COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
*****REGULAR MEETING*****
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
350 MAIN STREET
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2000
8:3 0 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT:
Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-chair
Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Ms. Jody Kelman, Concord-Carlisle, Chair, Student Advisory Committee
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington

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

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ABSENT: Dr. Judith I. Gill, Boston

ALSO PRESENT: Nancy Catuogno Varallo, Registered Diplomate Reporter

CANDIDATE FOR SUPERINTENDENT OF THE LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS -Interview, Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good morning, everyone. We are going to begin today's meeting with our consideration of the candidate for superintendent of the Lawrence Public Schools. Once we complete the interview we'll have a discussion and a vote, take a break, and proceed with the rest of the meeting as scheduled. Starting off, I first want to welcome Wilfredo LaBoy and thank him for leaving his vacation and coming up for this interview. I would like to turn it over to you, Commissioner, to begin the formal introductions and get us started.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to remind the general public, we have a legal agreement between the Board of Education, the Commissioner's Office, and the Lawrence School Committee that requires that all three parties approve a new superintendent in Lawrence. And the Lawrence School Committee has interviewed and selected Wilfredo LaBoy. Now it's up to me and the Board of Education to interview him and make a decision.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For the sake of our guests, why don't we go around the room and introduce ourselves briefly. No need to describe all of your credentials.

MR. IRWIN: I'm Bill Irwin, Director of the New England Carpenter's Training Fund.

DR. THERNSTROM: I'm Abigail Thernstrom. I'm actually a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute in New York.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm Roberta Schaefer, I'm the Executive Director of the Municipal Research Bureau in Worcester, Massachusetts.

MR. BAKER: Charlie Baker, President of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, which is an HMO here.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: David Driscoll, Commissioner.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Jim Peyser, Executive Director of the Pioneer Institute and Chairman.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Pat Crutchfield, Director of Organizational Development and Human Resources, University of Massachusetts.

DR. DELATTRE: Dean Delattre, I'm a Professor of Philosophy and Dean of Education at Boston University.

MS. KELMAN: Jody Kelman, student member, Concord-Carlisle High School.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I understand you have a brief opening statement you'd like to make; following that we'll begin the questioning. The questioning I will try to structure as informally as possible. We won't go serially around the room, but as people have questions, raise your hand and I'll recognize you.

MR. LaBOY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's indeed a pleasure to visit with you this morning, to have a conversation with you about things I'm sure concern you about the work that must be done in the City of Lawrence. I sit on the hot seat once again. Needless to say, I think it's an important opportunity and I need to have a conversation with our partners at the state level to say how we may jointly turn the tide in the city of Lawrence and give every child a fair opportunity to achieve high standards. So I welcome the opportunity. I'll try to be as forthright and candid as possible.

I'm a product of New York City Public Schools. I'm a native-language speaker and, needless to say, I consider my greatest accomplishment being a school teacher. And so it is in that spirit of mutual concern and collaboration and understanding that I come to you. I think what connects us together today is our relentless commitment to making sure that children throughout the state and particularly the city of Lawrence get a fair opportunity to a fair and basic and equitable education.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you. We have all received the tape. I think we have all had an opportunity to view it, so I would hope we are all starting from somewhere beyond square one in terms of understandings the kinds of experiences you bring to bear and your views on various things. But, certainly, we want to explore those more deeply in this meeting. If I could just start it off by acknowledging that Lawrence is in a somewhat unique situation in Massachusetts and nationally, as well. It is certainly an independent district, but it is one that is operating presently in the context of an agreement between the state and municipality that gives both some role in management affairs and overseeing the operations in the district.

Going beyond the explicit elements of the agreement that was concluded in the context of a court case, there is a letter that we have received dated July 18 from Mayor Dowling of Lawrence which basically says two things. One, it invites the Department of Education to conduct a performance evaluation of the district this fall, and establish a group to work with the superintendent, and to some extent with the School Committee, to ensure that the district is operating smoothly in the best interests of the children. As I said at the outset, it's an unusual kind of relationship between the state and the city and between the superintendent and the Department of Education. How do you feel about that? How comfortable are you working within that context? What do you think some of the real-life challenges are that we ought to be thinking about in trying to make this thing work?

MR. LaBOY: As you probably know, I come from a very unusual city-- New York City. New York City as many of you may know around the table, is really a federation of 32 districts that operates under one school district, the New York City School District. Reviewing accountability down to our partners at the central board is an ongoing way of life in New York City Public Schools. That means conversations with Chancellor Ruiz, the leader of the system, and with school districts in terms of partnerships and how we better serve children individually within districts. So I think in some ways there are similarities in that there's public engagement, accountability where the central administration has day-to-day talk about how we are doing for kids. Obviously, I knew that would be the case in Lawrence. When I was first contacted for the job, I was told of this very unique relationship with the state. Honestly, if I had any reservations about that, I probably would not have initiated any conversations around the possibility of becoming the superintendent of the City of Lawrence. I'm comfortable with that. I'm not familiar with the particulars of the letter of July 18, but I welcome the opportunity to serve as a partner. I think that this relationship can only strengthen and can only better what we can do for children in the City of Lawrence. I'm not uncomfortable with that relationship. I'm sure that the other part of that is that at no point will the Board of Education or its Commissioner try to micromanage what we are doing. I think what they really want to be is partners and I have no problem with that at all. In my initial conversation with the screening committee I was very aware of it, and at the second level of interview. I look forward to the possibility of galvanizing support and partnership at the state level.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me ask one more question, then I will open it up to the rest of the Board. You said during the taped interview with the Lawrence School Committee a couple of weeks ago, and the quote I wrote down, "It is my job is to be a principal developer," and that's P-A-L as opposed to P-L-E. Given the fact that the bulk of your experience is in some way, shape, or form related to central office as opposed to in schools per se, how effective do you think can you be in that role? Perhaps more specifically, what methods and criteria will you use to evaluate the effectiveness of principals?

MR. LaBOY: The primary role of the principal is to be instructional and moral leader in school. And everything that the principal does must be looked at through the eyes of improving instruction for children in the school. That's a fundamental criterion. Principals must ask: How are we doing? Is the teaching connected to the learning? What are we doing at the schoolhouse that makes the school better for kids every single day? And he or she attests to the moral competence for that school under the imperative that we will leave no child behind. I think professionally there has to be a framing around some theory in research, how we do in schools. So I think principals have to be very holistic and balanced people in those three domains: instructional leadership, professional leadership, and moral leadership. I have worked as an interim principal at a school in East Harlem. I know what good schools are all about. You don't have to walk too long and too hard in a school hall to know what good work is going on. So that's important.

The role of the district is really to develop good principals, but that's not the role of the district alone. The superintendents' job is to be the person who develops good principals because, as Ron Emmons said very clearly, "There are no good schools with bad principals." And that's what this is about and I think the district has to have a primary role. We can do that through professional development, through conversations about schools and how we are doing, site visits to schools, site principal performance review. There are many ways we can get that task accomplished. But primarily, when I said I was a principal developer, that means that my job as a superintendent is to make sure that my colleagues, the principals in the field, run good schools for kids, and the district has to have an intricate part of that. And everything we do at the district level has to be with the focus: Who is helping principals run their schools better, and how are schools doing better by work we are doing at the district office?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Just to build on that, could you describe with some detail what you've done in the case of a principal to help that person develop professionally, to help bring their learning, their professional development experience back into the school. And, what happened as a result of your intervention?

MR. LaBOY: Absolutely. One of the things in the current district I serve in is instructional leadership conferences every month. For too long, many of those conferences looked at the administrative work; we spent time talking a lot about administration. One of the things that we did is to get administrative matters out of the way. The principals' conferences are for learning, there's an agenda for learning together, we invite experts outside of the district to have conversations with us about instruction and good practices. We have networked together so there's a principal support group. We have connected them to outside consultants, learning together, and visitations school to school. We feel principals can benefit from the kind of learning we have developed in the district principal networks where principals go to each other's schools. We have also connected what we believe are strong principals and good principals to principals who are young and starting. So those are the kind of initiatives that we have taken at the current district that I'm at presently.

MR. IRWIN: Good morning. I'm going to take a little different tack here. What role do you see technology playing in education in Lawrence for both -- and there are going to be two parts of this question -- first for the students and second for the teachers and administrators.

MR. LaBOY: Well, you know, as much as we like to believe that our schools are up to par in technology, in many ways we are still a paper-and-pen generation when it comes to educational technology. That doesn't necessarily mean that that's the way it should be. I think it's an important part. I think technology can be used in moving the curriculum into the day-to-day operation of the school. I think for too long -- and I come from a school system where we had computer labs away from instruction in some room where kids would have to take turns at working at computers and in having instructional computer literacy. I believe it belongs in the classroom. I think we need to dismantle those labs, put them in the classroom, and of course build the capacity for professional development with teachers to help them learn how to do that. One of the things I have been intricately involved in is with the Education Development Corporation, EDC, that has worked here in Boston. It has done work with us in assistive technology to help teachers use technology in the classroom, to help kids with special needs as well as the general population. So I think it can be an intricate part if it moves instruction forward, and there's wonderful software, there's enough work being

done in the field that it can lend itself naturally. But, of course, the magic is always to put the computer on and build the teacher capacity to be able to do that.

DR. THERNSTROM: You've talked very vaguely about what good schools look like, and there are some in New York. You've said that principals have to be instructional and moral leaders. I'd love you to put a little meat on those bones. What specifically are you looking for when you walk into a school? What specifically would you like to see? What are the messages that principals deliver to their staff that you think are absolutely integral to good teaching? Is there a uniform message? Are there a variety of possible messages that all fall under the category of good educational practice and are there some bottom lines that for you are very important? I'd like you to kind of flesh out what you alluded to before.

MR. LaBOY: I'd like to start with the first premise I always tell people. If you don't know how schools are doing and what is going on, look to the kids, they'll tell you. I think one of the things that fundamentally you have to look at is how the students are engaged in their learning. How they are engaged in their learning. When you walk through schools, how is it that the school celebrates learning? If you walk into a classroom, you look at what kind of literacy assessments they have. What are the charts? What are the leveling of books? If we are talking about literacy, how do teachers engage in making those assessments? If it's a standard-space room, what is the evidence of good work? What are the descriptions around those standards? What are the outcomes of those standards?

I look, in general, as I walk-through, for how the environment is connected to the day-to-day learning of kids whether it's in literacy, writing, or the content areas. What kind of classroom-based libraries are there? What kind of books are available? What kind of strategies are teachers using? Are they doing mini-lessons for kids who are struggling to bring them back in focus? Those kinds of practices move them along. One of the things that I fully embrace is, for example, balanced literacy. And so is there an attempt to read aloud? Is there guided reading? Is there shared reading? Is there independent reading? Those are the kind of things, how kids are engaged in the learning and how are adults facilitating that learning. What is the outcome of that good lesson for kids? Those are the kind of things. When we have a conversation with principals around those walk-throughs, if I may call them, we set up some real focus on what we're going to concentrate on in terms of practices in the school, not one size fits all. Obviously, they are going to find diversity as we include kids, as we adapt, as we modify curriculum for kids with special needs, those are the elements that come into the mix. But primarily and foremost among all things is how is the teacher connected to the children's learning? And I think fundamentally that's what I look for. When I sit with principals at the annual visit, we talk about what we need to work on room by room to really build it up, and that there's uniform practices, universal practices, and a core curriculum. For too long, instruction has looked a mile wide and an inch deep. And I think it may be an inch wide and maybe a mile deep. Those are the kinds of things I would hope to be looking at.

DR. SCHAEFER: Welcome to Massachusetts. The district obviously has multiple problems. Have you had a chance to think about what are the most important issues that you need to address first? Is there staff that you would need to supplement at this point with who is there? This may be a little unfair at this point, but perhaps you've had the opportunity to think about that. And how can the Department of Education and the Board help you in these particular areas?

MR. LaBOY: One of the things that I've done since coming to Lawrence is listen a lot. Listen to people's concerns. I have done very little as to looking inside the district, so I have not looked at organizational structure of the district. Most of it has been around listening. And one of the things that is very evident to me is improvement in the system as a whole.

The need to have a better understanding of how it is that we're going to educate native language speakers in the city there. The accreditation of the high school is a burning concern. How are we going to move forward and regain that accreditation and develop a high school that holds high standards for every single student? The dropout rate, attendance, the district's role with its public partners and how we're going to be engaged in public conversations of accountability. How are we going to evaluate schools that are successful? What are going to be the performance indicators of how schools will succeed? So there's a number of issues at hand. But I'd like to tell you that a lot of what I've done is listened a lot.

I have not looked inside the district to see how schools are doing school by school, what kind of organizational structure is at the district. I have some very strong ideas of what I believe needs to get done, but I think I need to have time to make an assessment and have a conversation with the people who are currently on staff at the district level and in every single school as well. I hope to do that should I be given the opportunity to become the superintendent of schools in Lawrence.

DR. SCHAEFER: Do you want to comment on the last part of it, the role of the Department and the Board?

MR. LaBOY: I think the Department can lend itself to share expertise. I think it's an important part to serve as a technical assistant to the district, and giving guidance and advice, and aligning its resources to make sure that we do a good job in aligning our resources in Lawrence. It would help us to be in sync with what has to get done. I think from the Commissioner on down there's a wealth of knowledge and a wealth of technical assistance that can be brought into Lawrence to really make Lawrence a wonderful district. I hope to have even day-to-day conversations about how to better do that. But it has to be a real partnership, shoulder to shoulder, with mutual respect, collegiality and care for the things we are doing in Lawrence. So I see us calling on the state to help in the area of technical assistance for the school district.

MR. BAKER: Good day. Let's follow up on this discussion you had with Roberta a little bit. I'm going to list what I heard, because Roberta went in a direction that I was trying to figure out how to go. Can you define the two or three things you think are most important and then build some kind of context around how you can measure whether you find principals and teachers and schools are succeeding and achieving? Certainly reducing the dropout rate would be a good thing.

You talked about a lot of materials and you talked a lot in your taped testimony about the importance of standards and expectations. So let's presume getting better at MCAS would be a good thing. MCAS, statewide standards, which, for all intents and purposes, everybody is going to have to abide by. And the third piece you mentioned was sort of figuring out how to deal with the bilingual question in a native-language community like Lawrence. Let's say we're going to define success for a school and student and principal on the basis that people get more proficient in English quickly, there’s a reduction in the dropout rate over time, and a gradual improvement in MCAS scores. You can feel free to come up with different ones if you don't like those. What skills, acts, experiences have you had that you think would be useful to get at those? And then, what would you need to get from the people who are currently there or from people you would bring out from the outside to round out the complementary school and experience set that would chase those three issues?

MR. LaBOY: The dropout rate is very connected to student attendance and other issues, such as student engagement and how we move students ahead. But I think we have to look at attendance in terms of the dropout rate. Which kids are coming to school? What is the history of many of the kids? Often what happens is kids are retained and so they come to school with many years behind them, not being on level, and obviously, schools become a struggle because they feel over age and not engaged. In the long haul they wind up not coming to school at all. Attendance has to be the business of everyone. I would put in a district-wide attendance plan, particularly the high school, that will track attendance, that will track kids, that will go get kids, and that will engage our partners in the city to work with us. I will speak with different leaders in the community, both in the civic and religious life of the city, to make sure that kids are coming to school. If we are able to do that, if we get them in school, then we'll give them a good shot at being able to succeed by providing for them with a standards-based education.

I have spoken about a core curriculum for them. A lot of my thinking, particularly in the high school level, where we are having the greatest drop out problem, is that we need to look at high schools in a different way. A lot of my thinking has been influenced by the design of the National Center in Education. This is the committee where there's work being done around the New American High School, implementing a core curriculum, certificates of initial mastery, standards-based education, and looking at Work For Kids and Advanced Placement, and also with professional and technical careers. So I think in those ways we can move not only attendance, but the graduation rate. The other part of your question was what, Mr. Baker?

MR. BAKER: Bilingual. How are you going to engage people in establishing success in regard to bilingual?

MR. LaBOY: If you have seen my resume, I have some experience as a bilingual coordinator, director of bilingual education, and if you heard the tape, you may know how I feel about bilingual education. And I think it's somewhat unfortunate that the debate around bilingual education has been really a political debate. It has not been a debate around true instructional intervention for kids. I'm fundamentally committed that kids must learn the language of culture and of power of this country, which is English. And I am relentlessly and unequivocally committed to structure immersion programs that move kids to English proficiency immediately. Considering all things and all things being even, we will do a disservice to children in this country if we hold them and believe that somehow kids will become cognitively disadvantaged if we move them quickly into the mainstream of English in this country. Over the years of both practice and work in bilingual education, I have come to the conclusion that we must have immersion programs that move children quickly to become English proficient and move them into the mainstream, because for too long bilingual programs have become language apartheid programs in this country. We have to change that mode and we will look at Lawrence and we will evaluate programs that are working and ones that, perhaps, are not. But the goal has to be and must be English proficiency. And I say that unequivocally. Two languages become a notion. I think

dual language is an option. But the three mandated instructional modes, at least in New York, are E.SL, English as a Second Language, and traditional immersion programs. I'm fully convinced we must have immersion to move kids ahead into English.

DR. DELATTRE: You talk about a knowledge core, core curriculum, study of things a mile deep and an inch wide. What belongs in the core curriculum?

MR. LaBOY: Of course English Language Arts is very important, as is mathematics. As for content area, if we're talking -- what levels are we talking about? Are we talking high school, middle school? Obviously there's content area instruction. History and social studies and math and art and even phys. ed. have standards as well. There has to be a core. Particularly, the core has to be coherent, has to be sequential, there has to be good assessment around that core to look at how we are assessing students and how we are doing. If it's in mathematics, I can see us moving from basic math to Algebra II, probability, geometry, and others disciplines that are connected to numeracy.

DR. DELATTRE: Since before 1920 the social studies have been contrasted with the study of history. How are you going to have them both in a core curriculum?

MR. LaBOY: I think you can do interconnected work around history and social studies just as we can do block scheduling in schools. I think we need to look at how disciplines can be connected, in language arts as well. I don't see a real dichotomy between one and the other.

DR. DELATTRE: Do you think social studies is a discipline?

MR. LaBOY: I think history is a discipline. Social studies can be a strand.

DR. DELATTRE: One other question. In your written submission to Lawrence, you refer in “the things you will do” to developing school leadership teams that will consist of teachers, school staff, community partners, and parents who would have oversight of governance. I don't understand what "oversight of governance" would be or even how it would be legitimate. And you add that you will develop conflict resolution, peer mediation programs. I'd like you to say what the fundamental principles of trustworthy conflict resolution are.

MR. LaBOY: One of the fundamental principles of conflict resolutions is the win-win situation. Not getting locked into win and lose, but that we can fundamentally go beyond our conflicts and resolve them so both of us get something out of it. I think it's fundamental to conflict resolution that we don't get ourselves locked into winning or losing, but we have a conversation around consensus and building consensus and resolving conflict. Conflict will always be part of the work that we do in the day-to-day life and in schools. Schools are having a hard time with it, but we can have conversations around listening better, understanding better, and understanding the hard work of the schools.

I would like to get back to the issue about what I meant by school-site governance, because I think that's important. I think we need to have models in schools that welcome every single partner to the table around the business of instructional improvement at the school. We have to have conversation with the constituents of the school, which are of course teachers, students, parents, and community around what will make better schools. So what I mean by school leadership teams are those on site. But the bottom line we know is that principals are the people that are ultimately responsible. And I do not want to at any point interject or even, for that regard, suggest that some other form of leadership will alleviate the leader from what his or her job is, and that's to make the hard decisions at the schoolhouse. But we must have some conversations with all the partners at schools around how we're going to do that.

As for peer mediation -- I'm talking about peer mediation looking at the high school level, middle school levels or upper grade levels, around peers working together to mediate conflict and to hopefully interrupt the suspension rate of kids in school.

MS. KELMAN: You say that the principal is the key figure in a school system in the education of a student. How would you hire a set of principals who you think will carry out your vision for the school system?

MR. LaBOY: The principal is a person that sets the tone for the school, has a clear understanding of what has to get done, has a vision. I would not think that this person has to be autocratic in his direction, but to be a consensus builder, be someone who engages all the members of the school community in conversation about what he or she is going to do in terms of improving

instruction in that school. And what kind of experience they bring, not only based on theory and research, but in practice to the work of schools every day. Those will be very fundamental criteria that I would use for the hiring of principals.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You said on the videotape -- you probably regret the fact that the videotape was ever invented because it provides fodder for questions. But you indicated that good teachers are 90 percent heart and 10 percent brain. And my view is that the ratio is a little bit different. Caring about kids and motivating young people is absolutely essential to good teaching and good practice. But depth of subject knowledge, proficiency in effective teaching methods, instructional methods, skill at doing assessment, these are things which are also critical, and I would say probably at least as important as having your heart in the right place and caring and being compassionate about children and their learning. Can you clarify your position on this?

MR. LaBOY: The wonderful things about tapes is the magic that you can erase them. I would love to clarify it and I'd like to do the same with the statement about budget, because I thought it was also an opportunity to have a discussion. But absolutely, the teachers have a wealth of expertise in knowledge. I said 90 percent. I will submit to you I'm willing to compromise, 50/50.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: This is one of those win-win negotiations you're talking about.

MR. LaBOY: Absolutely. In that sense what I meant is, when I think about that statement, what comes to my heart is the passion and the commitment that a teacher made who invested herself in my life as a struggling learner in school, as a native language speaker that came to this country in 1957. There were no bilingual programs and it was the most unlikely person, an Irish Catholic woman, Ms. Gibbons, Margaret Gibbons, may she rest in peace. She showed me that much about education is what you experience and what you're exposed to. And I think that learning happens that way, too, for every single child. But I cannot more than agree with you that a teacher has to have and share expertise to be able to meet the challenge of being a good teacher and that good teaching is connected directly to student learning. So in that sense I stand corrected, Mr. Chairman.

DR. DELATTRE: You describe yourself as a child-centered educator. What does that mean you're not centered on?

MR. LaBOY: I'm not centered on adults being convenienced for the sake of children.

MR. IRWIN: Mr. Chairman? I'd like to move the motion, if I could.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, if I could hold you off for just a second. The Commissioner has a question, I'd then like to thank and excuse our guest, give him an opportunity to make any closing comments, initiate a discussion, and then we'll move to it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I want to make this very brief. I have had the opportunity to meet and talk to Wilfredo and his wife. So I want to just ask you, yes or no, when you talked about dropouts and attendance, were you not part of and didn't you institute a program in your district whereby people went to houses to get kids into schools?

MR. LaBOY: That's right.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Most of these interviews sometimes get kind of esoteric, and I think we tend to talk in general terms, but I think I can assure you, his talk about dropouts is not that. It's not a theoretical discussion. It's about truly getting kids in and then connecting them. The Mayor of Lawrence, the Chairman and I have agreed that the involvement of the Department of Education and the Board of Education is going to be more active than it's been, and we believe that we need to provide more oversight where we can, so that what's happened over the past two years, while we have made progress, not being as engaged as we might have been and sitting back we think has caused some slippage, if you will. Do you have a problem with having state people look over your shoulder?

DR. THERNSTROM: Yes or no.

MR. LaBOY: One of the principles that I embrace is learning as apprenticeship, and certainly I think we can do that. I think coming shoulder to shoulder, I hope not over my shoulder, but I think shoulder to shoulder we look at each other is important. And I welcome the opportunity for full engagement from our partners, and I have from the beginning had no problem. And I have to say, although I've not been a superintendent, I'm not a neophyte to the superintendency. I have been assistant superintendent, have worked with four superintendents in my life. I know the role, I know what it takes to do a good job, and I know what it can mean to be a bad superintendent. So I would hope I would build on that. So that's not a problem for me at all.

The issue of attendance for me while working in East Harlem -- I developed a transitional education program for kids in partnership with the Boy's Club of America that we use their sites as an off-site for those kids who are having school adjustment problems. And the other part of that is we currently in the district that I'm involved in have hired and have developed attendance teachers who go and look for kids in the projects, look for kids in their houses. We have developed a program in New York City -- if you know New York City, and I'm sure some of the folks know, we have a partnership with the police department doing truancy sweeps. We increased -- in my coming to the district, one of my responsibilities, direct responsibilities, is the day-to-day attendance rates of kids in school. My department has increased every single year's attendance for the district that I currently serve.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just before giving you an opportunity to make any final comments you may like to make, I just want to follow up on the comment the Commissioner made about the partnership, and in particular I want to thank Mayor Dowling for her leadership in recognizing that this needs to be a partnership in order to be successful where the state and the city and the district need to be working together in order to do what's necessary to raise student achievement in Lawrence and to do what's right for the children of that school system. She didn't have to do what she did, she didn't have to extend an invitation beyond the sort of legal requirements in the agreement that we have, but she's shown, again, a lot of leadership in trying to extend the level of cooperation and partnership between these two levels of government. She should be congratulated for it. Are there any final parting words that you have for us?

MR. LaBOY: I want to thank you for the opportunity of coming and having a conversation with you this morning. This is the first superintendency that I applied for in the years that I have been serving at the district level, and I was humbled by the fact and somewhat taken back that everywhere I have sent my resume to, I have gotten a call for an interview. So I'm humbled by that. I do it at a time in my life where I bring seasoning and maturity to the job. There's something about getting the job at the right time in terms of your personal maturity, and at the stage in my life that I think I'm at, I think I'm ready for that opportunity. I come to the City of Lawrence as superintendent, should you wish to approve my appointment, with a passion to do what's right for kids in that city, and with the apprehension that a heavy load is upon our shoulders to do what's right for kids in that city. For too long, for much of the time in certain cities in this country, adults have taken their hands off student learning. It will not be accepted in Lawrence. We will have high expectations for every single child and we will meet those expectations because we as adults have a responsibility. Kids do not fail; adults fail children. This is how I come to the City of Lawrence, working in that partnership and in that commitment. I want to tell you also that I come with a sense of apprehension because it's a new move for us, and at this stage of my life, my wife always thought we would be in New York, and she's somewhat concerned. As you may know by the record, she also has committed her life to education. She's a career educator and in her school serves currently as assistant principal. So coming this way is -- as she would say, I'm supposed to be organizing my school, not moving out of the state. And we are spending some time with her current principal who is very uneasy about her move, and so she asked if she could stay here, could she stay home and you go and get the job. Absolutely not! She's coming with me. So I look forward to the challenge and hope that we can feel good that if the byproduct of us succeeding in Lawrence is that we all can look at each other and raise it as a model district, I'm happy for that. But always with the focus that it's about children and about improving education for them. Not about my ego, not about me being good because I've succeeded. But if that's what happens because we all can do that, because we have helped children, I welcome the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you very much. You're welcome to stay and listen to all the horrible things we might have to say about you, but your participation is over. You probably should leave the head table so you're not in striking distance of any Board member. But I thank you again for coming and in particular I thank you for flying up so early in the morning, leaving a long-planned vacation, and I hope you found the experience not unpleasant. Now I'd like to move to some discussion of the candidate, Mr. LaBoy. Let me begin by making just a couple of brief comments for my own part. I have been impressed, both in terms of his interview in Lawrence, his interview here, and the conversations I have had with other people from New York who know him and know of his work. Wilfredo LaBoy is someone who is capable of bringing a number of qualities and experiences to Lawrence which are desperately needed.

In particular, he is the kind of person who is capable of rebuilding trust in the city that has lost it. He is clearly focused on teaching and learning and classroom practice, which is something that needs to be restored, within the school district. As he described, as he stated this morning he has an appreciation for the importance of principals in school-based leadership, in driving reform and improvement. He has a clear understanding, as he expressed very clearly this morning, that English proficiency must be central to the commission of bilingual education, to any type of program designed and focused on English language learners. And finally, and importantly, is his openness to working in partnership with this Board and this Department in trying to ensure that we do what we need to do and do the right thing for the students of Lawrence Public Schools. This is

not a situation where any individual is going to be capable of pulling that system out of its current state of affairs. It is going to require a team effort. There are certainly some experiences that Mr. LaBoy may be missing in his resume. He may have the skill and knowledge and instincts to be successful in those areas where he hasn't had experience. But he would also benefit by having other experienced people who do have the relevant experiences at his side and consulting with him and I'm hopeful that we, at the state level, can help provide that kind of assistance to him in order to make him successful. But overall, I am comfortable with what we have heard this morning and what I have heard elsewhere that Mr. LaBoy is up to the task and can lead Lawrence school district out of its current situation and into success.

DR. THERNSTROM: Has Mr. LaBoy committed himself to staying a minimum number of years to see this through?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't know what kind of contract the district is planning to negotiate, particularly in terms of its length of tenure, but perhaps you could --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, the former contract was for a period of three years with a renewal after a year's evaluation. I think that is the tendency. I think that's about where the district wants to be, and Mr. LaBoy has committed to that to me.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: To three years.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: At least.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It seems to me that the kind of systemic changes we are talking about in Lawrence is that a good three years is the tip of the iceberg, and we're talking a little bit more than that. So I'm hoping, as I've listened to Mr. LaBoy, that he seems to be bringing balance of the practical and theoretical with his understanding of the need for human connection and the need for rigorous academic standards. He brings with him the knowledge of the need for partnerships and experience in developing and implementing those partnerships for the benefit of children and the adults who work with them on a daily basis. I'm very happy that he is a student-based educational leader who understands that very often children are inconvenienced, children are short changed because adults feel inconvenienced. And so I just said a lot but I think that we need to recognize that this is longer than a three-year appointment, and I guess we do.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think that it's important that this partnership with the Department and the Board be worked out so that we come to some agreement on what the most important next steps are, the priorities at this point, and not undertake too much but really focus in on what is going to make a difference immediately. Not immediately, but certainly in the next three years. And he seems very open to that kind of relationship and I think that he really needs to stick with it this time and make sure it doesn't fall.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: On that score, I think we are fortunate in that we have several people who have been working with the Commissioner over the last several months who have an intimate knowledge of the district and the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and we also are going to be doing this performance evaluation in the fall in order to hopefully provide not simply a laundry list of areas for improvement, but also a clearer sense of what the priorities ought to be. And I think you're absolutely right, there are only so many things you can do successfully and effectively, especially with something kind of approaching a crisis situation. But that's it exactly, and therefore we have to invest a lot of time and energy in figuring out what the right things are and working with the superintendent to start addressing those and not dissipating our energy across a broad list of things.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right.

DR. DELATTRE: I wish I were persuaded, but I'm not. I think when he said 90 percent heart, 10 percent brain, he meant it. I think that's why he refers to compassion and caring and why he refers to a right to education instead of a right to educational opportunity. I also think it's why he thinks it appropriate for the young to be taught that life is essentially a matter of consensus and win-win, when it isn't.

MR. BAKER: Ed, could you be a little more specific?

MS. KELMAN: I'm just wondering what options the Board of Education has if we see in a year that he is not meeting any of the standards that he promised, if he is not meeting his own standards.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, the agreement -- and, by the way, we need to renew the agreement which is coming up, so we might even be able to add to it, because the Mayor is quite willing as the Chairman pointed out. But in our agreement, once a superintendent is selected, we move into a monitoring phase and we do set goals. Frankly, I like Charlie's three. I think it's a good place to start. But if we are not satisfied with the progress, that is what the agreement was all about, then this Board can end the agreement and pursue taking over the district. So this is not just kind of a fun agreement, this is a very serious agreement that was fashioned by a judge in court as we moved to take over -- under a different administration, but to take over the Lawrence Public Schools. So clearly, this Board and the Department have very strong tools if we are not satisfied.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For clarification, it would allow us to initiate a process to take over. We couldn't just sort of decide to take over.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's right.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Even we have to be tempered.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But just to clarify specifically with respect to the superintendent's contract, I don't think we are empowered under the agreement to sort of withdraw our approval and as a result the superintendent contract is null and void. That's a contract between the school committee and the superintendent. It's not something that we can simply go in and vacate in the absence of going through a process to evaluate the district and if, based on that process and based on our judgment we determine that it's necessary to intervene in the district, then only at that point would we have the requisite authority to do something about the superintendent.

DR. THERNSTROM: Just building on what Roberta had to say, I would hope we would not only very early set our priorities, but also set the lines of authority because, obviously, we don't want to end up micromanaging the district. And yet it is going to be a partnership and there is a potential there for inattention and for misunderstanding and for future difficulties. And so I would hope very early that would be part of the discussion of what the state role is, specifically.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would agree that we need to clarify what sort of the proper boundaries are between the district and the state. By the same token, this is not disagreeing with what you said, but I want to make sure we don't get too formalistic and too legalistic about the partnership.

DR. THERNSTROM: Of course not. I'm just trying to avoid future trouble.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good point.

MR. IRWIN: I'd like to move the motion.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Second.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Ready for a vote? Just to clarify what the motion is , it's to approve the actions of the Lawrence School Committee and its offer of employment to Wilfredo LaBoy to become the superintendent of schools for Lawrence Public Schools.

MR. BAKER: With the understanding there's going to be a very clearly defined game plan in which he and we and they are going to be monitored and judged and measured.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's a long motion.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's the understanding.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with the January 1998 Memorandum of Agreement among the Lawrence School Committee, the Commissioner of Education, and the Board of Education, hereby approve the appointment of Wilfredo LaBoy as Superintendent of the Lawrence Public Schools.**

The motion was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Crutchfield. The motion passed 7-1. Dr. Delattre opposed.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Vote is seven to one in favor and the offer from the School Committee of Lawrence is approved by the Board of Education.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: May I just speak? I know you want to take a quick break. I just want to take one minute to praise someone who has done an absolutely tremendous job from any point of view. In fact, we spent a lot of money the last time to search for a superintendent. We didn't spend much money this time at all because we had Matt George, former superintendent of schools in Brockton, and an absolutely outstanding screening committee. The process is tremendous. I don't think people understand how difficult it is today to recruit and find candidates for superintendents. In fact, this screening committee rejected three, and four are finalists in a number of other places. We had at least three candidates that were very outstanding as well who all dropped out of the process for one reason or another before becoming formal candidates. So I want to take a minute for the members of the Board to praise the work of Matt George who is here with us. Tremendous job. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to add my thanks and the thanks of the Board for the effort. I didn't realize you were so cheap. If I knew that, we would have used you even more.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We are now going to proceed with the regular agenda and I just want to make a couple of comments before turning it over to the Commissioner for some additional comments. First, we have scheduled a forum, the first in a series of five or six forums, and I think I gave you a list, a couple of meetings ago, of forums that we were trying to schedule. This one is on effective schools and effective leaders. It's scheduled for October 17, I think it's 3:30 to 6:00. We are not sure exactly the location of where this will be but it's a forum that will feature about a half dozen principals -- it will be here. I got the sign language. It will be here, probably even in this room. -- about a half dozen principals from around the country and around Massachusetts who have demonstrated excellence in producing excellent schools.

DR. THERNSTROM: What time will that be?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: 3:30 to 6:00, so we're going to give them an opportunity to tell us a little bit about what they have done in their schools and give us Board members in particular an opportunity to have a discussion with them about what it takes to make an excellent school. So that, I think, may be a very interesting and useful forum. Second thing to note is that the legislature has adopted two bills, one reforming special education and the other increasing the number of charter schools. And while there are still some procedural policy loose ends that need to be tied off before this thing is totally done, the legislature is slated to go out of business for this session on July 31, so there aren't too many days left. Both bills, assuming that all the little wrinkles get ironed out in the right way, are very promising, very encouraging, and very consistent with longstanding Board policy. So I think all of us should be pleased by the direction the legislature has taken. And finally, although I forgot to bring it with me, the Commissioner and I have been working on some metrics by which to measure your performance directly tied to the goals and strategies the Board has adopted in prior meetings. I apologize for not bringing it but I will distribute it to all of you hopefully by the end of the day. And I would appreciate any feedback on whether the measure I have identified are the right ones, whether there are others that might be used instead or whether there's some improvement that needs to be made in the measures that are listed there. With that, I'll turn it over the Commissioner.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I will be brief. I have three very quick comments about exciting things that are going on this summer. First of all, we have our scoring institutes that are going on now and they have been extremely well received. Many of our teachers think it's their best professional development experience, and this is our first experience working with Harcourt and that's worked very well also, so we are very pleased about that. Secondly, of course, we have our training for our bonus recipients and others who are coming into the field of education, and we are very pleased with our training. The Governor visited the program at Timilty School in Boston. These people are teaching in classrooms all across the state. There are 11,000 Boston kids in summer school, 775 teachers. You may have seen, their attendance is 90 percent. It's just a tremendous effort

this summer. And the Governor visited the program in Lowell as well. The last thing is that today, the Chairman and I are joining the Governor on a program that I don't think has received its proper notice. We have gotten an awful lot of great publicity about the bonus program, about our Master Teacher program, even about Tomorrow's Teachers Clubs for middle school and high school kids. There is one program that the Governor has initiated called Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Fund which allows high school kids who graduate in the top quarter of their class who commit to teaching in the public schools for four years free tuition and fees at our state colleges and universities. It's a tremendous commitment on the part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, really the Board of Higher Education, because it's not part of our $60 million endowment that funds all our other programs. So today we are celebrating by having the young people who are recipients of the Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Fund at the State House to celebrate their entering college to teach. And for that matter, the Governor later this month is going to have a special event for those new teachers coming into the field that are certified -- a lot of fields celebrate the professionalism and the credentialing of their new people, bar exam, bar associations, for example. So this summer for the first time the state government is going to celebrate the new teachers certified in July and invite them to a reception. So I think a lot of positive things are happening this summer and I'm pleased about that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I will pick up one of the things you said about the MINT program, and this is, as you know, essentially an accelerated teacher preparation program that operates in the summer at about four locations in Massachusetts that combines classroom, as in sort of college teacher preparation classroom experience, with a student teaching experience working with students in the summer school programs. But I was at the event in Lowell and it was very heartening to hear the unsolicited stories of the people who were there and participating in the program who basically said -- and most of these were mid-career people who basically said, I wanted to get into teaching, but the barriers in terms of the kind of courses and the extent of time I would have to invest in getting over the procedural hurdles to become a teacher were just far too onerous for me to pursue. But because of this concentrated two- to three-month MINT program, I was able to change my career, fulfill my dreams, and become a teacher. And this is exactly the intent of the program. I think it's also, looking ahead, the intent of creating the alternative paths to certification that we're going to be considering as part of the certification regulations. So it was very encouraging that if in fact we create opportunities for people to become teachers that don't burden them with a lot of procedural obstacles, that in fact we will attract new and highly qualified people into the profession. So I thought that was very encouraging.

STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLIC

James Hamos, Co-Chair of the Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks Steering Committee.

JAMES HAMOS: Good morning, everybody. I have my comments before you. Commissioner Driscoll, members of the Board, my guess is that this likely will be the last time that we communicate on this version of the mathematics framework as I have little doubt that the die has been cast. That being said, I believe that this document will doom Massachusetts' children to mathematical illiteracy as it perpetuates the status quo, and a vision of education that reduces mathematics to a set of computational skills that are easily testable and exclusionary but have little meaning to the majority of citizens. Certainly, I am neither a mathematician nor a mathematics educator, but rather a scientist who has used mathematics to answer questions about the brain and who has drawn from a quantitative skill set that has propelled me through the educational quagmire. Most of my awareness of mathematics and science education comes from eight years of working with the Department and educators across the state to identify an educational scheme that might have value to all children. I am anguished that after countless hours that have been given freely by many who worked with PALMS and the myriad aspects of the Education Reform, we will begin to separate ourselves from our partnership with you. It is the efforts of these reformers that your mathematics framework eradicates. Indeed, after eight years of working with you on setting standards, creating MCAS, setting performance levels and more, I see little evidence of true educational reform. Your only success has been to implement a test that is limiting to children and does not validate the many ways in which students learn and teachers teach. So, where is the evidence for these statements?

The Department says that this framework contains a balance of understanding and skills. I contend that any document that has 20 to 30 to 40 learning standards per year focuses on the trivial. We are back to academic debates of whether students memorize the 50 state capitals, work with standard algorithms and identify the parts of animal and plant cells. Or should they understand the role of state government, appreciate that mathematics is important and has utility in their lives, and be able to make informed health decisions based on their awareness of the biology of their bodies? The standards must be the broader concepts. The narrower learning goals and expectations are portions of the educational puzzle, but they are not the only indicators that students have learned and are ready to move forward. Teachers, and educational researchers, know what can be documented in the classroom and beyond. In the text entitled, this one, How People Learn -- and this is something that is referenced in the

science frameworks but not the math ones -- the authors look at how experts learn in order to raise the discussion of how this might benefit all learners. A quote: "In mathematics, experts are more likely than novices to first try to understand problems, rather than simply attempt to plug numbers into formulas." Further, "transfer [of knowledge] is affected by the degree to which people learn with understanding rather than merely memorize sets of facts or follow a fixed set of procedures." The deeper understandings that have been proposed to the Department as learning standards are constantly discounted because they cannot be assessed. But this is true only in the narrow views of the MCAS pencil-and-paper test.

I am appalled that the accountability hullabaloo has resulted in so much of schools' efforts being geared to this MCAS. What a waste of time, energy, dollars and, most importantly, the future of our children. The discussions that your documents unleash are about MCAS remediation, not about learning. Why we do continue down this narrow road of evaluation? Clearly, the Education Reform Act demands more of us. In its various sections, the Act notes that the assessment system: shall be designed to measure outcomes and results regarding student performance; shall strike a balance among considerations of accuracy, fairness, expense and administration; shall employ a variety of assessment instruments; shall be criterion referenced; shall include considerations of work samples, projects and portfolios; and shall facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance. While you might argue that aspects of points one through four have been dealt with through the current MCAS, there certainly is little evidence that points five and six have been implemented. Elsewhere, Section 1E of the Reform Act states that "the frameworks shall reflect sensitivity to different learning styles and impediments to learning." It is in this statement that your document fails most notoriously. The majority of educators who have worked with the Department for the past eight years are most disheartened that the framework does not include a common set of high standards that would validate the multiple ways in which students can learn. Rather, we have found that the guise of academic rigor and international standards has been used to retain the view of mathematics education that has always been of benefit to some while leaving out many others. Policies and decisions of the past few months simply scream out "teachers must teach better" and "students must jump higher" in the belief that this alone will improve student performance. As we conclude the long road to get to your vote today, I'm comforted only by the belief that the type of revisionist process that you have unleashed with this framework will return in the not too distant future to expunge this document from the public domain. At that time, many of us can return to the broad systemic process that seeks to make mathematics significant for all children.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Although I know you're not happy with the outcome, I want to thank you for the effort and many hours you have put into this. It does not go unnoticed and I'm grateful for it.

JAMES HAMOS: I hope this is not necessarily the end. I hope there's a next process to it.

Claire Graham Co-Chair of the Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks Steering Committee.

MS. GRAHAM: Commissioner Driscoll and members of the Board, I'm here to speak against the mathematics curriculum framework dated July 14, 2000. Today, I come before you as someone who has tried to work with the Department of Education for the past eight years. For many years, I thought that, through PALMS, we shared a vision of mathematics education that sought to raise academic achievement for all students. I was in the first group of PALMS Teacher Leaders who worked with Department staff to craft a program for professional development attuned to the best that we could glean from standards movements in other states, the nation and other countries.

Professionally, I prepare many future teachers of mathematics through my role at Framingham State College. I have a strong sense of the curricula that they are struggling to bring into the schools so that all children will be able to know and do mathematics. During the past academic year, I have served as co-chair of your Mathematics and Science Advisory Council. I have also been a part of the leadership group empowered by your February conditional endorsement to work on the framework standards. My most recent interactions with the Department have left me and my colleagues disenfranchised from the document that you are about to discuss. This mathematics framework is light years away from the PALMS vision or from the NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. It is a framework that we cannot accept or begin to institutionalize in the academic programs of the Commonwealth.

For much of the past six months, a steering committee representing the advisory council, mathematics teacher organizations, and the superintendents' association as well as the standards writing groups have brought forward numerous suggestions for a consensus document that we could all approve. We have found that the Department took the recommendations and very selectively used them, without consultation or further discussion with the groups who presented them. To back our belief for children's learning of skills and understanding in mathematics, we were the ones who aligned the NCTM 2000 standards (what

the Department calls Broad Concepts) with Learning Expectations (what the Department calls Learning Standards). In cases where we disagreed with the Department, we offered rationales as to why a different wording and meaning for an expectation be included or why to add a deeper understanding as an expectation. When these were presented to the Department on June 6, we were assured that the depth of our analysis would be treated fairly and that in those instances where the Department disagreed with our recommendations, we would receive counter rationales. Since that time, several framework drafts have been distributed. Each draft has included some changes. All of this has led to the framework before you today. However, major differences still exist, and we just received the DOE rationales last week. Many of our recommendations have been rejected because they are not assessable.

We ask, Is this a curriculum document or an assessment document? With this history in mind, and with dissatisfaction with your document, we are poised to take our recommendations to mathematics educators, mathematicians, parents, students, legislators and the broader public. The body of this alternative mathematics framework is here at my side. We have written the preliminary portions and guiding principles that should guide mathematics instruction. We have divided into standards and expectations that are appropriate and meaningful for all preK-12 students. We have appendix materials that appropriately guide teachers and school districts to making curricular choices that match the alternative framework. We are prepared to distribute this alternative framework through the mathematics organizations and through the superintendents' association. Our hope is that you will not ratify the proposed framework but rather provide for an ongoing, broad-based dialogue to reach agreement face-to-face on mathematics standards.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you for your comments. I'd like to extend the same thanks for your efforts over the last several months and years.

Lee Stiff of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

MR. STIFF: Good morning. I'm Lee Stiff, a professor of mathematics education at North Carolina State University. I come before you today in my role as President of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, an organization of more than 100,000 members, and an association that has dedicated itself to improving the teaching and learning of mathematics since 1920. All students should learn algebra. Principles and Standards for School Mathematics describes algebra as a strand in the curriculum from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. And, although many people continue to equate algebra with symbol manipulation, algebra is so much more. Symbol manipulation is an important part of learning algebra, as is understanding the concepts, structures, and principles that govern the manipulation of symbols. Algebra should also emphasize relationships among quantities, ways of representing mathematical situations and structures, and the analysis of change. By promoting algebra as a strand throughout the early grades, middle-grade students will be ready for a greater emphasis on algebraic concepts and skills. Consequently, the framework should not over-emphasize the importance of symbol manipulations to students' understanding of algebra. Traditional mathematics is the mathematics of exclusion. The framework must not allow the mathematics of exclusion to continue. Some students should not be given access to high-quality mathematics that lead to heightened opportunities while other students are relegated to traveling slower or different pathways to reach the same goals.

Any mathematics curriculum that does not promote one set of standards for all of the students that it serves is in violation of the Equity Principle in Principles and Standards for School Mathematics and in contradiction to the vision of the NCTM, which emphasizes a high-quality mathematics education for every child. The framework's Learning Standards for Multistrand Core Sequences are not identical to the Learning Standards for Courses Emphasizing a Strand. Some students will be permitted to travel a slower and different path. History tells me that if this is allowed to occur, those students will not arrive at the same destination. Setting higher expectations for all students is an important element of the Equity Principle. Setting higher expectations for ourselves is another. Teachers, school administrators, school board members, parents, community leaders, and NCTM, must work together to provide resources to help accommodate differences among students. Be it after-school programs, use of concrete materials, enrichment projects, peer mentoring, different teaching approaches, or alternative forms of assessments, every effort must be extended to students to help them meet the expectations that we set. "Back to basics" is moving backwards. Number crunching alone is no longer enough. The new economy demands that we prepare students to become flexible and resourceful problem solvers. Our democracy demands that all children have access to high-quality mathematics. And the future demands that we reject the mathematics of exclusion. Thank you.

John Bookston from Brookline.

MR. BOOKSTON: Good morning. I'm so proud to be a colleague of Lee Stiff, of Jim Hamos, of Claire Graham, of hundreds of other math educators and concerned citizens who have poured their hearts, their time, their brains into making a document for Massachusetts that will be good for all students in Massachusetts. I have been a math teacher in Brookline for the past 14 years. I, along with my colleagues, have long been concerned about allowing another generation to be math phobic. The curriculum and tests of the past reward too heavily those who plug numbers into formulas. After lengthy research and inclusive discussion, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published a document a decade ago that is the standard by which math education must be measured. The change to NCTM curriculum and methods has been a slow process, requiring teacher training, curriculum development and textbook purchases. I might note parenthetically, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics publishes a substantial monthly publication called Mathematics Teacher that has all sorts of support and extended mathematical projects for students that has a very high expectation and goes to the core of understanding, enjoying, being successful and priding oneself on one's mathematical knowledge as a student from a very young age through high school. I have over these past ten years seen support for the NCTM standards snowball among teachers who have been involved, myself included. Such teachers are not surprised that research findings (that are now just beginning to come in) are positive. Not only is there a widening of the population experiencing success, but there has been no loss of performance even on those formulaic standardized tests. As a teacher who has seen amazing growth in a broad range of students, I am appalled by the "sound-byte" nature of this debate. For example, Board of Education member Roberta Schaefer, justifying her push for a return to basics, does not cite any of the research or professional experience. Yesterday's Herald reported she said parents fear their children are mathematically illiterate. Quote, "Parents were telling me that their kids were not able to compute," said Schaefer. Quote, "They didn't know the multiplication table or they weren't comfortable enough to use it for more difficult problems. Parents were spending time drilling their kids or getting tutors," unquote. We, as a mathematics and education community, have begged the Department of Education to meet with math educators and concerned citizens. We noted in the February meeting that Dr. Delattre -- I was one, Dr. Delattre, who applauded when you said that the document that was given to you was not approvable. The method and the content were both atrociously shoddy. I applaud today when Dr. Delattre says, "We have not done what was promised in February." In February it was promised that the Department of Education would seek out the input of the mathematics and education community, of parents and others. We have provided the effort, the meetings and so on for the Department to attend. We have been stood up on two occasions when we were hoping that Commissioner Driscoll would be at a meeting to discuss those things. One more paragraph, I will read it and I'm done.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Hope it's not a long paragraph.

MR. BOOKSTON: Although the professional, parent and student response to the Board of Education's abrupt proposed changes to the frameworks has been overwhelmingly negative, the Board is considering adopting them today. Even if there were a negative perception of NCTM standards, it would be the Department's obligation to present a factual picture and not just fan the flames (which in this case the Board even ignited). The system that is proposed in the changes is the system that has proven itself ineffective over generations. Educators (including math teachers, university researchers, principals and superintendents), activist parents, and even a few wonderful students have put in time and effort to bring reasoning based on facts to this Board. I urge you not to adopt these ill-conceived changes. Thank you.

Ann Collins, Boston College Mathematics Institute.

MS. COLLINS: Good morning, Commissioner Driscoll, members of the Board. "In the 16th century, instances occur of arithmetic written in the form of questions and answers, and during the 17th century this practice became quite prevalent both in England and Germany. The tendency to pose a problem was considered far superior to the older practice of simply directing the student to do so and so. The question draws the pupil's attention and prepares his mind for the reception of new information. Unfortunately, the question always relates to how a thing is done, never why it is done. It is deplorable to see in the 17th century, both in England and Germany, that arithmetic is reduced to a barren collection of rules." This comes from A History of Mathematics book written in 1896. It also reflects some of the concerns that we have here with the document in front of us. I have been involved with the revision process for the past two years. I have been advocating for one set of standards for all children. I and my colleagues in mathematics and in mathematics education believe in all children. The document before you does not reflect the work of the esteemed panel convened to revise the frameworks two years ago.

Contrary to the statement made on page 2 of the document, this is not the work of the panel. It is a misrepresentation at best. I have spoken with panel members who are appalled by the inference that in this document, rife with errors, inconsistencies and dismissive of the philosophy of NCTM, represents their work. The panel members request that if that reference to their work remains in the document, that their resignation in protest to the changes being made to the document be included. They

resigned because they were not pleased with the process. I want to talk a little bit about the inconsistencies and the errors in the document. The learning standards don't align with the guiding philosophies. For example, on page 3 it states, "Mathematics is not a collection of separate strands or standards." Yet, the standards for the stand-alone Algebra I course makes absolutely no mention of geometry or geometrics where representation of algebraic concepts and symbolic manipulation is what one must be working towards. In the geometry learning standards for grades 9 and 10 it states that students will draw congruent and similar figures using a compass, straightedge, protractor, and other tools such as computer software. Make conjectures about methods of construction. Justify the conjectures by logical arguments. This is mathematically incorrect. One can construct geometric figures, as in the classical Greek construction, then they can make conjectures. They can draw triangles using protractors but they can't do constructions with a protractor. It's not mathematically sound. The process described uses inductive not deductive reasoning. To further compound the confusion between drawing figures and classical Greek constructions, the example used to illustrate this standard asks our students to use a compass and straightedge to find the center of an old shot put circle that was washed out in the rain. Although this could be a construction, students are asked to draw the circle rather than construct it. This was a geometric construction, a big idea in mathematics that has been shabbily and erroneously treated in the framework. As an aside to that, I don't know where they are going to get a compass large enough to draw a construction of a shot put circle. I did list all of the omissions and the many language errors that do abound through this. The standards are lacking on mathematics of change. It's essential for calculus as well as science, to develop generalized quantitative reasoning skills. Many standards of solving equations and inequalities use tabular symbols and graphs only. Nothing about how they translate among or relate one to another. Lack of building conceptual understanding of probability and statistics. It only has a use of how to use the statistical procedures. Grade 3-4 students are expected to do multiplication with three-digit multipliers, but all textbooks have it introduced around chapters 3 and 4 of grade 5. Grade 5-6 students are expected to compute with integers, typically a 7th grade concept. Although there may be some reference in the last two chapters of a 6th grade text, they are not usually covered. Grade 9-10 students are expected to master quadratics, traditionally Algebra II materials, in a variety of different ways yet in arithmetic they only need to learn the standard algorithms. If this document was scored using the MCAS rubrics, it would receive a designation of Failure. There are too many inconsistencies, incorrect usage of mathematical language and errors both in the mathematics and the grade placements.

James Kaput, Mathematics Department, UMass Dartmouth.

MR. KAPUT: I'm a professor of mathematics, born and brought up in Chicopee, lived in Massachusetts all my life. I was educated here as well. I have also been a consultant to governments around the world, mainly in the area of educational technology and its application in schools. I currently run and have run for some years a million-plus dollars a year in R and D work in that area. Unlike some of my colleagues, I have also been an MCAS advocate. In fact, I was interviewed for and quoted in the Mass. Insight literature. Without MCAS we would still be at ground zero. However, if the content being tested does not represent high national standards of the sort that Lee Stiff was describing, then the test becomes something to oppose rather than fight for. That's why doing a really good job on the frameworks is important and, in mathematics, doubly important.

I'd like to turn your attention to page 56. Members of the Board have a third page following my two-page letter, that offers you a diagram, taken from page 56 at the top, of two cars. It is speed versus time and you have car A and car B each reaching the same speed after one hour, and then there's a series of questions. That caught my eye because I wrote that problem about a dozen years ago, in fact, used it at a State House news conference back in probably 1992. Senator Dave Magnani was the one who got it right and explained to the rest of the crowd how to solve it. This is an interesting problem. It's obviously in the frameworks as an illustration, it says, of standard 11. But in fact it doesn't refer to standard 11. In fact, standard 11 doesn't seem to me to have much to do with that particular body of mathematics. But I will ask you to imagine, for example, having two job offers instead of describing velocity of vehicles. You have two job offers reaching the same ending salary after five years. Which is the more valuable? Or perhaps you have two deficit reduction plans yielding the same zero deficit rate after a certain amount of time. The kind of mathematics in here is very, very important. It's the kind of mathematics that our students need in the 21st century. It's forward looking. But unfortunately, not only does this example not link to a standard, it is not led to by any of the standards at the middle school or high school level. Very disappointing, but it's illustrative of the problems with the framework that you're about to vote on. I would also point out that the -- I think I better jump ahead. You've seen the inconsistency of the one other thing I would point out, so we can get an answer to this. This is assessable but it's not a computation problem. It's an interpretation of graphs problem. It's the kind of mathematics that is far more than the plug-in chart you're familiar with. So anyway, I would suggest that the frameworks that you have in front of you are deeply flawed, they don't contain the kind of 21st century mathematics that we need, and ought to be rejected. Another comment, and then a suggestion. The traditional Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II alternatives to real content reform at the end of the document are a serious subversion of Education Reform, an open and explicit invitation to stay with the failed practices that Ed Reform was

intended to change. These reduce reform to pedaling harder, but continuing in the wrong direction as evidenced by TIMSS and other data that show students are doing worse the longer they experience that traditional curriculum. Their appearance in the document is a blatant loophole through which all those thousands of teachers who have been waiting for this reform squall to blow over can escape. My suggestion is to drop those alternatives and stay with the multistrand materials.

My last comment and suggestion: The inevitable pull downward in quality of mathematical experience associated with decomposing school mathematics into easily and cheaply assessed bits has a paint-by-the-numbers effect on the math that is exactly the same when applied to art. It trivializes math in the same way it trivializes art. This destructive pull needs to be deliberately and structurally countered in ways that can help ameliorate other accountability problems as well. My suggestion is to create an open-ended, web-based DOE-administered Standards Exemplar System that invites contributions of rich examples of instructional activities, materials and assessment problems linked to specific standards from anyone who wants to help -- teachers, parents, teacher educators, even students and pre-service teachers. These would be reviewed by a standing panel of math educators for accuracy, overall quality and linkage to standards, and when approved (perhaps after being revised) they would appear on a standards-based DOE database accessible to all who wish to use them. There might be annual awards for the best exemplars at the various levels. This will build continuing improvement into the system (which is what any organization needs to do), draw the best from our best (which is what any organization needs to do) rather than alienating our best (which is what seems to be underway), help build the buy-in desperately needed as the going ahead gets tough, and use technology in a creative way to improve the frameworks system. It's easy to imagine such exemplars being used in teacher pre-service and in-service activities, as the basis for ongoing discussions among communities of teachers, and so on. This will also help solve the quality problems so evident in the current draft, as an understaffed DOE tries to meet BOE deadlines in a document that is then frozen in place for years to come. No knowledge based industry business would do this and expect to survive. Thank you.

Brian Sullivan, Association of Teachers of Mathematics.

MR. SULLIVAN: Good morning. My name is J. Brian Sullivan and I'm a substitute for Duane Cameron who is president of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts. Duane is currently returning for a NCTM conference in Nova Scotia. I have been a member of the ATMIM executive board for 23 years. My major responsibilities have been conducting the annual spring conference. Also, I have served as a mathematics coordinator for the arts in public schools from 1970 to 1989, and I have been a mathematics teacher for the past 35 years. ATMIM has a membership of more than 9,500 members and we have played an integral role in the revision of the1995 frameworks. In fact, the majority of educators that resigned from the writing team were all past officers of the ATMIM. Duane, along with others, sent a lengthy rebuttal to the February framework. We are extremely disappointed in the framework that you have been given to adopt today. The frameworks were supposed to be something that teachers could use in the classroom, not just as a preparation for a test. Many schools, including my own, in Hudson, have spent vast amounts of money and time to change their curriculum K-12 and to change the way that teachers teach and students learn. ATMIM maintains that the proposed framework does not represent what teachers want and is not written for all students. ATMIM worked very hard in helping the DOE develop a framework that was a balance between skills, concepts and understandings. No one has listened to our recommendations. Why did so many of us work so hard only to see, once again, that we were not listened to and that we wasted our time and effort? Instead of a document like the one in front of you today, the DOE could have submitted a 1968 table of contents from an Algebra I, Algebra II, or Geometry textbook. ATMIM, the statewide organization of professional teachers, pleads with you, the Massachusetts Board of Education, not to adopt the proposed framework, as it is a giant step backwards, and ask the DOE to return with a framework that represents mathematics for the 21st century. Thank you.

Irwin Silverstein of Natick.

MR. SILVERSTEIN: Good morning, members of the Board, Commissioner Driscoll. My name is Irwin Silverstein. I'm currently a member of the Needham School Committee, but the views I'm about to express are my own personal views and do not represent nor have they been discussed by my school committee. My background is as follows: I have a doctorate in environmental engineering and I'm a professional engineer. I have taught engineering courses at Northeastern and Tufts Universities. I'm certified to teach high school chemistry in Massachusetts. Two summers ago I participated on a panel that set cut scores for the grade 8 mathematics MCAS test. I'm speaking to you now to offer some perspective on how districts are responding to the math frameworks and the MCAS tests. Currently, topics such as probability, statistics, and geometry are being tested at the 8th and 10th grade levels. In reaction to the inclusion of these topics, curricula are being modified to introduce these topics at earlier grade levels with a well-meaning intent to help our students succeed. However, a consequence of the earlier introduction of these topics may be less time spent on such foundation subjects as Algebra I. As we know, there

is a national controversy about the state's standards in mathematics. Parenthetically, Massachusetts' current standards were given a grade F by the Fordham Foundation, but as a point of reference, Florida got a grade A from the American Foundation of Teachers, a C plus for the Council of Basic Education, and a D from the Fordham Foundation. When viewed in this context, allowing districts more flexibility in how they prepare our students for high-stakes testing of mathematical skills would be well advised. Toward that objective, I feel it would be useful to offer an alternative MCAS test at the 8th grade level in Algebra I. The inclusion of this choice would help to provide incentives for districts to offer alternative math instruction pathways and allow the development of a better database for comparison between different pedagogical styles. As we have learned from the whole language/phonics issue, adjustments to curricula should be made in a cautious manner, and perhaps the best way to improve the mathematical skills of all of our students is to encourage a variety of pedagogical approaches. Toward this end, I'm in favor of the proposed changes to the math frameworks. Thank you.

Wilfred Schmid, Professor at Harvard University.

MR. SCHMID: Good morning, Chairman Peyser, Commissioner Driscoll, members of the Board. My name is Wilfred Schmid. I speak to you as a parent, as a mathematician, and as a participant in the process that resulted in the document now before you. When we began the latest round of revisions, we were asked to produce a framework that is mathematically sound and sets standards at an international level. We met those objectives, while retaining the format of the June draft, with many sample problems, many of them taken from NCTM, with classroom vignettes, and standards organized according to the NCTM scheme of strands and substrands.

Have you heard from the critics of the current draft? Time is too short to respond to everything they have said. But I see three major themes that the critics have brought up and I would like to briefly address each of them. First, the critics charge that the draft mandates a return to old-fashioned teaching methods. Well, even a cursory glance at the draft shows that the mathematical substance is very similar to what you will find in most reform curricula. And if you doubt it, compare the high school standards to textbooks co-authored by Eiston (phonetic). The draft is, however, scrupulously neutral as to pedagogical approach. It does not mandate a reform approach in the classroom, but it does not prohibit it either, and perhaps it is this neutrality that angers the critics.

The critics also charge that the draft neglects conceptual understanding. Ridiculous. Time and again the standards ask students to demonstrate understanding of this topic or that. Yes, the draft puts emphasis also on computational fluency, as it should. Conceptual understanding and computational fluency go hand in hand, and we need not and indeed we must not choose between the two. Equity is another theme of the critics. The draft violates equity, they say, by listing separate standards for courses in algebra, geometry, and pre-calculus. But look at those standards. They repeat the standards of the grade 9 through 12 multistrand courses almost verbatim. The difference is simply some additional emphasis on formal arguments and proofs. The claim that Lee Stiff made that somehow there is a difference in the multistrand standards and the single-discipline course standards is just not true. Just look at the document. NCTM guidelines spell out what equity should mean on the level of curriculum. Namely, providing a challenging curriculum for all students, not only those taking single-subject courses. The framework draft does just that! The question of whether single-subject courses should be offered and if so, when, should be decided by local school boards, not by the curriculum framework.

Some critics regard the standards of the framework draft as unrealistically high. But state law suggests that they be set at an international level. The standards in the draft are slightly less demanding than those in the current California framework, which has been in effect already for two years. Contrary to predictions, the sky did not fall down in California after the standard were adopted. Elementary and middle school children did reasonably well on the assessment test based on the current California framework. NCTM 2000 cites high expectations for all students as an equity issue. This framework draft is demanding. No doubt Massachusetts students and their teachers will meet the challenge. I urge you to adopt the framework draft. It is a balanced document which sets demanding but realistic goals for 4 students in this Commonwealth.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you very much, and I also want to thank you for all the time and effort you spent on this document. It's been certainly unpaid I think is a fair statement, but we are very grateful for the time and energy you invested in it.

FROM THE FLOOR: Let the record reflect this is supposed to be public comment. The DOE has inserted its -- It's offered as if it were public comment.

Chris Martes, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.

MR. MARTES: Good morning. Thank you. Chairman Peyser, Commissioner Driscoll, Board of Education members, my name is Chris Martes and I'm the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Our association represents all of the public school superintendents in Massachusetts, and parenthetically, based on my five-minute conversation, we think including Wilfredo LaBoy, along with many of the assistant superintendents, associate members and retired members. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this morning about the mathematics curriculum framework.

As you know, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents has played a key role in the ongoing discussion of this document since the Board decided to endorse the framework with conditions last February. We have worked closely with Jim Hamos, Claire Graham, Peg Bonderew, and an impressive group of many mathematics educators across the Commonwealth. I believe that progress has been made over the past few months. I think that the process of inclusion and working with a variety of important constituencies has improved. The mathematics curriculum framework controversy has created an opportunity for practitioners to have a stronger voice. Now that they have been heard, I think that it is clear to you today that they are not going to give up. This discourse and dialogue is a very, very good thing. An incredible amount of work has been accomplished by a group of educators who have the best interests of all students at heart. At heart. The many face-to-face meetings, e-mails, and ongoing on-line drafts and redrafts have shown me that caring and knowledgeable people do make a difference. They represent some of the best mathematics educators in this state and certainly in this country. They understand what outstanding teaching looks like and what needs to happen for high achievement to take place. We are all aware of the student achievement issues associated with mathematics. This is why our work needs to continue. The voice of the practitioner will add to this document which will create a richer set of standards that will foster a deeper understanding of the usefulness of mathematics. We are committed to working with the Department of Education, the mathematics teachers associations across the state, and the school principals association to make sure that this document, the mathematics curriculum framework, is the best one in the nation. Thank you.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you. Before jumping into discussion around the framework, there's one item of business on the agenda which is the approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

DR. DELATTRE: On page 19 of the minutes, in the bottom paragraph, four lines in it says, quoting me, "I have no belief for whether triangle trigonometry." It should be "brief". And later in that paragraph the text refers to Sam Vanderbilt. It's Sam Vanderveld, V-E-L-D, instead of B-I-L-T.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 19, 2000 Regular Meeting as amended.

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

REVISED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IN MATHEMATICS - Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Next we'll move on to the business at hand which is consideration of the revised curriculum framework in mathematics. Before beginning a discussion, I just want to extend my personal thanks and the thanks of the Board to a few people. The first certainly is the Commissioner himself who has thrown himself personally and fully into this exercise over the last several months, certainly since the conditional approval of the prior draft, and has been intensively involved and engaged in this process. As I think I've said at an earlier meeting, this was not part of the original plan of the job description, but it's a demonstration of the level of commitment that the Commissioner has to getting it right, and to making sure that we are doing the best thing for the children of the Commonwealth. So I greatly appreciate the work that he has done, and I would also add further, just to underline the point, that any suggestion that the process has been exclusionary fails to appreciate the work that the Commissioner has done in reaching out to all parties concerned and to solicit their input, which is not to say at the end of the process everyone comes out satisfied, or that there's a consensus. But everyone was given an opportunity and everyone was listened to seriously. I also want to make sure that I extend my thanks and the Board's thanks to Sandra Stotsky, Tom Noonan, Bethe McBride and the other people in the Department who were part of putting this document together. This is in

many ways a thankless task, but just to make sure that it's not completely thankless, I extend my thanks for the work that you have done.

The Education Reform Act states explicitly that the curriculum frameworks must meet the following standards: they must set high expectations for student performance, consistent with the level of skills, competencies and knowledge expected of students in the most educationally advanced nations; the skills, competencies and knowledge set forth in the frameworks must be expressed in terms that lend themselves to objective measurement; and they must provide sufficient detail to guide and inform curriculum and textbook development, professional development, and the certification and evaluation of teachers. I believe there is broad agreement that the 1995 mathematics framework did not meet these standards. The framework lacked the kind of depth and specificity necessary to inform curriculum, instruction or assessment. It was, in my view and in the view of many others, unbalanced and overly prescriptive in its treatment of pedagogy. Of equal importance, the 1995 document did not adequately appreciate the need for all students to master the basic skills and facts of mathematics, as the foundation for a deeper understanding of math concepts. In many ways, the draft before us today reflects a compromise. The overarching standards of each strand are drawn from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Many of the selected problems and classroom activities that are used to illustrate the standards are taken directly from NCTM's Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. Exploratory concepts that encourage students to experiment with different ways of applying math principles and to investigate possible solutions to unfamiliar problems, are associated with every strand in every gradespan. At the same time, the revised framework adds many specific learning standards that explicitly describe the skills and knowledge students are expected to acquire by the end of each two-year gradespan. The new framework recommends the teaching of conventional algorithms or methods for conducting basic math operations as a minimum, although not exclusive, component of elementary math instruction. The framework also acknowledges the importance of both integrated math courses and individual discipline courses, by organizing the upper-level standards to support either approach.

Some critics have argued that this revision of the math framework represents a step backward to the dark ages of math instruction, when teachers stood stiffly at the blackboard, while students recited formulas and multiplication tables. I don't believe this caricature of the bad-old days ever really existed, but even if it did, that is not at all what is envisioned by the framework before us today. The present draft is a content-rich document that will lift expectations for students and teachers alike. In that sense, the revised framework is not a compromise at all. It envisions a K-12 math education that challenges students to master the essential tools and concepts of mathematics, while asking them to apply their skill and knowledge to meaningful problems. This is the kind of curriculum that all students deserve and it is just the kind of curriculum that for too long has been denied our most needy children. Mathematics is a gatekeeper, which can either open or close opportunities for career and educational success. We have an obligation to ensure that students throughout the Commonwealth, regardless of where they live or how much money their parents make, have access to a rich, challenging and effective math curriculum. I believe this framework will help us fulfill that obligation. The process of revising this framework has been excruciating and long. I'm convinced that it has helped us produce a better product. But the time for debating and rewriting is over. It is now time to set about the more important task of improving student achievement. I urge the Board to adopt the revised framework. Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I will make every attempt to be brief because I know how long a process this has been. So many things run through my mind as I look at various experiences I have had over 30 years, 35 years, looking at good instruction and poor instruction, good results, poor results. I had an opportunity to sit in the 3rd grade classroom at the Kensington Street School in Springfield, a school, by the way, that is 92 percent free and reduced lunches, has every problem an urban city school would have. They also happen to have the highest percent of increase in MCAS scores in mathematics in the Commonwealth. We did a little exercise, Bill Edgerly and I, passing the bean bag, and we counted 3, 6, 9, and the kids have to get it right as they go around. And if I thought that that's all that the Kensington Street School is doing in terms of mathematics education, I would be a little bit disappointed because I do believe in the "aha." I was a PI, principal investigator, of PALMS when the first mathematics framework was written. I would simply suggest to you that what we have done is pass the bean bag. As the mathematics framework was produced in 1995, it not only received a D from the Fordham Foundation -- some would say that's not exactly an organization that is ideologically neutral. But unlike the science framework that received a very solid B plus, it received a D from the American Federation of Teachers, and I know from the chief state school officers that they have concerns about that framework as well, and I was very involved in the writing of that framework and editing it and so forth. And I look back now at that framework and I wonder, What we were thinking? And I know what we were thinking. We were thinking that all of the business in classrooms is up to those at the local level, and so you will see virtually no specificity but very broad concepts and ideas. The reaction of the field by and large, particularly as we headed towards MCAS, was one that asked us to

be clear on what it was we wanted. Some in this room helped us write the bridge document, the assessment and expectation document.

So we passed the bean bag to the Department of Education and the state because in 1995 no one trusted the state to set specific standards. They did allow us to write a document that was broad and to stay in line with NCTM and other things, and so now we have gone forward and people like to blame MCAS. You know, somebody once said, a parent wrote in Springfield, that a man went on a diet, he bought a mirror and he looked at the mirror and he hadn't lost any weight. So he did the logical thing: he threw away the mirror. MCAS is a reflection of what's going on in mathematics in the United States of America and what's going on in mathematics in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and it's not a pretty picture. And it's not a pretty picture because we have gotten away from what our souls should tell us what to do, and what our hearts and minds should tell us what to do with young people. We have people in our classrooms who are drilling and killing, and shame on them. But we have people who aren't getting to right answers either, and shame on them.

And so I say, We pass the bean bag. We put out exactly what it is that kids should know and be able to do with very high standards, because that's what the law requires. All you need to do is look at the data. How can you look at Taiwanese kids coming over here, being given the Maryland test? It would be like giving them MCAS. No preparation, no idea what the Maryland test is about, and they blew it away. They don't use calculators, they don't have 65 standards. And I am a little sorry there's so many, but that's consensus at this point.

And so I think what has to happen is that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this Board and this Department, ought to do what the law tells us to do which is to establish the right standards that are comparable throughout this country and throughout this world. And then it's up to you. The bean bag gets passed to those of you that think you know what everything is about, and that's fine. You want to teach Chicago Math? Teach Chicago Math. You want to do IMP or PMP or whatever it is? Fine. This framework is not a document that produces inequity. People produce the inequity. There is nothing in this document that tells us to go on two different paths or go on a slower route or whatever it happens to be. Our job is to be very clear on the standards because you know what? Our kids aren't getting it. And half the world tells me, Well, they are not getting it because we have people that are back in the traditional way of drilling and killing, that's why they are not getting it. Parents tell me they are not getting it and that's why my kids are being tutored because they are not being presented with the basics or any kind of basic standards. You don't have to get to a right answer. I have a senior high school calculus teacher telling me she asked her kids 80 times 16 and they all dove for their bags to take out their calculators. 80 times 16. They don't have the confidence to multiply 80 times 16 in senior high school. So it is fine to blame whoever we want to blame.

I think there are two suggestions that make a lot of sense to me today. First was Jim Kaput who talked about using the web. I think that's absolutely the right thing to do. We now have classes with over 200 districts -- one little classroom teacher started that process -- where every mathematics teacher or teacher in any subject area can go on line and share with other teachers across the Commonwealth. That's what we ought to do: share best practices, share best examples in the classroom to make things come alive. Second suggestion I think was by Chris Martes of the superintendents' association. This should be a discourse. Every time you get to finalize a framework, and many of you know this, there's a scramble. And so as we scrambled to try to finalize this document, we were given quite a bit of material by groups that aligned it with NCTM. And let me just give you one example which I think summarizes -- and by the way, we accepted 47 percent of what was submitted. But let me give you an example I think that typifies the debate. Our standard says, Name and write in numerals whole numbers to a thousand, identify, so forth, the place value. The recommendation was to add: Use multiple models to develop initial understanding of place value. I think that's correct. That is correct. Go to it. Take the bean bag and make mathematics come alive for our students. I believe our job -- and by the way, this Board sent some very clear messages to me and I in turn accepted them and agreed to them, about standard algorithms, about calculators. I think we have balanced that well. About including specific courses. We write a science framework and everybody endorses it and then we send it out and it's about a multistrand approach, and whatever percentage, 58 percent of our high schools still teach biology, chemistry, physics or whatever. Now, we can continue to send out another framework that says do it in a multistrand approach, or we can recognize that that's what they are going to do and that's the choice they are going to make and allow that kind of choice.

I am very sorry for the debate, the way it has occurred in one way, because it has produced rancor. It's produced ad hominem comments. I didn't stand anybody up, by the way. I tried to make some schedules that I couldn't. I think people understand that. But I think that we have the challenge here today as set by Chris Martes to use this discourse, to use what we know, to make it come alive for the students in our classrooms. I'm very proud of this document because I think it states what needs to be stated. It sets the right goals. And overall, across this state, absolutely, people are teaching to the test too much. That's

absolutely right. But you know what? At least they are incorporating the standards that count. If they take the bean bag and bring it to the next level, which is to incorporate those standards in such a way that education comes alive, that it's about art programs and music programs and phys. ed. programs and all kinds of connections for kids and engagement for kids, then we will have succeeded. But don't blame the mirror, because this is a document that can be used to help our people, our young people, succeed in mathematics, which they are not doing today. So I'm very proud to recommend this document to the Board, I think the challenge is for us and for others to continue classroom examples and other ways to make it come alive, and I enthusiastically recommend it, Mr. Chairman.

DR. DELATTRE: I think the progress on the mathematics is spectacular, and I'm very grateful for it. As you know, I would have waited another month or six weeks and put more of the instructional guidance in it to make it what I consider a complete framework rather than bringing it forward this month. But I do understand that there really will be systematic treatment of the instructional guidance materials on the web by the Department and that it will be accessible as a companion to the framework, and that will happen soon?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes.

MS. KELMAN: I realize this is my first Board meeting and among you probably have more Ph.D.'s than I can count, but I have to go with my gut on this one, and I believe that by passing this framework, at best we will be producing students with the knowledge of these too-specific concepts that last only through their unit test on the subject, and at worst we will leave both students and teachers so overwhelmed by the excessive numbers of standards and strands that they will lose comprehension altogether. I think we must begin to trust the teachers and we must begin to work with these teachers to raise Massachusetts mathematics standards rather than by laying these heavy-handed proclamations upon them.

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 Mathematics 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 Mathematics.**

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

The motion was made by Dr. Schaefer and seconded by Dr. Thernstrom. The motion passed 7-1, Ms. Kelman opposed.

SCHOOL BUILDING ASSISTANCE: PRIORITY LIST APPROVAL & UPDATE ON LEGISLATION - Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We'll now move on to the next item on the agenda which is school building assistance, and I guess it's a combination of an update on the legislative activity and approval of the priority list which Board members should have received by fax and in the mail.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You have before you the list which I think was sent out to you, and we also have put another copy before you, since it might have got lost with the math framework. Jeff, anything you want to add or -

MR. WULFSON: These are basically the last of the projects to come through under the current process. As I think most of you know, the enacted state budget does include major changes to the SBA program. We are just at this point waiting to see if the Governor signs it this weekend. We have already started to analyze it, to start developing a work plan to implement the new legislative mandates, to make whatever changes are necessary to our regulations to conform to those changes, and to get information out to the districts by the end of the summer on the changes in policies and procedures.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me ask you two questions on the legislative piece. One is -- and I have only seen the summary so I'm not sure what the specific language is. But one of the sections around school building assistance addressed the

reimbursement rate for deseg communities and talked about providing transitional assistance in the form -- it sounded like sort of a bonus percentage points on the reimbursement formula rather than kind of an automatic leap to the 90 percent.

MR. WULFSON: That's correct. It's declining bonus points for the next few years. I believe it's ten points then it goes to five points and then down to zero.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Second thing is, I understand that there is some language in the budget which is in an outside section which states that the higher reimbursement rate for deseg communities is applicable to all school projects. Am I correct in understanding all school projects within the district?

MR. WULFSON: There is some language that we are actually still parsing over that appears at the surface, at least, to provide the 90 percent rate to any project in the district that has at least one school imbalanced --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Which may affect the Waltham situation.

MR. WULFSON: Waltham, Milton, Quincy potentially. But we are still discussing that with legal counsel and the Attorney General's office. We haven't come up with a -- the language is a bit ambiguous and we want to really parse that through before we officially make the interpretation on that.

MR. BAKER: Can you just say a little bit about what's actually in the legislation, since I'm not familiar with it? I don't think I have seen anything on it through you guys, have I?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No.

MR. WULFSON: At this point we are still waiting to see if it's signed, but the --

MR. BAKER: Unless it moves 180 degrees away from everything the administration has been saying in the last five years, I think they'll probably sign it.

MR. WULFSON: I believe so. It certainly gives the Governor not all of what he asked for, but probably 80 percent.

MR. BAKER: I think you can assume he'll sign it.

MR. WULFSON: It does keep the program in the Department but does establish the interagency advisory committee. It redoes the rates, again, along the line of the Governor's proposal of a base rate of 39 percent, and then increments based on community wealth and various incentives for good maintenance and doing renovation projects and innovative techniques.

MR. BAKER: How did it treat the issue around local expertise on projects and the ability to budget?

MR. WULFSON: Actually, there is a separate outside section that amends the state construction laws which will now require professional assistance in managing any municipal building project over $500,000, not just school building projects.

MR. BAKER: Makes it possible for people to use modular designs and standards.

MR. WULFSON: It does, and non-construction alternatives. Tuition arrangement, sharing of space.

MR. BAKER: Sounds pretty good.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay.

MR. BAKER: Why are you smirking, Mr. Peyser?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: This is small to everybody else, large to blocks of people, especially me. I'm not sure if it's in the same outside section, but there is language in the part of the public construction reform extending the filed sub-bid requirements to new trades.

MR. BAKER: Oh, God, really?

DR. THERNSTROM: It's not called a smirk.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I haven't talked to Bill about the impact of this or what position we're going to take, but there are some implications in there. I'm not sure if they are all bound together or what the story is. It's complicated. If there's no more discussion on the legislative side, I will hear a motion to approve the list.

MR. BAKER: Can I make a comment about what is on this list? It's 2.5 billion in approved spending and about 1.9 billion in state support and about 90 million to 100 million in annual spending. I mean, I have a little tantrum every time one of these comes up because it's huge. In the context of everything outside of Chapter 70, there's probably not a bigger financial commitment that this Department makes every year than this one, which is why mixing that process and that structure and that apparatus is so important. But this is really big bucks, folks, and it's just always amazing to me how we whip through it. And I guess at some point, Jeff, I think it would be great if we actually spent some serious time on this issue before we kind of --

MR. WULFSON: In fact, one of the things we talked about in terms of the new procedures, and the Chairman and I have discussed, is we need to figure out a way, if the Board wants to become involved in these project decisions -- it can't happen now at this point in the process when people are --

MR. BAKER: I appreciate the wave is already over and the boat is tipped over, to use a relatively sort of --

MR. WULFSON: Of course, this year has also had a large bump, I think you have seen the bar charts, because people were anticipating --

MR. BAKER: That's because people knew the rules of the game were going to change, so shovel as much under the door as you can.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The other thing is, the advisory panel that will be set up through regulation, which is the initial legislation making its way through now, would provide some review of these projects earlier in the process by people who have greater expertise and more direct interest in the way in which they are designed and their overall cost. One of the difficult problems we have had is we haven't had the focus or the expertise to provide much value to review these.

MR. BAKER: Even something as simple as taking what we have done today, basically, all other things being equal, we just voted to do this to the Education Department budget for the next five years. The numbers are mind boggling and they dramatically restrict our capacity to create discretionary spending opportunities each time we do this.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm not sure exactly the number, but I think this line item in the education budget is likely to grow -- well, for the coming fiscal year, actually the fiscal year we are currently in, will be two to three times higher than the growth rate for the budget as a whole, even for the Department budget as a whole, which is growing faster than the rest of the budget. So we're talking a 15 to 20 percent growth path every year, which is substantial.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Is this not the year that the Department in recommending to the Board and the Board took a low number for the appropriations as a signal? Isn't this the year we cut back?

MR. WULFSON: Basically level funded the authorization.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And of course, I think both House One and the legislature overrode that.

MR. BAKER: I think that combined with the message around the reform piece probably had something to do with the intention.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We talked about it ended today, the 20-year commitment, six billion. The Commonwealth owes today six billion dollars. It is mind boggling.

MR. WULFSON: Charlie is right. The commitment is when we approve the project and put it on the list. Regardless of what the legislation is, there's a moral commitment if not legal to eventually get to those projects. So we understand what we do today is going to have a budgetary impact five years from now.

DR. THERNSTROM: But I would like to see precisely the discussion and exploration of this whole issue that Charlie has called for. I think that would be very, very useful. I would certainly get an education and I think the rest of us would, too.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with the School Building Assistance Act, as amended, hereby approve the addition of projects to the priority list, as presented by the Commissioner and the emergency grant to Medford.**

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

STURGIS CHARTER SCHOOL: APPROVAL OF LOAN BEYOND CHARTER TERM - Discussion and Vote

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just as background on the Sturgis issue, we don't typically get involved in financial arrangements or loan agreements that charter schools enter into with banks or other lenders. However, the law does state that if a charter school attempts to enter into a loan that goes beyond the term of their charter, that the Board must approve that agreement. The purpose being in part to ensure that the Board is protecting the state's interests and not taking on a liability that is implicitly or explicitly entered into by independent parties, namely a charter school and a lender, in this case perhaps a commercial bank. Again, the purpose is to protect our interests as opposed to essentially making the decision for the lender or for the school itself as to not only the viability of the loan but also its desirability in terms of the context of the school itself. So with that perhaps confusing bit of background, let me turn it over to Susan Barker and to Jeff to explain a little bit about the background here and make a recommendation.

MS. BARKER: Sturgis Charter School is located in Hyannis and has completed its second year of operation, and the charter school model has existed in a couple of ways in this school. They have had an external audit of their books, they have had a programmatic audit done by Daniel Dennis, as well as they have completed their first site visit in the step toward renewal of their charter, and they have, as many charters find to be the case, had some trouble in terms of facilities. And they are coming to you for approval of this loan based on a facilities-driven need to expand the schools. This is a school that has a large amount of parental support. Parents have contributed over $230,000 to the school so that it can continue to provide a rigorous academic program to children.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What specifically are the facilities issues that they are dealing with?

MS. BARKER: In order to expand as the terms of their charter indicates in terms of enrollment, the school needs to build out the facility or do some leasehold improvements in the facility where they are currently located. In addition, there's some programmatic implications to their facilities because they are pursuing an international baccalaureate designation, and there are very rigorous standards for becoming an international baccalaureate school that includes things like having a full complement of biology, chemistry lab, media, some international language opportunities. And so all of those investments come in a facilities package.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: All the funds being borrowed would be used for that purpose?

MS. BARKER: The funds are for this, for facilities, leasehold improvements. Actually, what they are asking to do is reorganize some existing debt they have with their landlord and fold in another chunk of the money to build out so they can grow into the terms of their charter.

MR. BAKER: It's kind of a tough letter that showed up in everybody's folder this morning, which I just read, from some people who raise some pretty interesting questions that I at least would like to know something about. One of them is students are fleeing the school because people are unhappy with it. That would be a bad thing in the context of whatever their financial projections look like. Second is that there are no financial projections. If we are assuming that Daniel Dennis did an audit, then that audit must be based on some presumption of enrollment and some sense of plus or minus 10 percent. I'm guessing here. I

don't know. And that the project was not, or that the money was not going to be used to finance the facility repairs but was instead just going to be used to pay off an existing debt. That would be dramatic in the context of what it would mean in terms of a base case sort of steady-state financial analysis. So I guess my question would be do they have financial projections, are they within the realm of reasonableness given what's going on with their student population plus or minus something, and are they using this loan for the manner in which it's supposedly intended? Which is not to sort of artificially one-time inflate their revenue base but to actually engage in building improvements.

MS. BARKER: Actually, the loan agreement is with their landlord that they are asking you to enter into, and it does restructure some previous debt and include some further leasehold improvements, so it will be used for the purpose that they describe. Talking about the analysis.

MR. WULFSON: We have seen their financial projections and have discussed it with them. My characterization of the projections are they are based on a set of assumptions that if everything goes well, they'll do okay, both in terms of the enrollment growth that they are projecting and in terms of controlling costs and revenues being maintained in terms of their tuition rates. I don't think it's by any means a sure thing that they will be successful financially. If I was lending them the money, I'd think twice.

MR. BAKER: The biggest concern I have is that one about students leaving. Does that mean your enrollment numbers don't mean very much?

MS. BARKER: Currently their enrollment projections are right on target with what they told the Department in their financial projections. I'm not clear on the evidence -- I have read the letter you received, and I am not sure of the evidence based on which those statements were made. That is not the information that the school has provided to the Department and has included in their financial projections they have provided to the Department.

MR. BAKER: Having been through this "what-if" drill myself, one of the things we made sure is that within some bounds our "what-if" was still possible, so that if everything didn't go exactly as we expected it would, which of course it never does, we would still be able to more or less meet whatever our financial obligations were.

MR. WULFSON: Keep in mind, this is not a Commonwealth obligation and we made it very clear and required them to include that in the loan agreement you're voting on, but --

MR. BAKER: I know, but it's funny how those things happen.

MR. WULFSON: That's the policy that the Board will have to discuss as to whether you're concerned about whether they might not meet these projections and, if so, do you want to take away any chance that they do have for success, because clearly without the loan --

MR. BAKER: No, I'd just like to know how much faith we have in their enrollment numbers based on what's going on.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There's a related issue here which all comes under the heading which is what, really, is our obligation under sort of due diligence, I guess, for lack of a better term, to ensure that the debt that the school is entering into is somehow reasonable, even if we are not explicitly on the hook for picking up the tab if they go out of business. But one issue is whether students are leaving. I assume you've gotten enrollment reports for the coming school year that indicates they are at or near full enrollment.

MS. BARKER: I do know when the site team went there with questions related to this issue, which when they were coming before the Board they hadn't presented at that time, we asked for actual enrollment records. So we have all those things in our files. It is the case that some of the students enrolled at Sturgis are dual-enrolled at Barnstable High School, and that is the choice of those students and those parents, and neither school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You mean they are waiting to the last minute to decide what they are going to do?

MR. BAKER: Is that 1 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent?

MS. BARKER: Probably closer to 7 or 8 percent of the students are dual enrolled.

MR. BAKER: Do they have any students on a waiting list, to your knowledge?

MS. BARKER: Not a significant amount. Maybe a handful.

DR. THERNSTROM: What would be the result if that 8 percent did leave?

MS. BARKER: I don't know how it's going to relate to the financial projections in terms of repaying this loan, but it would be a decent percentage of their tuition income.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Eight percent. It's a one-to-one relationship in terms of their tuition.

MR. WULFSON: They have cash reserves to get through probably a year or two, but long-term they are counting on their enrollment going up from 280 to 400 by adding the higher grades, and they need that level of income. Keep in mind, there's been a lot of obviously chaos around the school this year, and at one point it appeared the school was going to be closing its doors, at the end of this past school year.

MR. BAKER: Some of that double enrollment could be people just hedging their bets.

MR. WULFSON: They didn't know whether the school was going to be open, so keep that in mind. The other risk, if you will, enrollment-related risk, is if the charter is not renewed when the time comes, which is three years from now, but I guess the evaluation process will be completed in two. And the other thing we need to be weighing here is does this somehow put us in a box if we decide that programmatically or educationally the school does not deserve to be renewed, but we are afraid of incurring some liability on the part of the state and therefore we do the thing that may be fiscally or financially sound but educationally unsound. That's the other -- this, again, relates to the issue of how much due diligence do we need to put into the process. I think it's kind of an interesting question. We are not technically taking a risk and the agreement has been drafted to ensure that. However, there's this obligation that may exist.

MR. BAKER: Do we have the authority to do this?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes.

MR. IRWIN: I have a couple questions, and I, like Charlie and I think everyone else, am a little disturbed by this fax that just came in. It's interesting that the time it comes in it really doesn't give us too much of a chance to look into this. But my first question is -- this should be fairly easily answered -- the school has issued no financial statements since June 30 of 1999. Is that a true statement?

MS. BARKER: That's not accurate. They have provided financial statements to us throughout the spring.

MR. IRWIN: The next part I have is concerning this loan agreement. The second to last paragraph on the first page says that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Board, the Department has nothing to do with it, yet the last sentence says, "The agreement is also subject to approval by the Massachusetts Board of Education, failing which, the terms of this letter would be void and invalid." If we have nothing to do with this, why is this in here? Why is our approval part of this?

MR. WULFSON: We have no functional liability, but under the charter school statute the school cannot enter into the loan agreement without the Board's approval.

MR. IRWIN: The Board's approval of what?

MR. WULFSON: The agreement.

MR. BAKER: I think what this was probably designed to do was to keep the boards from entering into agreements that would go beyond the length of their charter without some opportunity to look at their capacity to make payment. It sounds more like an oversight than a commitment.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think that's exactly right. The issue was trying to protect the interests, in part, of the school and of the students from a school entering into an onerous long-term debt agreement which was not in the best interests of the students enrolled in that school, that would essentially have the result of eating into operational expenses that are designed specifically to provide for educational programming and instruction. It's a little hard to divine all the legislative intent behind this, but I think that was the purpose not so much to protect creditors who are assuming financial risk, but rather to ensure that the operating revenues of the school weren't being eaten up by long-term debt agreements that extend beyond the life of the charter itself.

DR. DELATTRE: I wonder if we might be smart to consider a substitute motion that gives Dave the authority to go ahead at such time, I don't know, a day, a week, when he knows that everything in this letter is inapplicable or mistaken.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This is getting scary. That's exactly what I was going to suggest.

DR. DELATTRE: You know, I get letters like this all the time and you can't know on the face of it how much of it is reliable. It seems to me precipitous, too.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me ask a question of either Dave or general counsel which is whether we have the authority to delegate this responsibility to the Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Here would be the question. This does cry for some more time, notwithstanding the fact that someone faxes something at the last minute that, obviously, has at least some falsehoods in it, and we have dealt with these people before. I don't want to sound like Tom Reilly, but this is clear. I think with all of our materials, either through Jeff or I, it's been very clear what we are dealing with here. We are dealing with a very risky financial venture, one that a lot of people may not have confidence in. On the other hand, we are dealing with a school that we would love to see survive and grow. You know, the question is : Is the financial issue getting so murky that they are going to lose their students and then it becomes inevitable? So it is very tricky right now. It's really a very difficult situation. I would still recommend that the Board approves it, and because it's risky we have taken the steps to see to it that we are not on the hook. But my question really would be for Rhoda, Is there a way for the Board to approve it? Because if the Board doesn't approve it, then it's not going to happen and the whole thing will just fall apart. Can they approve it with all the necessary conditions to allow the Department to make sure, before the agreement is signed, that these issues are to our satisfaction?

MS. SCHNEIDER: Commissioner, Mr. Chairman, I would recommend that the Board approve it conditional on the Commissioner satisfying himself that all of the facts alleged in the letter that you just received don't undermine the decision that you have made. In other words, that the facts as they may be revealed after we look into them don't call into question the viability of the loan or the Board's decision. So I would have the Board act but conditioned on the Commissioner's satisfaction.

MR. BAKER: With the theory that Dave comes back in August and tells us either way.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: With the idea that I would tell you just simply in writing, not in a formal meeting, that we were satisfied and we can go forward.

MS. SCHNEIDER: That the Commissioner will inform you.

MR. BAKER: Can I ask one other question here? What is this about three percent of revenue, debt service requirement? I'm guessing --

MR. WULFSON: For this particular loan, yes. They have several other loans that we took into account that they would also need to satisfy over the next several years.

MR. BAKER: Is it fixed, not relative to their revenue? I don't know enough about charter schools where you guys start to get nervous about this stuff. Do you get nervous at 3 percent, at 5 percent, at 8 percent?

MR. WULFSON: The issue with charter schools is more just to open up the school's doors. That's where a lot of the fixed costs are. And then it's those incremental students that you get by adding another 50 students that brings in all of the free revenue. So it is not so much a percentage that works for any school size, but that they have got their current expenses covered

more or less and need the additional students to give them that margin, because additional students don't cost the full amount of the tuition they are bringing in.

MR. BAKER: And they don't have a cash problem, an income problem.

MR. WULFSON: They ran into a serious cash problem this year.

MR. BAKER: I must have misunderstood you, Jeff. I thought you said they won't run out of money for another year or so.

MR. WULFSON: With this loan. Without this loan -- what happened is they did a lot of renovations for the school and they never paid the landlord for renovations, so this is financing, in good part, the renovations. Without this loan I'm convinced the school will not survive financially. Whether it should or not educationally is another issue.

DR. THERNSTROM: Well, we have already got a financially very risky situation here, and at what point does it become unacceptably so? That is, Jeff just told us that the financial viability depends on actual enrollment. We will not know actual enrollment until September, and if that enrollment is make or break, then it's not possible for you to come back before September to tell us with any kind of confidence what the financial viability of this situation is.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, I do think we can, because they have to base -- they have based all of it on certain projections of enrollment, and they have identified -- they have to identify the kids and, as Susan said, they are dual enrolled. So in fact we may have to call some families or whatever. But that's part of my job is to verify whether or not -- if it is true that many of these students are now fleeing, then their own scenario falls apart. If, on the other hand, we talk to a number of families and they say, Well, as long as they get your approval and they can have this loan, the kids will go. So I think that's exactly what this motion is about is for me to go and verify what the actual enrollment will be. We can narrow that number down. We are not going to know exactly, but we will know whether or not they have overestimated or, said another way, that there are in fact, because of the financial turmoil, kids that are leaving that they were counting on. If that's the case, it makes it very difficult and that is why Rhoda said you would have a contingency in the motion. If, on the other hand, they are pretty accurate with all the kids that will come now if they get their loan, then I think the original recommendation that I made for today would be viable. It's going to be risky to some extent, we made that very clear, so I don't know which it is. And if it's somewhere in the middle, that would make it tougher. But I suspect it's going to be one or the other. Either the sum or part of these letters is right and they are losing students, and if that be the case, then that's not what we expected. If it's not, then I will verify it and we can go forward.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Are there enough places where you can stop this process if you find out that things are too risky to proceed once we, if we agree today, put you in charge of monitoring? And what can you do to reverse our decision?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, you've made a condition. The easy part is stopping it, because you made it contingent. The question will be what if it's a jump ball, and at that point we may even have to call a special meeting of the Board. I will just keep you informed.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It seems very risky.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to clarify, once we make a decision, or once the Commissioner makes the final finding, we can't three months later say --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That part I understand. That's why I'm asking the question now.

MR. BAKER: The financial risk here is being borne mostly by the landlord.

DR. THERNSTROM: Unless, as you say, at the end of the day --

MR. BAKER: Right.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think they did raise substantial monies through the parents, didn't they?

MR. WULFSON: For the new renovations. One of our concerns, if we let them start the school year, we want to be sure they can finish the school year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think the charge is, to the extent possible, to verify the validity of the enrollment figures, to do some kind of analysis of the projected cash flows, especially with respect to different scenarios around enrollment, certainly for the next school year and probably for three years out to the end of their charter. I think if you're satisfied on the basis of that analysis that they can handle the debt or that they have a shot at handling this debt, then perhaps that should be the basis of our approval. So if it's legally sound for us to approve this motion on the condition that there are those findings by the Commissioner with respect to the validity of the enrollment projections for the coming school year and cash flow projections for the coming school year and two years beyond, then I think if someone is willing to make that motion --

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 71, §89 (j)(6), approve the request of the Board of Trustees of the Sturgis Charter School in Hyannis to enter into a proposed loan agreement that extends to 2006, which is beyond the term of the school's current charter. The Board's approval is conditioned on the acknowledgement and agreement of the parties to the loan that the Commonwealth, including but not limited to the Board and Department of Education, has no liability for any portion of the loan, and provides no representations or guarantees with respect to the loan. Specifically and without limitation, the Board's approval has no impact on any action the Board may choose to take in the future with respect to probation, revocation or renewal of the charter of the Sturgis Charter School.**

The motion was made by Mr. Baker and seconded by Ms. Kelman. The motion passed 7-1, Mr. Irwin opposed.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I will very carefully communicate to Board members based on our findings so you know exactly where we stand.

DR. THERNSTROM: I think also there are the long-running implications for other charter schools down the road and what kind of precedent we are setting here, which I think is an additional problem we didn't talk about.

MR. BAKER: Let me say one thing about that. Most of the time you ought to make a decision based on the facts of the case, and I don't think this Board should think it's necessarily entering into a precedent today. I don't think we should let somebody come here a year from now with a completely different set of facts and argue precedent, because at the end of the day we are giving a certain authority here that is to be used on an ad hoc basis, and we should treat it as an ad hoc authority and not let people argue just because you did it in one circumstance, you have to do it in another.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Amen.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So we adopted that resolution six to one if my math is correct. Thank you very much.

AUTHORIZATION TO COMMISSIONER

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Education authorize the Commissioner, in consultation with the Chairman, to act on behalf of the Board in approving grants and any other matters that require action before the next regular meeting scheduled for September 26, 2000; provided that the Commissioner shall report to the Board at the next regular meeting on grants and any other matters that have been so approved.**

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

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: He promised to consult me and we promised to consult you. And by the way, just making this, I want to clarify, my expectation is we will not meet again until the end of September.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: September 26.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The plan is not to meet in August. You will not have to miss that meeting.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The Commissioner can now pass out the money to anyone he wishes.

DR. SCHAEFER: Before you bring down the gavel, is it time for any other comments? I just wanted to call attention to an article in the -- well, first of all, I'm sure that all of you have seen Marcel's article.

MR. BAKER: What a great piece.

DR. SCHAEFER: Let the record show we all thought that was a fine piece that he wrote. But I would also like to call your attention to the article by David Broder on college students not doing very well on history questions.

DR. THERNSTROM: Doing miserably.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think this begs the question, now that we have very handily dispensed with the math frameworks.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let's get onto something really controversial.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: History and social science will be an easy one.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think it's important for us to reconsider what is on the 10th grade test. It is certainly clear to me that American History is the critical thing that should be tested. We should make sure that our students understand this government, understand what self-government means, and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens of this country. I mean, there's been a lot written about this. The U.S. Congress got involved in this. It's really a disgrace.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Sandra, when are we presenting the first initial at least overview of the history/social science framework? Will it be in the fall?

MS. STOTSKY: We hope to finish our selection of candidates at that point and then have an idea of what we'll be setting out.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I will live to regret these words, but I honestly believe when we present the finalized framework, it will not be as controversial as was the math.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's not saying very much.

MR. IRWIN: We have had no problem with this before, have we?

MR. BAKER: This test was in the New York Times about four or five Sundays ago. My wife and I took it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: How did you do?

MR. BAKER: We did fine.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: On that note, we'll be adjourned.

The Board of Education meeting adjourned at 12:00 a.m.