure that there is high quality.

And let me just pause and talk about the Route Four induction programs. I am a passionate advocate of strong induction programs. I am so passionate that I'm giving up a couple of weekends to take six of my districts to talk about establishing the kind of induction programs that will make a difference for young teachers, beginning teachers or mid-career professionals going into teaching. But I'm telling you right now, even though some of my districts have had mentoring in existence for a number of years, they are still not equipped and do not have the structures in place to do strong induction programs that would lead to licensure.

The second comment, the balance between content. I've already told you that I am absolutely in favor of high content standards in subject area. I think that is critical. I think that's why I supported -- To me, in these regulations, there isn't a balance, and although my stated view has also been strong that subject matter and content knowledge is important, and I supported the legislature when they were drafting Ed Reform, I do not believe there is a balance in terms of the professional knowledge these teachers need in order to teach. That is more important for alternative route teachers than anywhere else. And I will tell you that the statistics tell me, and I interview beginning teachers consistently, 60 percent of the teachers who come through alternative routes leave the profession within the first five years. 30 percent of the teachers through traditional routes are now leaving teaching through attrition. 15 percent leave after a strong induction program, internship program after they've gone through the traditional route. So there's some evidence that tells us that you've got to have serious support systems for teachers not only in content and subject matter but in the art of teaching that is critical.

And finally, I guess my last comment is I think the Dean's Council has made some very fine comments, as did some of the teachers, and I'm not going to go over those, but one of the things that struck me consistently is that I do not believe that there are standards in this document or in any other document I've seen that really guarantee that we are going to have clear standards to ensure rigor and quality in all of these programs. And that to me is a huge issue when we are talking about teacher licensure. The monitoring and evaluation of the system is unclear. I believe strongly that the people I represent, the people that MassPartners represents, you know, this polarization between those of us who are in the field and you, has got to end. It's got to end because we are in the fight for our lives to make sure that we raise standards for kids. And what I'm saying to you now is we have legitimate concerns, I think this Board should take

them under consideration and look at them very seriously. I think this is a huge issue and I urge the Board to take the time to look at those issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for my two minutes, and I will use my other six the next time.

Annette Lieberman of COMTEC.

MS. LIEBERMAN: I'm speaking for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Teacher Education Consortium, which is an organization representing every state institution that prepares teachers, that includes community colleges, state colleges and state universities. The president, Marcia Horne, who was to address you today is ill and so I'm reading her prepared statement. We have been discussing these new regulations for a long, long time. We meet monthly and the main focus of many of our meetings and conferences has been regulations and our concern for the teachers and students in this Commonwealth. We have made several suggestions to the Department of Education in response to drafts previously circulated. We believe that our recommendations have received serious consideration and have positively impacted on the requirements which now appear in the draft distributed on November 10. This was written in response to that draft. There are, however, some concerns which we hope can be addressed; several of these have emerged as a result of the November 10th draft.

COMTEC members support equivalent requirements for all routes to certification. The routes, as currently specified, are not equitable. They don't really ask for the same knowledge and experience for all teachers. The undergraduate route is highly specified, which is fine, but there's no specificity in background for people coming through alternative routes. COMTEC objects to the definition of the appropriate master's degree. Colleges and universities should be able to design graduate programs which faculty agree are responsive to certificate program areas. Credit requirements and content should not be specified in the regulations. It is recommended that option 4c on page 11, "Completion of an appropriate Master's Degree Program in an education school," be eliminated. Point 4b should be rewritten and state, “Completion of a master's degree in a discipline relevant to the license sought.” And that could be in education or some other field.

COMTEC is pleased that the reading requirements for early childhood, elementary and special education have been significantly strengthened. However, all teachers should be teachers of reading. Middle and secondary educators should be required to complete at least one course with a focus on reading in the content area. There are some additional changes in the November 10 draft of the regulations for early childhood teacher preparation. These include significant additions and deletions in the field of knowledge. These changes strengthen knowledge across the curriculum but weaken the requirements for dealing with children with disabilities and for working with parents and community agencies to meet the needs of all children. I want to add here that in 1993 when the certificate of young childhood / special needs was eliminated, many of those competencies were added to the early childhood and we would like to be sure that they are still in there.

I have two other points. The practicum requirements for the Early Childhood License no longer align with the qualifications of the Office for Child Care Services which require a 150-hour preschool practicum. Our relationship with community colleges is involved in this problem, and it will erode effective articulation to the community college and the state teacher education programs. The practicum experience should be revised to 150 hours at the preschool and 150 hours at kindergarten or grades 1 or 2.

The final point is about preparation of teachers to meet the needs of young children with special needs. Since 1994, this has been met primarily by teachers working in integrated public school settings who hold either pre-K Moderate Special Needs Certificate or Early Childhood Certificate. Neither certificate as outlined in the November 10 regulations provides adequate content knowledge or experience for teachers to work in this unique and essential position. At the very least, the early childhood license should be

included as a possible prerequisite for the teacher of moderate disabilities and special needs. And they are also questioning the elimination of the GRE requirement for the academically gifted or academically advanced specialist. Thank you very much.

Ms. Kharis McLaughlin for Denise Simmons, vice chair of the Cambridge School Committee.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: May I ask permission to speak for Denise. She's sick this morning. I'm very sorry, this is irregular, but I'm sure you will forgive me. My name is Kharis McLaughlin and actually I guess I'm here today as a member of the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee and I'm speaking for Denise Simmons who was to be here this morning, but she's sick. And I'm here to advocate for the 636 restoration to the budget. We are still deeply concerned because we realize that although the State Board of Education is very aware of what kids of color need and the need for integration, we still have not been put back in the budget. We would much rather spend our time educating kids well, thinking about what they need in order to pass the MCAS this year, which will be so important to their lives, and the real access to effective education that is primarily denied them. And so we would like to ask you to still think about putting it back in your budget. It is important to us.

When I looked at the budget last month when I was here, my estimate was when we talk about ethnopolitical funding for kids of color, it only covers about 1 percent of the budget. And that includes both METCO and the 636 funds. And so I think it's not too much to ask that you reconsider your position on 636 funding. This year has been extraordinarily difficult. We have continued to do the work necessary, we have kept our parent information centers open so that parents can get the information they need to make good choices for their children. I know in the case of Cambridge we actually had to make a loan to make sure that that work would continue, we had to make a loan for I think $376,000. That's difficult. It doesn't sound like a whole lot of money, but when you think about the services that we would lose if it were actually to fold because it wasn't funded, it would be a real disservice to the parents. We have parents in Cambridge who are immigrant parents, they are just coming here, and they are not sure about which educational program is the best for their children. There is also the real issue around access. We have schools in Cambridge that were created so that kids could be educated effectively and creatively, and what we want to ensure and what we try to do each day is to make sure that there is a real balance in that program in that programs are not absorbed just by people who have the means, who have the money, who have an education to make very good decisions. What we want to make sure is that all kids in Cambridge have access to good, equitable education.

And so Commissioner, and Chairman of the Board, and State Board of Education, I really do appeal to you to reconsider the process of last year and to restore these funds so that all kids are provided equitable education. I would really like to believe that you could take out these funds, that there would be no need to even think about funding of this type, and that equal education would be assured. But really, I've thought about this a long time, and I really believe that so much is dependent on who sits in a particular chair. Right now in Cambridge we have a very good superintendent, we have a good school committee. I think that we have a wonderful Board of Education, and Commissioner, I think you know that I think highest of you. And I believe right now people are certain about what they need to do. I don't think this country has progressed enough that we can say that people who have less means will have access to everything that they need. I would like to think that we are years away from inequity, and I think in many ways we are. I know in my own life, I'm certain that I have had wonderful, wonderful access and that my life is so much different than that of my mother, grandmothers or great grandmothers. So education has been the leg up. And what I'm hoping is that you will consider and put the money back into the budget. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just a technical note, which is not clear in the materials. In the Chapter 70 line item, we have restored $6.6 million of the 636 funds specifically to fully fund the parent information centers.

Again, it is in the Chapter 70 line item but is a separate line item. Those funds have been restored in the budget, of course, today.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: We appreciate that. What we are asking for is full restoration of funds. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Janet Stetson, Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

MS. STETSON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commissioner, and Members of the Board of Education. Thank you very much for this opportunity. The Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education will be addressing two of eight concerns included in our letter of response to proposed changes in teacher certification regulations. And also a petition which has been circulated at the MACTE conference November 3, 2000 by our member colleges and universities.

Our first concern is equivalent levels of regulation. MACTE urges that the Board adopt equivalent levels of regulation for all programs in the program approval process and across all elements of certification such as requirements for coursework, course content, majors and degree requirements. For example, the proposed regulations include coursework requirements related to curriculum framework topics for Route One candidates for the elementary certificate that are not included for Routes Two through Five candidates. We believe that this proposal is not equitable and represents undue interference in the internal governance procedures of the diverse colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. These institutions should have a right to decide the best way to prepare teacher candidates at their institutions. External evaluations of such factors as performance on the Massachusetts Educators Certification Tests, program approval by the Massachusetts Department of Education, national accreditation, employment of graduates, the satisfaction of employers, and the learning of students they are prepared to teach are sufficient for judging the quality of the preparation of Route One candidates.

MACTE also urges the Board to adopt equivalent clock hours of practica and equivalent requirements for pedagogical knowledge across all routes. Student teaching at any age level and for any subject area should provide sufficient opportunity to practice under the supervision of an experienced teacher in that field and at that level. Unless there is research to the contrary, practicum requirements for all certificates should be at least 300 clock hours. Furthermore, teachers of older students as well as those who teach younger children should understand child and adolescent development, and this topic should be included in the requirements for their licenses.

Our second concern refers to inequity. MACTE strongly recommends that Massachusetts teacher certification regulations address the need for candidates to demonstrate a knowledge of the rights of all students, despite differences in race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic class, culture, language, or disability, to a safe, encouraging environment in which to learn. This issue should be addressed in the Equity standard of the Professional Standards for Teachers and the Professional Standards for Administrators. We also believe that a commitment to these students should be included in the Purpose and Authority section of the regulations, 7.01(1). Safeguards for students who have had difficulty learning in the past are included in the present teacher certification regulations, and omitting these safeguards from new regulations at a time when MCAS scores and dropout rates for minority students are reasons for concern is very unwise.

MACTE encourages the Board to move the statements "Encourages all students to believe that effort is a key to achievement" from the Promotes Equity section of the Professional Standards for Teachers and "Fosters understanding that effort is a key factor in achievement" from the Equity section of the Professional Standards for Administrators to more appropriate sections of the standards that govern effective instructional practices that foster academic excellent. These statements do, indeed, apply to all students and

are not particularly relevant to students who may already be working especially hard to overcome educational disadvantages resulting from disabilities or discrimination. These students instead need the protection of strong teacher certification regulations. Thank you for the opportunity to present some of our concerns at today's meeting.

Dr. Karla Brooks-Baehr, superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools.

DR. BROOKS-BAEHR: Good morning. Commissioner Driscoll, Chairman of the Board, Members of the Board, I thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. I come here with 30 years of experience in education in Massachusetts. I was a teacher in Methuen and Arlington, a central office administrator for curriculum in Franklin, the superintendent of schools in Wellesley and Lexington, a member of the graduate faculty at Lesley College, and starting this past July as superintendent of schools in Lowell. So I bring the perspective of the suburban districts, the middle class communities, to my work in an urban district, and this morning I want to talk about 636 funding for fiscal year 2002 and beyond.

School systems that have entered into agreements with the Department of Education, as Lowell did in 1987, to operate under voluntary desegregation and education improvement plans face a challenge that other school systems in Massachusetts do not confront: large-scale linguistic, ethnic and racial diversity. For those, like Lowell, that committed to implement centralized, controlled choice school assignment plans, Chapter 636 has been a lifeline which has provided the funding to establish and sustain the parent information, student registration, and school assignment services without which a centralized controlled choice plan could not exist. It is the parent information centers, supported by Chapter 636 grant monies, that I want to highlight here. In Lowell today 12,000 students choose from among 20 elementary and nine middle school programs housed in 26 different facilities. Lowell's parent information center, housed in a convenient downtown location adjacent to the system’s transportation, early childhood, special education and bilingual education offices, registers more than 7,000 students annually in prekindergarten through grade 8. As a result of the center's effectiveness, and in spite of high transience, the enrollment of every school in Lowell now reflects the city's minority population within plus or minus 10 percent. The center's multilingual staff helps our many limited English proficient families to make wise choices to meet their children's needs. Four of every eight students in Lowell speak a language other than English in their homes. One-third of these students are enrolled in transitional bilingual education programs; the remainder are in mainstream classes, many with E.S.L. support. Without the parent information center, Lowell could not be in compliance with the state's Racial Imbalance Law and Lowell would not be taking this essential step to assure equal access for all students.

Suburban districts do not have to offer this kind of service, nor do they have to provide these services to such a large proportion of their families. Only desegregated districts, the 22 districts supported by Chapter 636, do. If Chapter 636 funding for Lowell's parent information center is terminated, Lowell will have to continue to run the center. We will not have a choice. Other services, primarily direct teaching resources that are just now beginning to catch up with our suburban neighbors, will have to be cut from the local budget to pay for the center next year and in the years ahead. I applaud you and ask that you preserve in the Department's fiscal year 2002 budget request a separate revenue stream to sustain this essential service. Thank you.

Professor Barbara Beatty, chair of the education department for Wellesley College

MS. BEATTY: Good morning, Mr. Commissioner, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board. I speak as a preparer of teachers and as an associate professor and chair of the education department at Wellesley College. Wellesley offers undergraduate preparation in elementary education for Harvard University and for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as well. I'd also like to add that I taught in the Boston Public Schools, was a private school principal, and have been a teacher educator for more than 25 years.

I'm here today to speak about section 7.051(b) of the subject matter preparation for the undergraduate elementary license. Since I have provided you with prior written testimony which discusses these issues in more detail, I will limit my remarks to two main points. First, I'm concerned that the new regulations will make it harder for students at institutions like Wellesley, which provide rigorous academic preparation in the liberal arts, to become elementary school teachers. Second, I'm concerned that the new regulations may lower the quality of the pool of elementary school teachers in the Commonwealth generally.

At the outset, I want to state that I strongly support the desire of the Board and the Commissioner to improve the quality of teacher preparation and I want to commend Commissioner Driscoll who has gone out of his way to personally respond to my concerns. The Commissioner's commitment to increasing the quality of public education for all children in Massachusetts is admirable. I also understand and strongly support the need for ensuring that elementary school teachers are knowledgeable about the subject matter outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. I know from experience, however, that the amount of content the regulations specify which must be acquired through regular coursework will make it very difficult for many students at Wellesley to become elementary school teachers.

The number of specified courses, the fact that many liberal arts colleges do not offer courses in all of these subjects, and the timing of when students make decisions about their coursework and vocations, are all problematic. Students will have great difficulty fitting these specified courses into their already crowded course of study and still have room for the courses required by their majors, language requirements and electives. We do not offer a course in geography, for instance, nor is it likely we could do so on a regular basis. At Wellesley and at many similar institutions, students typically select their academic majors at the end of their sophomore year when they have already completed half of their coursework. They then make their vocational decisions. Since many of these students may not have chosen exactly the right courses to cover the required content, and they no longer have the time to do so in their remaining two years, we need to find some mechanism for providing more flexibility within the undergraduate program without sacrificing content, allowing for appropriately documented, individually designed, independent study courses and workshops to provide this flexibility.

I have never spoken at a Board meeting before, unlike the speaker before. My other more general concern is this level of content specification may discourage students from institutions like Wellesley from going into elementary education when middle or high school teaching requires much less specified coursework, while the new regulations allow for alternative postgraduate 3 course routes to certification which may be necessary due to the shortage of critical teachers of science and other subjects. The proposed regulations may have the undesired effect of lowering the quality of the pool of elementary teachers the Commonwealth, some of whom may go on to be education leaders. I therefore urge that the Board consider changing the wording of section 7.051(b) to read, and here I have changed it a bit for the elementary license, "the equivalent of at least 36 semester hours of upper and lower level arts and science courses or documented independent study courses or coursework covering composition in the other subjects." This wording or something to this effect would supply a modicum of flexibility, perhaps, in a liberal arts setting while maintaining the intent of the new regulations.

I strongly believe, as I'm sure the Commissioner and the Board do as well, that it is in the best interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth to encourage as many academically well-prepared students as possible to become elementary school teachers. I hope that teacher educators and state education officials can find ways to work together more collaboratively to achieve this important goal

Bailey Jackson of the Commonwealth Education Dean's Council

MR. JACKSON: Commissioner Driscoll, Mr. Chairman, Board Members. Based on the most recent version and in anticipation of your vote on the proposed regulations, the Commonwealth Education Dean's

Council has asked that the following points be noted:

1) We still need to strive for quality preparation of teachers to teach our socially and culturally diverse students. The current diversity of children in our classrooms and the trend of increased diversity of backgrounds is a critical areas for the regulations to reflect. We have previously offered suggestions as to how to do this and we remain interested in helping to develop this area of the regulations.
2) All routes to teacher licensure should have a uniform level of performance assessment. We applaud the Department's attempt to articulate performance assessment standards for the alternative routes through initial teacher licensure. We strongly believe that the end result of this work should be an assessment that is as rigorous for the alternate routes as those for traditional teacher education programs under Route One.
3) The implementation period for the new regulations should allow time for the development of newly required tests.
4) For the elementary license, competence in appropriate academic subject matter preparation should not require specific individual courses. I won't go into all of the details on a couple of these because you have this submitted to you in writing. And the last point I want to make, or next to the last, actually, will request clarification on whether licensure for teachers of students with moderate special needs will be possible at the undergraduate level.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you further. In the meantime, because the draft regulations are continuing to evolve, we urge you to postpone the date for voting on them until these discussions have occurred. These revised regulations will have a far-reaching impact on teaching and learning in the Commonwealth. It is worth taking the time to ensure that we maximize the benefits and minimize any unintended consequences arising from this process. I yield the balance of my time to your wonderful deliberations. How about that?

Pam Hulme, chair of the Framingham School Committee

MS. HULME: Good morning. My name is Pam Hulme. I'm chair of the Framingham School Committee. I'm here this morning to talk about the importance of including funding for Chapter 636 in the state budget for fiscal year 02. Framingham is a town of approximately 65,000 people. Our demography almost exactly duplicates the racial/ethnic makeup and economic diversity of the country as a whole. Approximately 10 percent of our population are African Americans, 16 percent are Latino, and 5 percent make up other ethnic minorities. Our students speak 57 different native languages. The income level of our residents covers the spectrum from wealth to poverty.

It is this demographic mix that has caused Framingham to be the focal point of countless research studies, including the world famous Framingham Heart Study. We are not an urban center where school children are overwhelmingly racial and ethnic minorities. And we are not a suburban community whose homogeneity and tax base ensures consistent and high levels of success. We are a combination of suburban and urban characteristics. In many ways, Framingham is a testing ground for whether a diverse society can succeed and can educate all children well. The Framingham School Committee believes that Chapter 636 is an important law and has testified in its support on at least two occasions in the past. And I thank you for the opportunity to do so again today. In the brief time allotted to me this morning, I would like to focus on two points. The first is the continued importance of Chapter 636 to Massachusetts and Framingham's commitment to racial equality. The second is why funding under this law is important to Framingham.

Chapter 636 is Massachusetts' response to the failure of segregated schools to provide children of color with educational opportunities equal to those of white students. That failure is well documented and was the basis of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in Brown versus the School Board of Topeka, Kansas. Over the past 25 years, Chapter 636 has played a vital role in changing the educational landscape for children of color in Massachusetts. In Framingham, Chapter 636 is the cornerstone of a comprehensive commitment not only

to provide all of our children with comparable educational levels, but also to ensure that all of our children achieve at comparable levels, graduate at comparable rates, and continue on to higher education in comparable numbers. Some have argued that racially integrated schools should no longer be a policy interest of the state. We could not disagree more. Without public policies such as Chapter 636 and the financial support this law provides, the schools in Framingham and other diverse communities will become segregated and racially isolated. Resegregated schools cannot be the public policy interest of the state. It is imperative that the state of Massachusetts continues its support for the 22 communities with Chapter 636 initiatives. These communities are educating over 70 percent of the state's racial/minority children and more than 85 percent of our children with limited English proficiency. The recent MCAS results make it abundantly clear that continued attention to the educational needs of our minority students is critical.

Another argument you may have heard is that Chapter 636 funds go to urban districts that have received a significant infusion of new dollars under Education Reform. This is not true for our community. Framingham receives no foundation aid. Our financial gains from Education Reform have consisted largely of dollars to restore the level of state aid we received back in 1988 and dollars to offset the growth in Special Education costs since 1993. The modest amount Framingham receives under Chapter 636 has been critical to our efforts to improve the education of minority students. An important part of that effort is the Parent Information and Resource Center. Without Chapter 636 funds, it would not be possible for Framingham to maintain this valuable resource for our parent community.

Some theorists have suggested that the critical issue is poverty and not race. Clearly, poverty represents a special challenge for our schools. Framingham would welcome state funding to assist us in dealing with that challenge. To suggest, however, that race is no longer an important factor is to ignore the mountain of evidence that race continues to matter, including recent studies by the United States Department of State, the Educational Testing Service, and Massachusetts' own data from the MCAS. It also ignores the importance of children learning together with peers from other races, cultures and ethnic background. The global marketplace is shrinking rapidly and the ability of people to work is an important skill for success. Framingham's rich diversity is the strength of our community and a source of pride. The Framingham schools welcome the challenge of ensuring that all children have comparable educational opportunities and that those opportunities result incomparable levels of achievement. I'm here today to tell you that we need help from the state. We need the state to demonstrate a strong commitment to all children and to support that commitment by including funding for Chapter 636 in the fiscal year 02 budget.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'd like to move as quickly as possible on to the business part of the agenda. The first item is the approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 24, 2000 Regular meeting.

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

FY 2002 BUDGET PROPOSAL – Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Jeff Wulfson is joining us. Just a couple of quick comments about budgets generally, and this one in particular. Ultimately, developing budgets is about setting priorities and making choices, and without question the top priority has been and must continue to be fully funding our longstanding commitment to the foundation formula and school building assistance. In order to keep those commitments, we have to trim other parts of the budget. And at the same time, while we are trying to

maintain a balance in the discretionary parts of the budget, we have also tried to rationalize parts, various line items, by consolidating closely related line items together affording greater flexibility to direct funds to the most effective programs and in order to reduce administrative overhead.

In the memo in the Board packet, on the first page, there is a list of about eight or ten items where we are actually increasing discretionary spending. We are increasing support for MCAS remediation programs, but through the consolidation of the MCAS remediation grant program with after school grant program plus the addition of $5 million. We are adding $4 million to the student assessment line item which is necessary to fund the additional testing that is going on as part of retesting activity, part of the course assessment activity, and part of the general work that needs to be done in order to ensure a complete and fair MCAS program. We are adding $1.2 million for stipends for the students who received Koplik Certificates of Mastery; $2 million for administration of school building assistance which is necessary to accommodate the changes in statute and regulation; $5 million to allow early implementation of a new special education assistance program which is called the "circuit breaker" program, which is to essentially provide additional aid to compensate for unexpected increases or spikes in their special education budgets.

We're also adding funds of about $750,000 for academically advanced students which includes AP, gifted and talented, and dual enrollment programs, and adding $500,000 to begin a program evaluation unit within the Office of Academic Affairs and Planning, a proposal which we made last year that was not funded. Again, as I mentioned earlier, we were also restoring $6.6 million to the Chapter 70 account to fully fund the parent information centers under the Chapter 636 program. I'll turn to the Commissioner for any additional comments.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I would like to acknowledge the tremendous effort personally on the part of the Chairman. We worked closely with Administration this year and they gave us a target that we had to meet, and the Chairman is being modest in going over these recommendations as if it were very easy. There was a commitment made that we would spend or budget additional dollars in such areas as the Certificate of Mastery, which goes out to students; in such areas as the circuit breaker in special education, which we really don't have an obligation to do under the law. That is supposed to kick in next year. The Chairman stuck to his guns with respect to additional funds which are going out either to districts or to students, and that meant that we had to make reductions elsewhere. It was not easy, and we are fortunate here in the Commonwealth to receive and continue to receive significant additional funds, but I wanted to make note that we have met the target established by Administration which meant we had to make some cuts in order to maintain these programs and to add MCAS remediation in other places which are going to help districts and students. In order to do that, and it was not easy, the Chairman was very helpful in his leadership work with the Administration.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One other comment I will make also as it relates to some of the discussion that is already taking place around the certification regulations, in particular the induction programs: there is a note in your memo on the second page which talks about an effort to secure an initial $10 million supplemental appropriation during this fiscal year as a final payment into the educator quality endowment fund, which will in turn be used to fund, on an ongoing basis, the educator mentoring program which had previously been included in our budget in a separate line item. The intent was to do the supplemental appropriation and fund it down rather than through annual appropriations. Any other comments or questions from Board members?

DR. DELATTRE: Mr. Chairman, as you know, I continue to believe that we need in the Office of Academic Affairs the subject matter scholars, qualified teachers, and consultants so that we can keep faith with the public in the preparation of MCAS items, the revision of frameworks, the review of teacher testing and

teacher certification and the like. I don't see anything here to cover that either in a line item having to do with a program evaluation unit or in the gross total for administrative budget for the Department. Am I to understand that that's not being sought?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No. Part of the $500,000 would support the addition of either contractors or employees of scholars who would be used in the continuing revision and review of frameworks and the development of the standards. In addition to that, as part of the assessment line item, we do have funds in there as we did in last year's budget request to fund positions within the assessment office that will allow us to have more direct oversight and involvement in the development of the tests themselves. That did not get funded during the last budget cycle. We certainly felt that it would be this time, but certainly not only the issue formally but the funds that are being requested as a carryover, essentially, from last year's budget request would be sufficient, I believe, to fund the program within the assessment office to provide greater oversight in the process. It's in the minutes. Maybe I will extract it and write a letter.

DR. GILL: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you and the Commissioner for the work you have done in reinstating parent information centers. As Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education, I'm fully cognizant of how difficult it is to come within the budget that's been set for us by the Administration. I think the parent information centers are very important not only for the original purpose for which they were identified, but also for the work you're doing today, to try to help students in these areas with MCAS remediation issues. And I think this was a very important reinstatement of funds.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I just want to echo and underline your comments about some of the multiple or additional uses that could be made of parent information centers, because one of the things that's obviously of great importance right now, especially in these communities receiving these funds, is that the provision of the kind of remedial or accelerated services that these students need in order to achieve at levels appropriate to get over the MCAS hurdle, certainly these information centers could be used for that purpose as well, and we hope that they would be.

MS. KELMAN: I have a couple of questions. One is: Are we level funding the METCO program again?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes. It increased, I believe, about $3 million last year and we are proposing to level fund it for the FY 2002 year.

MS. KELMAN: Is there any sort of plan in the future? Because I know it was level funded for a large number of years. Is there a trend towards doing that again or will we be looking towards increasing the funding in future years?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My position on this, and I think at least implicitly the position of the Board, in the past has been that we need to reevaluate METCO not only in terms of funding levels but also in terms of the funding mechanism itself. I know there have been some discussions about trying to understand the extent to which METCO should or should not be integrated with the funding mechanisms that apply to the inner districts, school choice program, the extent to which transportation funds should be segregated from essentially tuition payment funds. All of those things need to be explored as well as just a general program evaluation, an independent program evaluation of METCO to provide a level of accountability which I think the Board members, at least, have not been entirely satisfied with. I'm prepared to support higher levels of funding for the program in the context of evaluation, but in the absence, I don't feel it's appropriate to do more than we did in the past.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Jeff, did we make a change in the counting of students in METCO?

MR. WULFSON: Yes, we did. For many years METCO students were not counted in the foundation budget for either the sending or the receiving district. A couple of years ago we started counting them for the receiving district, which means they are eligible in most cases to receive minimum aid for those students.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think both for the sending and receiving.

MR. WULFSON: Just receiving.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So they do get additional compensation.

MR. WULFSON: Not a lot, but some.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I heard what you said. We have had discussions like this over the last couple years about METCO, and I'm wondering, to support Jody's question, when we would proceed to do what we said we want to do so we can, I should say, reach around. I think we need to move the questions that you put forward.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It is my hope and expectation, we have had these discussions at the Board level in the past, that as part of an evaluation of the budget we actually do a program evaluation of METCO and address these issues, and with $500,000, it's sufficient to allow us to do that and other educational and programmatic examinations.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Is that in the plan for the coming year, to actually do this? Or next time we have budget conversations will we have what we need?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let's put it this way: It will be. And, obviously, we are dependent in part on receiving the funds to do the evaluation.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think, as she points out, for your benefit and for the people in the audience, for the past few years we have been asking for the money and the legislature has not been giving it to us.

DR. THERNSTROM: At the moment without such an evaluation we have zero, and I mean zero knowledge of the impact of METCO on student achievement, which is of course the central question in any consideration of the level of continuing funding.

MR. BAKER: Are we assuming that we are punting on Chapter 70 distribution?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: On Chapter 70 reform I would say that punting laterally might be the right -- delaying might be the better term. There are several activities underway. Roberta is part of one, the administration is pursuing internally with Administration and Finance another, which are external to the administration efforts underway to evaluate Chapter 70, to look both at whether the aggregate level funding is adequate, and to reexamine the foundation budget formula itself. All of those things are proceeding. We have, as of about a year ago or so, produced a memo outlining some basic principles that could be used in creating a Chapter 70 reform. That's still on the table. I think that will be incorporated when the recommendations do come forward. My point is, we are better off waiting to see what develops and if what develops sort of satisfies us as being appropriate, then it will be. If for some reason this doesn't move forward or moves in a path we don't find acceptable, we might weigh in at that point.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education approve the FY2002 state budget request, and authorize the Commissioner to submit it to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and the Humanities , and the Secretary of Administration and Finance, in accordance with General Laws Chapter 69, § 1A.**

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

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CURRCULUM FRAMEWORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS – Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is revision of the English Language Arts curriculum framework. Sandra Stotsky, Deputy Commissioner, will join us for this.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Mr. Chairman, before we move to the recommendation for the English Language Arts framework, as I think we all know, this is a strong document to begin with. We had very little major public comment when we sent it out. I did put before you some suggestions for copy editing changes, and I would like to include those suggestions in a vote that the Board will take today accepting the framework. It has been, certainly compared to the other frameworks, a nonevent, which is a good thing. I think it's just very well accepted across the board in the field. So Sandra, unless you have anything to add; perhaps Board members?

MS. STOTSKY: I thought I would just ask one of the members of the committee to say a few words because they were very deeply involved in all of the revisions. Let me introduce Lorraine Plasse who is the director of English Language Arts, reading, and maybe a few other things in the Springfield Public Schools this year. And then we have Anne Steel who is from the Shrewsbury Public Schools, and you are the assistant principal for curriculum in the Shrewsbury schools. And Susan Wheltle who has been the staff member in charge of the revised English Language Arts framework. Anne, will you say a few words on behalf of the committee?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I assume Superintendent Roach is shy today. He's spoken enough, I guess.

MS. STEEL: We have all been involved in the assessment committees, all of us who are here, as well as being developers and conduits for the teachers in Massachusetts for this framework. And I think, Commissioner Driscoll, to echo what you have said, we are very proud that this is a stable framework, and that the impetus for the changes that we have been making have been very thoughtful, based on our work with the assessments, our liaisons with the teachers in Massachusetts. And I strongly believe that the changes that you see, specifically with a few of the standards, do reflect our sensitivity to early literacy, which had not been as strong in the original document, all the way through the connections of the standards K-12. And we realize that as we have acknowledged different grade levels, pre-K, K-2, 3-4, 5-6, we are paying attention to what we know is happening in the classroom and hoping that we are building on those standards from the early grades. So I think that I could go on for hours, and that would be most inappropriate, but I do feel that it does represent our sensitivity to what is going on in Massachusetts with English Language Arts.

MS. STOTSKY: Thank you. Let me also just add that I want to extend appreciation to two other key staff members, particularly Holly Handlin and Janet Furey, the sabbatical teachers who have been most helpful in assisting Susan Wheltle in the development, as well as other staff members who have helped out with the early literacy piece in particular, and with all of their work, what was a very fine document to begin with has become in my judgment even better. This is really an excellent English Language Arts document that I think will serve our purposes very well in the state and I'm very pleased to recommend it to you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to add my thanks to the committee. I also want to specifically note Sandra's work in developing not only this framework but going back prior to her days as a state employee in the drafting of the original version of the English Language Arts framework, and I think that consistency of leadership has been helpful in making this process come to such a positive, favorable outcome. So good work to you. Questions from members of the Board?

DR. DELATTRE: I concur this a marvelous framework. My only question is whether the copy editing will include proofreading of the exercises. I note a few typos in there.

MS. STOTSKY: Yes, there will be more copy editing of these documents that take place in the next few weeks.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with Chapter 69, Section 1E of the General Laws, adopt the revised English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and direct the Commissioner to distribute copies to the Joint Committee on Education, Arts and Humanities for their information, and to public schools and other interested parties throughout the Commonwealth for use in improving curriculum and instruction in English Language Arts.**

Further, that the Board extend its appreciation to the Department and to the many individuals and groups statewide that helped revise and strengthen the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework as directed by the Education Reform Act of 1993

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

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS ON EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE (603 CMR 7.00) - Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The next item on the agenda is the revisions to the certification regulations, and I want to preface our discussion with a few remarks. Reform of the educator certification regulations is one of the last major pieces of Education Reform to be put into place. And contrary to the suggestions of some critics that we are rushing this reform, I believe it is long overdue.

It has been seven years since passage of the Education Reform Act, which called for the establishment of alternative, district-based certification paths. It has been five years since the adoption of curriculum frameworks, outlining higher expectations for student knowledge and skill, which in turn has raised expectations for subject-matter knowledge and skill on the part of teachers. It has been two years since the Board of Higher Education recommended the establishment of new accountability measures for teacher preparation programs. And it has been one year since a discussion draft of these regulations was released for public consideration.

This last point deserves a bit more comment. Our standard operating procedure is to draft regulations, release them for a two- to three-month comment period, and then bring them back to the Board for final adoption. In this case, given the complexity and magnitude of the undertaking, we released a concept paper last December and draft regulations in April, allowing a full six months for formal comment. In addition to the public discussions that have taken place at Board of Education meetings, Department staff has also participated in several public discussions on the proposed reforms before the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation -- which, I might add, endorsed most of the major recommendations before us today.

In short, this has been a prolonged and highly open process that has now run its course. All the interested parties have been thoroughly counted and their voices heard. This does not mean that all their suggestions have been incorporated into the document, but there is no reason to believe that further discussion will yield a substantially different outcome. Responsibility for drafting these regulations and making these policy decisions rests squarely with the Department and this Board. We cannot delegate this responsibility to others.

There have been other concerns expressed that in our attempt to strengthen the subject-matter preparation of teachers, we have given short shrift to college-level instruction in pedagogy. I believe this criticism to be overstated. The new regulations for the first time specifically require coursework in the teaching of reading for elementary and middle school teachers. The regulations continue to specify the minimum duration of the practicum for each certificate area. And the regulations state clearly the teaching competencies that will be expected of all teachers, including: the planning of curriculum, the planning and delivery of effective instruction, and classroom management. Seminars or courses covering these areas will be a required part of all teacher preparation programs, including those established for the alternative routes.

More important to keep in mind, however, is the fact that these regulations merely establish a framework. There is much more work that needs to be done to make these recommendations fully operational. Specifically, guidelines must be established for district-based apprenticeship and induction programs. Protocols must be completed for evaluating the performance of student teachers and of practicing teachers at the initial and professional licensure levels. Regional training programs must be developed for alternative-route teachers, and revised protocols for evaluation and approval of teacher preparation programs need to be developed. In addition, as we were discussing during the budget discussions, additional money needs to be made available for the training and deployment of mentors in order to make much of this work possible.

It is through these efforts that we will give meaning and effect to the pedagogical standards that are established in these regulations. The Commissioner and I are both committed to fully engaging the knowledge and experience of practicing educators as we move into this all-important implementation phase. Kathy Kelley, who spoke earlier today, was exactly right. The polarization between the Board and the representatives of the field must end, and I believe this is the place to make a beginning. The document before you today is a dramatic improvement over the status quo and I urge Board members to give it their support.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to defer comment until after we have heard from Sandy, Carol and Ann, and then I will make my few remarks and my recommendation. Sandy, would you like to at least give the broad concepts of what we are trying to accomplish and perhaps some of the issues you know are being raised?

MS. STOTSKY: Of course. Thank you for this opportunity again to provide, just very briefly this time, an outline of what we are trying to do. As we have talked about in the past, what we were doing with this document was a development of what was already in the existing regulations in the 1993 education reform, that we were continuing the development of what will be inherent or spelled out very briefly there: for example, allowing alternate routes to initial licensure. That was already there, district-based as well as education school-based, or other ways of basing the preparation of teachers for initial license. The existing regulations also already allow options to professional license, as we are calling it. It allows the Board of Education and the Commissioner to consider options that they deem equivalent to a master's degree program. What we have done in this document is try to spell out those details a little bit more, knowing full well that there would be guidelines that would then be developed after the regulations were spelled out a little bit more that would allow for the participation of groups in all areas for whatever we needed to do with the particular options as ways to professional license.

The alternative routes I would just like to say a few more words about. We have one route for undergraduates, and I think it is important to keep in mind that all of the other routes are for post-baccalaureate candidates. There is a distinct difference between Route One and all the others, and the questions of whether certain approval criteria can apply equitably to programs that prepare candidates at any level, yes, we clearly have made sure that in our program approval criteria we are going to be using the same criteria across all routes for preparing student teachers for initial license. There are some differences between what one can expect at an undergraduate level and what one does for post-baccalaureate candidates, particularly when today we are trying to attract mid-career-change professionals to come into the field. So these regulations allow that, and these were possibilities that were allowed in the Education Reform Act and in the original regulations that we are revising as of today.

We also are planning to do much more with the performance assessment which I wanted to clarify as taking place at three levels, because it hasn't always been clear that we are talking about a performance assessment for the practicum which will, of necessity, involve all of the preparation program providers, because this will prepare and give the evaluation of pedagogical skills before the prospective teacher gets the initial license. So there is the initial performance assessment with a small P and a small A, to distinguish it from the performance assessment program with capital letters that is the option for professional license. That is one of the options that we have just specified more clearly, even though it was inherent in the earlier body of regulations, and it is one of the three ways that has been recognized nationally for teachers to show growth professionally in their knowledge as teachers to achieve standard or professional license. You can have a master's degree possibly in arts and sciences, a master's degree in an education school, and a performance assessment, and these are considered nationally ways for teachers to demonstrate growth in professional knowledge or skills nationally for achieving professional license. So we are simply making those spelled out and proposing that they will have guidelines certainly for the performance assessment which will have many license areas, probably 41 plus, in which we will have specific criteria developed with the help of those in the field, those in charge of the programs, so that we get the right performance criteria for the music educator, the right performance criteria for the biology teacher, and so forth. All of these will be tailored individually for the performance assessment guidelines that will be spelled out in the future based on what we have in this framework.

I would also like to add one more word about the flexibility that we see also built into the document under program approval criteria. We have tried to make it clear, and this is a continuation of existing policy, that all program providers will continue to have the flexibility to review the prior coursework and work experience of their candidates and waive otherwise required components when designing programs of study for them. This is always the part that program approval will continue to play, so we do already have that flexibility there for those particular principals that may see a need for this. I think that would conclude what I would see as the overview of what we have tried to do here, and I'd simply call attention again to the summary of our responses to public comment, which is the final document in the packet that the Board received, and I know is part of the handouts that have been made available in which we have tried to show how we have addressed many different concerns and issues that arose in the past six months as well as over the course of the year, and why things became the way they did. I don't know whether Ann would like to add a few words, or Carol, but we are here to answer your questions. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you. If I may, Mr. Chairman, I used to pride myself on being a pretty good teacher. I don't know whether I can pull this off in the next five minutes, but it's my intent in the next five minutes to try to clarify what I think is an unfortunate miscommunication and perhaps mistrust. I certainly acknowledge the polarization that is all too prevalent and I agree with the Chairman must stop, and we must begin today. Let me say that we are today where I had hoped we would be, and I'm enthusiastically recommending these regulations, and I acknowledge at least five major concerns raised by people which are absolutely valid.

The first is that there is not a guaranteed equalization of rigor across all of the options. It's absolutely correct. Secondly, there isn't the focus on pedagogy that there should be. I would add it to that particular concern that there isn't enough focus, thought and attention on what do we do to prepare teachers today for what they are going to face. We heard earlier, the city of Framingham, 57 different languages being spoken. So that's very valid. Thirdly, we hear that there isn't the capacity and resources for districts, or for that matter others, who will help with mentoring, induction, performance assessment, and the like.

So how can I say that I'm very happy with what I'm recommending when in fact I acknowledge these three major legitimate concerns? I don't mean to minimize the concern by saying that the answer is simple, but to me it is, and that is: We never intended to address those issues when we developed regulations. I think the process of regulations and the development of regulations is misunderstood.

In the case of the mathematics framework, I may have muddied the waters by trying to go back through and correct what I saw as at least an image or perception if not a process problem. But I'm here today to say that the process with respect to the certification regulations, I believe, was conducted as well as you could expect us to do it. How much more could Peg Wood and Margaret Cassidy and Margaret Regan and Carol Gilbert give? They spent weekends and nights. We put out a concept paper which gave us an extra step, we then put out regulations, and then our job is to take the comments and put them together in such a way that the recommendations come to me and then to the Board. We tried, as they are with the Big Dig, to keep traffic moving while we were building the Big Dig, so we tried to get back to people, we tried to respond, we tried to be responsive, we met with people. Perhaps that is a flawed system that we need to think about, but I have no doubt of the effort on behalf of my people to get back to everyone.

We had about 800 responses to the concept paper. 325 of those were for the business education certificate. Those 800 comments spread across 42 licenses and were about such issues as dance. We could go through the major changes that we made as part of the review across the Board. There were a large number of responses about the major, and psychology as a major, for the elementary license. It makes it sound like there were 800 concerns that we ignored. That's just absolutely not the case. There were major changes made all the way and it was my decision to put the draft on the web on November 10, it wasn't really Thanksgiving, but for the purpose of allowing people to see the last-minute changes. I'm sorry we didn't accompany it with a complete list of where every change was made, but there are only so many hours in the day. And by the way, people knew where to look and frankly they were looking at the elementary coursework and whether we had British literature and all that. It was down to a few issues at that point. So, first of all I defend the process totally. We are always rushed, we didn't have time to do some things which we can do now, but I very much defend the work of the Department people in putting this document together and getting it to the Board.

Secondly, more importantly, is the nature of what we were trying to do. It's the same nature that we had with the special education regulations, the same nature we had with other things that we've done, which is to set the framework. There was no intent on my part to be able to ferret out -- and by the way, I brought 100 copies of these guidelines that we presented at the last Board meeting on performance assessment and induction to show that there had been at least some -- there was never any intent to have the performance assessment fleshed out. There are only two states in the country that have done it, Connecticut and just recently Kansas. It's going to take us, I would bet, two years to get performance assessments in place. We are going to have to pilot test them, we're going to figure out which ones to start with -- are we going to start with elementary and history and English? And, by the way, even in New Jersey that had alternative routes as the law, they never had more than 25 percent come through the alternative routes, and now I think the numbers are in the single digits. So we are talking about a very difficult program to develop and lay out, and we had always intended to involve the field. I think there really is confusion about what it is with respect to the equivalency of the rigor.

I would not expect this Board to accept -- and by the way, I intend as long as I'm Commissioner to bring everything to the Board in terms of the guidelines, after full discussion with the field -- so this Board is not going to be piloting or accepting any kind of performance assessment before there's been plenty of public input. That was always the intent. It was to set the framework and then recognize we need tremendous help from all of the field, both higher education and K-12 teachers. This is a very difficult approach. The easier approach is to leave it to the colleges to establish what the rubrics are. With respect to pedagogy, again -- and by the way, regulations by definition can only take a certain nature. You are not allowed to include in regulations examples and other kinds of guidelines. They specifically restrict extraneous materials. And so here again, what we've done with relation to the purple book, which took seven years, by the way, of work -- I see Sue Freedman here, she gave an awful lot of time to this. If you look at the standards there and look at the standards today, I think you would agree that they are much, much more clearly written today.

What we have to do in pedagogy, and I would agree, if you look at the balance of content and pedagogy, we definitely lean towards content. That is what we could specify at this time. The pedagogy I look at, again, as the framework of those standards to work with people in the field and to develop examples. Now with the Internet, like we can with classroom examples in our frameworks, it's ad infinitum. How you address the diverse needs of our students is the $64,000 question. It's not something you can just simply write down. You can talk about examples, you can try to share things that have worked, et cetera. I do believe that we have been asked all of a sudden to produce more than we ever said we were going to.

What I said is that we were going to present -- and by the way, this process started a year ago when Sandra Stotsky made an initial presentation to the Joint Committee and we talked then about our statutory responsibility. That's what it is, it's our statutory responsibility to establish the equivalent. It's not language we made up; it's in the statute. We talked then about trying to develop a system, looking at other states and trying to design a system that provides, first of all, more rigor, more content for those going through the traditional programs, and the ability for people to come in through alternative ways. I sit here today telling you I want the same rigor for those as well. And so I ask you to try to recognize that this was the first step and we are at the right place for the first step. Delaying it three weeks or six weeks isn't going to be the answer.

What I would ask you to recognize is that I intended to present today the framework, and I do so very strongly. I very strongly recommend these regulations, and then take the personal responsibility, after all it's my job, to come back to this Board within -- you name the time. I'd say sometime around 120 days, sometime in March perhaps, hopefully sitting with members of MassPartners, hopefully sitting with the deans, and recognizing that we have started to build this trust, that the performance assessment was always meant to be developed with the field, that the pedagogical guidelines and examples were always meant to be developed with the field, that the induction programs, all of the various aspects of mentoring. By the way, this is very much tied to the evaluation, as you know, of teachers; that was always the intent. And so I'm worried more, as I think I've stated a number of times, with this trust issue, this communication issue.

I urge the Board of Education to adopt these regulations. I will vow to you that I will work with the field and will report back to this Board in 120 days, and hopefully at that time I will be able to bring with me the major players who will say, Yes, we now feel that we are being listened to, that we can influence and affect and shape and mold all of these options, we can make a difference in making pedagogy more important than it is today. That was always the intent. Maybe I should have been clearer, maybe we need to be clearer on what the process is when we develop regulations, but I stand by the work of this Department, I stand by these recommendations that I think are first rate, and I urge the Board to adopt them.

DR. GILL: Since our meeting last month I have had several conversations with education deans, chief academic officers and presidents, and I would like to thank the Commissioner, Sandra Stotsky and Carol Gilbert for the time that you have taken to listen to my concerns and to those of the higher education community. I recognize that the development of public policy is not an easy one and that it requires compromise, and while I recognize further that all of the issues that have been of concern to the higher education community have not been addressed, I do believe that the most important ones have been, and for this reason I am prepared to vote for these regulations.

One of the things that I did learn in my many discussions was that the Department of Education many years ago had requested that the Commonwealth Education Dean's Council be formed. I also learned that throughout the years this group and the Department of Education have not met on the regular basis that they once did, and I would like to request that the Commissioner work to continue these meetings because I think that they are very important ones for the collaboration that is so needed between the Department of Education and the higher education community.

DR. DELATTRE: Yes, thanks. I think we've made really great progress on the regulations. I intend to vote for them and I will be happy to make a motion for our adoption, if you wish. I have only a couple comments. One is that I'm glad to hear the things that are being said about the future. It seems to me that while we should adopt these and that it's timely to do so, we have to continue the refinement of the regulations. I think your 120 day timetable, Dave, is probably on the mark. When you learn from such people as the head of the program at Wellesley that there may be requirements here that should be refined lest the number of teachers who graduate from Wellesley as elementary teachers be reduced, where there isn't a better teacher preparation program in the world than that one, you have to work on continuing refinements. Nonetheless, it seems to me that we have made great progress in elevating the academic expectations of our teacher preparation programs.

A couple of modest comments: Under Route Five on the candidates who have completed an educator preparation program outside Massachusetts, candidates shall meet a requirement which could be satisfied by having graduated from a program outside the state accredited by NCATE. If you look at the teacher certification test performance in Massachusetts, you will find that there are NCATE-accredited teacher preparation programs whose students have done beautifully, and you will find that there are NCATE-approved programs whose students have done abysmally. Because many liberal arts colleges that prepare teachers don't have a school of education and don't seek NCATE accreditation, it would be much smarter to have this requirement satisfied by graduation from an accredited college or university, and look at the standards of the college within it rather than to insist on the NCATE accreditation of the program. Furthermore, if you look at the NCATE standards that were related on March 31, 2000 called the New NCATE Standards, you will find that intellectually they are spectacularly indefensible.

The only other remarks I would make are that on page 41 under Equity, (c) at the top of the page, number 4, under the Professional Standards for Administrators, "Helps all students see themselves as unique, responsible individuals." That's dangerously ambiguous because sometimes what you have to help a person see is that he or she is an irresponsible individual who is not living up to being a responsible person. The intent is clear; it's just a matter of language. And under (e) on that page, Professional Responsibilities, number 1, it says, "Understands his or her legal and moral responsibilities." I don't think that's a performance standard by itself. Perhaps your experience resembles mine in the sense that I know lots of people who understand their moral responsibilities but seldom live up to them. I'd like something here about, "Understands and fulfills legal and moral responsibilities." I will be happy to make the motion for adoption if you wish it.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I walked in this morning with one question, which is: How will we continue to have opportunities for dialogue between the Department, the Board and stakeholders? And at this point I'm glad

to hear that there will be ongoing conversation to look at the specific components of these regulations, and especially to address issues that are relevant to the components that are now in the works. I'm glad to see that there are copies of the draft of the performance assessment, because I think that these are the kinds of things that people are asking for. Can we see the entire system, can we see the entire picture? I want to support David's notion of 120 days. I want to support Judy's look again at the linkage between K-12 and the Dean's Council, and I would like us to support this and move on to the next phase of what we need to be about.

MR. IRWIN: I'm concerned and I'm concerned in a couple different ways. First off, I feel the regulations are very, very important. Second concern is the polarization that is happening out in the field. It's not only happening out in the field, but when you look at a group, the MassPartners for School Improvement, and look at what that group is made up of, I would never think that all seven of those groups would all sit down at the table together at the same time and agree on a lot of different things. I'm sure they don't agree on everything. So my concerns were specifically towards the issues that they raised. Because it's not just one group that we're talking about. Now, after listening to the Commissioner and his response that there are valid, legitimate concerns out there, of course he said there were five and he said three, so that's kind of fuzzy math to me. But I understand exactly what he is saying. And Commissioner, I am going to support the proposed regulations but with the caveat that I'm going to hold you to your word of coming back here in 120 days after meeting with all these groups and reporting back to us, and not all their concerns naturally, I don't believe that all concerns of everyone could be met, but I think you hit on three of the five major concerns you were going to talk about and I agree with you. So with that, I will support the regulations.

MS. KELMAN: First of all, let me just say that what I'm saying is my own personal opinion, I'm not speaking on behalf of the state Student Advisory Council who have voted to support the regulations. But I feel that we are in a dangerous position of sending very conflicting messages. David, I know you and I have talked about this so you have actually answered a lot of my questions, and you have done an amazing amount of work, but I just fear that we are putting so many undue regulations on existing teachers, so many that I have had my teachers tell me not to become a teacher in Massachusetts because of the regulations the state puts on them, and yet we are making it easier for mid-career people to come into the profession without the kind of tough standards that people who are going through the undergraduate programs and the master's degree programs have to meet. I'm just really worried that we are sending conflicting messages to the profession, that we are increasing the polarization rather than decreasing it, and that maybe -- I mean, if the teachers' unions and MassPartners, if all these groups feel that some sort of delay is necessary, maybe we should listen to them, give it another month and see what they have to say during that time. I know that won't completely alleviate the problems, but it's time to kind of reach out and try and start forming these alliances rather than always being in an adversarial role.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I want to go back to Bill's fuzzy math. I did have five: the equivalence of the rigor, the pedagogy, and then I combined equity, and this issue of making sure the incoming teachers are properly trained with what they are going to face. So that was three. The capacity and resources for districts and others is four. I did fail to mention the fifth one, which is the issue that Ed raised and Barbara Beatty raised, and that is this question of whether or not there's enough flexibility for someone who is, let's say, a psychology major and decides at the end of their sophomore year to become a teacher and have we boxed them in, so to speak, with the 36 hours of -- I might want to change the word to coursework -- in the major areas of mathematics, science, social studies and English? I did want to address that one, Bill. I think it's addressed, but that's why I want to meet with Barbara and others because, as Sandra pointed out, on page 6, we do give sponsoring organizations the authority to have certain waiverability, and we think that that will address that issue. So my fifth one I didn't mention was relatively small in one way, although very large, is this issue, Ed, and I do intend either to come back with recommendations to change the regulations or with the assurance that this does give us what I think we need to be able to handle that situation. So that is my fifth one, Bill.

And finally, Jody, it is the $64,000 question, but it was always meant to be. The alternative pathways can be assumed to be easier because we have not laid out the rigor, and delaying the regulations in my judgment doesn't help that situation at all. What's going to help that situation is sitting down with people and developing, and having an inclusive process that people have faith that the equivalent rigor is there for the alternative pathways. So I agree with your point. I just don't think delaying the vote is going to solve it. What's hopefully going to solve it is us going to work with the field and putting in place the kind of rigor that we are all proud of. If we can't, then there will not be any recommendations to this Board and there will not be any performance assessment established. Our next step is to be assured of that rigor.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would just add, there's no question that procedurally the alternative routes are easier, and obviously they are designed to be that way, otherwise there would not be any alternative route of any substance. The question is, at the outcome end, are we expecting the same level of performance and rigor? I think the answer to that is clearly yes, but that also is the work that yet needs to be done to define exactly how we're going to evaluate teachers who are coming through alternative paths to make sure they are meeting the same level of expectations we have for Route One or traditional route teachers.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, to begin with, I very much appreciate the year of absolutely splendid work that the committee has put in to these proposed regulations, and I also very much appreciate the Commissioner's reassuring words about where we are going from here. Obviously, very legitimate concerns were raised this morning by those who came to testify. The questions they ask need to be answered. I think every member of this Board was listening very carefully to those concerns, and we will demand that there be an appropriate response to them in the 120 days that the Commissioner has talked about. So nobody here is turning a deaf ear on the comments that were made. Again, I found many of them to be legitimate, worthy, and without any question essential to respond to.

It did make me very sad to once again hear Kathy Kelley, whom I enormously respect, and I respect the point as well, to hear her talk about the persistent polarization. We on the Board and the field agree on the most essential issue, and that is that there has got to be better education delivered to our kids in this Commonwealth. I don't think that there is any dissenting voice in the field or, obviously, on this Board from that basic proposition. At the end of the day we have got to have quality education for all kids, all kids in Massachusetts, and I hope, you know, united on that, in that basic commitment, we can walk forward from here and with the Commissioner's help walk forward together. So I'm going to vote for these regulations, again in part because of the Commissioner's reassurance about where we are going from this point on.

DR. SCHAEFER: Thank you. I too would like to echo the thanks to Sandy, Carol and Ann and Peggy Wood and other members of the Department for the work that they have done. I was a member of the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation as was Judy, and Jim, and Ed, and many of the recommendations that came out of that group found their way into this. We spent months agonizing over these issues and I was pleased to see that many of them did find their way into this document. I guess I'd just like to remind us of how we got here in the first place. That Joint Commission was put together after the incredibly high failure rate on the teacher preparation exam and a recognition that it was important that teachers pass at higher levels and that, perhaps, this was in some way another means of saying to us that we needed to raise the level of student achievement. That's what Education Reform is all about. So that's how we got to the place that we are, and I believe that the new regulations will help us toward that goal of ultimately raising the level of student achievement.

I guess I would like to make one final comment. I was somewhat surprised at Professor Beatty's comments about the program at Wellesley -- which is recognized as having a good program, and that I think you said this applies to Harvard and was at Tufts or BC? MIT. That the courses, the kind of material that we are saying should be covered by elementary teachers, those who are going for an elementary license, are not necessarily courses that are incorporated into a liberal arts education at Wellesley or at Harvard, and I was

quite surprised at that. I would think that if you look at the material that we're talking about, I don't think anyone would disagree that those are the kinds of things that a well-educated student coming out of a fine liberal arts college should have. So if they are not there, I would hope that those institutions would rethink the kinds of requirements that they have for their students before they get a BA. I would like to say that I would support these regulations and again thank the Department and the Commissioner for the work that they've done.

MR. BAKER: Thanks, Jim. I actually have a question. It seems to me that one of the questions that we are being asked to consider today is sort of a standard conundrum you come up against all the time when you're making public policy, which is reform versus risk versus reward. I have some idea about what we think the reform and the reward piece is that we are talking about here, and I guess my question would be: What's the risk? What's the exposure? Let's suppose for a minute that it doesn't go according to plan. How are we going to be able to measure and monitor and keep track of what's actually happening to determine if in fact we are achieving or not achieving what we are expecting to be achieving out of these reforms which are designed to accomplish a certain set of objections based on a certain set of assumptions about what we think needs to happen with regard to certification generally? When you think about the down sides, what are the down sides? And how does that calibrate into your thinking about how we are going to keep track of how we are doing beyond and above Dave's 120-day campaign?

MS. STOTSKY: Very good question, and it's a broad question that I hope we will be able to address as part of the work of another one of the areas of my responsibility, which is the research and evaluation piece. We need to be gathering information on how candidates are faring through the alternative routes as opposed to traditional routes, how long they stay as teachers, and we hope to be able to track the people who come through under the new regulations over years so that we could have some way of having some comparative information available on their successful performance, on teacher tests. So there will be a lot of statistical information, possibly followed up by more qualitative information, on these regulations through whatever performance assessment measures and other options work out, how many teachers take the various options, what are the differences among those that take given options on whether they stay in the field. All of these are things that will eventually be tracked as we build up our own data system so that we can have the kind of examination of what are the consequences of policy. But it will take time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Also, just to underscore that point, the Department is well on its way to having a much more sophisticated and comprehensive data collection and warehousing system so that we can actually have information about not only who has been certified, but who's teaching, and other information perhaps around test scores and professional development plans, other sorts of things that would be very useful in understanding the relative performance of teachers in each of these routes and what's going on not in a real-time way, perhaps, but not in a glacial way, how things are changing over time. So I'm encouraged, especially around the capacity of having resources at a research level, but also around having capacity at a data collection level which will make it possible for to us do some real evaluation in this.

DR. THERNSTROM: I agree, and I think in general there is insufficient evaluation of the impact of programs that goes on. We obviously had a funding problem. But I want to make a comment on just one aspect of this, because Kathy Kelley also brought it up when she said, Look, 60 percent of teachers with alternative certifications leave the field after I can't remember how many years.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Five years.

DR. THERNSTROM: Versus 30 percent of those who go through a regular process. How long teachers stay is an interesting question, but preparation may not be the important variable in that story. It may be the work conditions when the teachers actually arrive in the classroom and function in the schools, and

that's a completely separate problem. Any sophisticated evaluation will of course take into account the fact that the preparation alternative versus regular routes may not be the story there.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Just very quickly, I want to point out that there was no speaker today because we resolved those issues. I did hand to you a last comment and addendum, and that, Charlie, has added a list of references from the research showing the relationship between student learning and teacher verbal aptitudes, et cetera. And you know, I think we are very safe on a number of grounds with respect to increasing content, focus on reading, and part of the issue, Abigail, and this is a part of a larger picture, is how much are we preparing teachers for what they are going to see in terms and conditions. That's another whole aspect of our responsibility, it seems to me, but that's for another day, Mr. Chairman.

There are some minor changes that I would like to add, like Ed's comment before, when he threatened to make the motion, saying that he would assume that there would be these minor corrections. I do have two substantive changes and there are four on this page, but one we'll get because we have two motions. One is on the regulations and then there's one on temporary certificates, et cetera. I'd like to ask the Board to include the change in physical education which we changed from all levels to preK-8 and 5-12. We received a lot of input on that. We did, as you can see, add "valid" license and two additional qualifications for the initial license for school nurse, and it really is related to the now ten years that candidates will have to get a provisional certificate with advanced standing under the old system. We are asking that that include a requirement that they submit a plan outlining how they will fulfill those requirements rather than just sit back and have ten years. We really want five years to be renewed with an idea of what they are doing for progress, and that needs to be included on page 47 of the proposed regulations.

If the Board would agree, I would like these three changes to be part of the motion Ed so moved: submitting the plan outlining how the candidate will fulfill the requirements for professional licensure; the change of physical education levels to PreK-8 and 5-12, and the addition of the word “valid” to describe the license needed to practice as a Registered Nurse in Massachusetts, and the two additional requirements for a school nurse of “A minimum of two years of employment as a Registered Nurse in a child health, community health, or other relevant clinical nursing setting, and Completion of an orientation program based on the requirements for delivery of school health services as defined by the Department of Public Health.”

DR. THERNSTROM: It's been seconded.

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 c. 71B, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A section 3, hereby adopt the Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, in place of the current Certification of Educational Personnel Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00. Said Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations have been subject to public comment in 2000 in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Arts, G.L. c. 30A, section 3. Said Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations shall take effect October 1, 2001.**

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Mr. Chairman, if we're going to try to begin the process anew to break the polarization, can I ask everyone here, because you're going to go to work, but could I ask you to join in a round of applause for Margaret Cassidy, Margaret Regan, Peg Wood, and Melanie Winklosky. Thank you.

We have proposed amendments on the temporary certificate, renewal of the provisional certificate with advanced standing, and with that new change we will need to submit a plan. So we need a motion on that, Mr. Chairman. We also included the provision on critical shortage, and also we made some changes to the revocation, suspension, or limitation of certificates.

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 c. 71 section 38G, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A section 3, hereby amend the Certification of Educational Personnel Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, by adding the following provisions which were adopted as emergency regulations on September 26, 2000:**

- **provisions on the temporary certificate (603 CMR 7.01 and 7.02 (2) (d)) and**
- **provision on renewal of the provisional with advanced standing certificate (603 CMR 7.03 (7))**

Further, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, section 1B and c. 71, section 38G, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A section 3, hereby amend the Certification of Educational Personnel Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, by adding the following provisions, as presented by the Commissioner:

- **provision concerning determination of critical shortage (603 CMR 7.03 (2)) and**
- **provisions on suspension, revocation or limitation of certificates (603 CMR 7.02 (17))**

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

CHARTER SCHOOLS

a. Renewal of Charter for Chelmsford Murdoch Middle Charter School – Discussion and Vote

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: First, Mr. Chairman, is the recommendation to approve the renewal of the Murdoch Middle Charter School in Chelmsford. You have received the report and the major questions that were used as a basis for renewal, and I strongly recommend the renewal of the Murdoch Middle Charter School in Chelmsford.

MS. BARKER: As the Commissioner clearly stated, the school's provided evidence that supports it is indeed an academic success, it is a viable organization and it's been faithful to the terms of its charter. That's all I have to add.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only other comment I would add is I think this presents an interesting case study in a school that has attempted to organize itself in an integrated fashion around not central academic themes per se, but some organizational themes that carry over not only through the preliminary but also into the governance structure. This is sort of a systems-thinking, I think is the terminology they use, school which is trying to apply that methodology, again, not only to the way the school operates, but also to the curriculum itself. I think it's a very interesting school design, school model, it deserves further study, and certainly a great deal of praise for the effort that has gone in to creating this unique institution.

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, hereby grant a renewal of a public school charter to the following school for five-year period from July 1, 2001 through June 30 2006, as recommended by the Commissioner.**

<u>Commonwealth Charter School</u>:
Murdoch Middle School, Public Charter School of Chelmsford
Location: Chelmsford

Said charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions 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 Ms. Crutchfield and seconded by Dr. Schaefer. The vote was unanimous.

b. Request to Amend Charters of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School and Francis W. Parker Charter School – Discussion and Vote

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The next motion I believe is Pioneer Valley. The other two motions are matters that were before the Board at the last meeting, and I asked for a month on both of these issues. First is that the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, which was recently renewed by this Board, be allowed to expand its grades, and I so recommend.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I just ask a question? Is there any reason to believe that by increasing the enrollment we're going to bump up against any ceilings, community ceilings?

MS. BARKER: No. They are far enough away from the net school spending cap, and actual increase of enrollment is only for about 20 students.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are there other applications in line that might somehow conflict with this if they were enrolled at full capacity?

MS. BARKER: Depending on whether or not the application is for a regional; we're getting close.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But you're on top of the potential cap issues there.

MS. BARKER: We are.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L.c 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School to expand its total enrollment to 300 students and to expand the grade levels served to grades 7 through 12.**

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would recommend the granting to the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School to be designated as a regional charter school effective July 1, 2001. This matter was before us and I want to be clear I'm making this recommendation for this school and this school only. I intend to take any recommendations to become a regional school on a case-by-case basis. This is a school that has serviced a number of schools from a wide variety of communities and I think they have proven themselves, and their success is the reason they have been able to draw from a broad range. There are issues of transportation because now, under the law with regional schools, we fully reimburse schools, so there can be a financial implication. So I am going to seek legislative change that allows the Commissioner to set a limit as to how much reimbursement we will provide for transportation in the case of

regional schools, because it could get prohibitive and I don't want to put us in that situation. However, I am very confident in this case, there is something consistent with what the Parker School is about. They have clearly identified a reasonable region and I so recommend them.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is it also correct, Commissioner, to say that the school itself and the leadership of the school has agreed to support your legislative efforts to cap the reimbursement for regional Transportation?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes. They have no interest in becoming a regional school just because of a financial transfer. This is not their interest. This is their mission, this is something they have proven since they began, and I think their success speaks for itself and I'm very satisfied that, in this case, this school is doing it for the right reasons and therefore I recommend it.

MS. KELMAN: I'll quickly say that they are one of the only charter schools that sends members to the State Student Advisory Council, so they are to be congratulated on that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We will reimburse them for their transportation.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with General laws chapter 71, section 89 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School to designate it as a regional charter school effective July 1, 2001. The municipalities to comprise the regional district for Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School are the following: Acton, Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Barre, Bedford, Berlin, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Clinton, Concord, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Gardner, Grafton, Groton, Hardwick, Harvard, Holden, Hubbardston, Hudson, Lancaster, Leominster, Lincoln, Littleton, Lowell, Lunenburg, Marlborough, Maynard, New Braintree, New Salem, Newton, Oakham, Orange, Oxford , Paxton, Pepperell, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Shrewsbury, Southbourough, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Templton, Townsend, Tyngsboro, Wayland, Wendell, Westborough, Westford, Westminister, Weston, Winchendon, and Worcester.**

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

c. Report on Atlantis Charter School

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Just the report on the Atlantis School, which it was required by the Board..

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Does anyone have any questions on the Atlantis report? Okay.

PROPOSED REGULATIONS ON USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT FRO STUDENTS (603 CMR 46.00 AND AMENDMENTS TO 603 CMR 18.00) – Discussion and Vote

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Can I ask, Mr. Chairman, that we skip to 6 and 7 which are votes of the Board? Because we're getting late. Then we can have the update on the school performance. Can we next move to the proposed regulations on the use of physical restraints which would be sent out for public comment if approved, which I recommend?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is Marty coming forward on this?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think there was a small change. Item 6, regulations regarding the use of restraint.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I just ask for a clarification? Because I was initially confused about this and maybe I still am. We did adopt some emergency regulations just a month or two months ago on this very area in response to legislative action over the summer amending the special education law. Could you just explain the relationship between these two sets of regulations? Just procedurally, I guess, or mechanically, not substantively.

MS. MITTNACHT: The regulations that we adopted were in section 18, and there are some pieces of those regulations that do refer to restraint, and so you will see in your package you received both the section 46 regulations and suggested changes to the section 18 regulations. The section 18 regulations only refer to the approved special education schools. The section 46 regulations will refer to all publicly funded education programs which would include the approved special education schools. So we would amend the section 18 regulations to be consistent with the section 46 regulations. Given that the section 18 regulations had been adopted as a response to legislative changes, we did discuss this proposed action with the education committee of the legislature, and conceptually they are behind our actions of today, and if they have issues, they are prepared to present them to us during the public comment period.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. One specific question had to do with a topic that we discussed at the last time we went through, which was parental notification. I know there's a section in here on reporting requirements and it does, I believe, discuss the -- it's 46.06(2), Informing Parents: "The school administrator shall verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than two school working days following the use of restraint." I'm curious as to whether that language, which sounds reasonable to me, has been reviewed by any of the parent groups, whether they have had any specific comments about whether they consider that to be adequate notification on the use of restraint.

MS. MITTNACHT: That specific language has not been reviewed, but certainly some parent representatives have seen the language. We haven't received any pointed negative comments at this point. I assume that, again, would be something that we would hear during the public comment period if there are problems.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And again, my reading of it, it does seem to address the concerns I have about the basic spirit of the regulations and the intent to provide parents with timely information about any use of restraints. And, again, this appears to cover that, but I'd be interested in hearing any other comments to the contrary. Other comments?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Just Ed Delattre raised the issue on page 4 of 8, part 2, it says, "As a response to property destruction, verbal threats," so forth, "unless the student's behavior poses a serious threat of injury to self and/or others." It was Ed's view that the word "serious" causes problems, that a threat of injury is enough, so that he would recommend that the word "serious" be deleted. So that it would simply read, "As a response...unless the student's behavior poses a threat of injury to self and/or others."

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Any opposition to that change?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's tough to make a judgment on "serious". A threat is serious, so with that change, we would eliminate that word.

MS. MITTNACHT: Can I ask whether or not you wish to have it eliminated just in 2(b)? Because it is also used in 1(b). Where it says Use of Restraint. The use of physical restraint may be necessary when, "(b) The student's behavior poses a serious threat of injury to self or others." It's used in two places, in essence.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's going out for public comment. I would prefer to take it out, frankly.

MS. MITTNACHT: In both cases?

DR. SCHAEFER: Yes. Ed seemed to think that the document, as he put it, was adjective happy, so maybe it needs to be gone through again.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Obviously we're not the authors of this language. I assume the intent behind it is to provide some comfort to parents and others that physical restraint will not be used blithely and it will only be under circumstances which would warrant it, which would qualify as serious. Having said that, a threat is a threat, and I think it may be --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We need to play with that language.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Perhaps what we should do is delete that in those two places, obviously for review at public comment, and see what kind of reaction we get. Any motion to approve these regulations for public comment?

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 37G and chapter 71B, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, section 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed Physical Restrain Regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 , and on the corresponding proposed amendments to the Regulations Governing Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Special Education School Programs, 603 CMR 18.00, as presented by the Commissioner**

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

APPROVAL OF GRANTS

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Last is approval of grants, school building assistance waiver, and advisory council appointments.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I suppose that's three separate motions. The first is the grants, and there are adult basic education grants, charter school dissemination grants. I guess there are two adult basic education grants and parent-child home program. The total is about $2.3 million. Any questions or comments on these grants?

MR. IRWIN: I just have a question. Are we voting on all three of them?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes. It's up to you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In terms of the education grants, vote on the grant in block. On the school building assistance grant, we'll deal with that separately. Is there a motion on the first set of grants?

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the grants as presented by the Commissioner.

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This was a very unique situation in Somerville where they had several years ago established this Edgerly Early Childhood Center project, and there were a number of concerns, particularly about the environment, so it took a long time. They had to ultimately move the site from the school and eventually got sign off. In fact, they not only got approval of the Department of Environmental Affairs, but they actually added green space, if you will. So during that entire period, of course, there was an increase in the cost due primarily to the delay, and so I'm recommending that the Board approve the maximum allowable cost to increase to $16,474,000.

MR. IRWIN: My question is the net will actually exceed the allowable cost under the regulations.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Without a waiver. In other words, if the standard cost factors were applied, they wouldn't be able to cover the sixteen-and-a-half-million-dollar expense.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Correct. So this is a maximum allowed. I mean, there can't be anymore than that. You've set it at $16,474,000.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to clarify, right now what would they be reimbursed at? The project was approved for $12.7, million meaning that their reimbursement would equal a maximum of $12.7 million?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The project would be approved at that cost.

MR. BAKER: And we would pay whatever our percentage would be.

MR. WULFSON: The $12.7 million was based on the 98 cost factors. Because of delay in the project we would normally recalculate their maximum cost allowance based on the FY02 cost factors when they actually go into construction. So without Board action, the maximum allowable would possibly be somewhere in the fourteen-and-a-half-million-dollar range. So the waiver is for, in effect, about $2 million above what it would otherwise be.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Would that $2 million be borne entirely by the state or is it whatever its percentage reimbursement?

MR. WULFSON: If that's the total project cost, then it would be.

MR. BAKER: Jeff, do you know what the $2 million is for?

MR. WULFSON: Primarily the remediation because of the environmental impact because of the changes they had to make in the design.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the waiver of the cost standards of 603 CMR 38.06, for the following previously authorized project:

Somerville – Edgerly Early Childhood Center

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

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We had some additional changes from last month. We had additional advisory council appointments from last month, which I recommend..

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws Chapter 15, section 1G, hereby appoint, to three-year terms, the ten additional Advisory Council Members as recommended by the Commissioner.**

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

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Back to school panel reviews. I want Juliane to walk us quickly through where we are. This is moving along. Just to remind Board members, we identified eight middle schools and we did an evaluation and initially I declared two of them to be underperforming: the Arlington School in Lawrence and the Lynch School in Holyoke. Two schools were found not to be underperforming at all, I think that's a big story, but it never makes the headlines. Meaning that even though they had low scores, they still had a viable plan and the support systems for the plan. That was a school in Boston and a school in Springfield. There were four schools that we wanted to look at again and give them an opportunity, and in two of those cases I have since declared those schools to be underperforming, that is the Kuss School in Fall River, and the Roosevelt Middle School in New Bedford. So we essentially have four schools declared underperforming, two came on line in the spring, two of whom came on in the fall. Why don't you walk us through what's going to happen with the Board over the next couple of months on those?

MS. DOW: We have two schools that are now preparing their school improvement plans, taking into account the information that was provided to them as a result of the fact-finding visit, and you've all received the fact-finding reports for those two schools, and they are using that material together with local planning. Those plans are due to our office by December 8 and we will be reviewing those. If we deem that they are sufficiently ready to come to the Board at the December meeting, then they are scheduled to be on the agenda for a vote at the December meeting. If we determine that they are really are not yet sufficiently -- haven't progressed to the stage that they really should be considered by the Board, then we'll inform you of that and we'll be asking you to defer action in December for a month if that's necessary. We haven't seen the plans yet so I really can't say what state they'll be in when we receive them.

We have two other schools that, as David said, have more recently been declared underperforming. They are scheduled for fact finding during the month of January, and their plans will come to you in the spring. In the meantime, we'll be starting soon with round 2, if you will, the second year. We'll be doing school performance ratings in December using the recently released MCAS results. That will be our first end-of-cycle report and will then put us in a position to use those results to again determine schools that require a visit in order to determine whether or not the conditions are in place for improvement in those schools. We'll be using the decision grid that was part of the package that was adopted by the Board in September of 1999 when we adopted the accountability system to identify both those schools that should be referred for panel review, and also for the first time to identify a set of schools that should be visited because they have made very strong improvement and have perhaps out-performed demographically similar schools, and we will identify a set of schools to be potential exemplary schools and invite them to be candidates for a new program.

We plan over the winter to spend as much time and energy on that effort of finding exemplary practices and programs and making that information be available to those schools that are still struggling to find the right combination of efforts to bring about needed improvements in their schools. And we're going to be working actively with Mass Insight, they are going to add on to our efforts to determine exemplary progress by doing some more in-depth studies of some of the schools that we identify as potential exemplars, and they will work together with us on the dissemination of that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to underline, again, this last point you made about taking a closer look at exemplary schools or schools that are showing significant progress. I would assume that would include schools that may have started at fairly low base and have improved substantially over the last three years or two years since the original administration of MCAS? This latter point in particular is extremely important because urban schools, schools that have been at least at the outset performing quite poorly, are obviously places where we need to have the most rapid turnaround and where the lessons learned can be most valuable, more so than looking at the highest performing schools in suburban communities which may have excellent practices and worthy of emulation, but may not be able to address the needs of certain schools trying to get over the MCAS hurdle. So I think that's one of the most critical parts of this process, one where we haven't gotten much attention because we haven't been able to do the work, and I applaud your emphasis on that in particular.

I think we are done. There is other material in your Board packet but it doesn't require discussion or votes on our part. Any closing comments or observations any Board members want to make?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just want to compliment the Mayor for hanging in for the entire meeting. I think we should give you PDP's or something.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Does that count towards her next election? With that, we are adjourned.

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