COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

*****Special Meeting *****
Lynn Community Charter School

106 Broad Street
Lynn, Massachusetts
Monday, February 11, 2002

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT:

Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Dorchester
Mr. Henry M. Thomas, III, Vice-Chairman, Springfield
Mr. J. Richard Crowley, Andover
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education
Mr. William K. Irwin, Wilmington
Mr. James Madden, Randolph
Dr. Roberta Schaefer, Worcester
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Secretary to the Board

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good afternoon everyone. If you could all take your seats, we'll try to get started. Hopefully, we can be done by seven o'clock, as we planned. Thank you all for coming. My name is Jim Peyser. I'm Chairman of the Board of Education. We are to here to have a special meeting to hear from the Department of Education, and from the Lynn Community Charter School, to discuss the pending application of renewal of the Lynn Community Charter School charter. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. We are not going to be taking any votes today. The purpose of this meeting, as I indicated, is to hear from the school, as well as to hear from the Department, and to have some discussion back and forth among Board members, and those who come forward to make statements. We will be taking this issue up for a vote at the upcoming February 26th meeting.

For those of you who are concerned about the process going forward, the Board at this point, has all options open to it in terms of what action it could take on February 26. If there is an adverse decision on the part of the Board, that would trigger an opportunity on the part of the school, if it so desired, to ask for an adjudicatory hearing, which is, in effect, an appeal of that decision, which would then trigger, obviously, an additional process, and would cause the Board to have to come back and consider the appeal at a subsequent Board meeting. As I indicated, though, there will be no votes taken at this meeting. Our purpose is to learn and to hear, and to have a discussion about the issues before us. In terms of the order, I hope the way that we can proceed to hear from the Department of Education, and then from the school itself. And having just created that order, I'd like to take out of order the Mayor of Lynn to make an opening statement, if that's okay, Mr. Mayor, with you. I'm sensitive to your schedule, and if you would come forward, Mayor Clancy, and start us off, that would be terrific. Thank you very much.

MAYOR CLANCY: Thank you, Jim, members of the Board, Commissioner Driscoll. And certainly, I would like to begin, since you're in the City of Lynn for this particular purpose, but

certainly to thank yourself, Jim, and particularly Commissioner Driscoll, because education reform has meant a great deal to the entire City of Lynn and its children, including the Lynn Community Charter School, which we're in here today. Without Dave Driscoll's steadfast support of education reform and standards and all of that, the Lynn Public Schools wouldn't have made the great strides that it has over the past ten years. So I want to thank Commissioner Driscoll.

That having been said, we do have a little bit different feeling, I think, on this particular issue. And I know, Jim, you're familiar with my prior life as a state senator, and I know Commissioner Driscoll is. But maybe for the edification of some of the other Board members so they understand where I've come from, I have been a solid proponent of two concepts under the Education Reform Law, the charter school issue and the accountability piece. Obviously, everyone has always been for the additional funding and for building the schools and all of that. But sometimes, the rubber has hit the road when it's come to the issue of charter school funding. There's been vigorous opposition to that at different times during the last few years in the Legislature, and also, the accountability piece, the MCAS and the graduation requirement and all that. Just so everyone understands that I have been a proponent of both.

And I think, now to speak to where we are here today, I think this Charter School, and the socioeconomic group it stands for and represents is the raison d'être why the Charter School was created, and why I have always felt so strongly that people that maybe do not have as much economic means still can have choice in their children's education. I think that has been a fundamental precept. I think it's the most valid and compelling reason that we're here today. And so, I think we have to look at that. And Lynn, as you probably all know, is a below foundation community. It has children from all over the planet. I think there's some 40 languages spoken. But even when you compare -- and Lynn is a below-foundation community. It's an urban community. It's a proud community, but it has a large contingent of poor people. The group here at this school is even a little more difficult economic circumstances than their peers. So it shows that people who are having a very difficult time making ends meet still are very focused about the choice of their children's education. No one here is leaving their children's future to chance. And I would ask you all in your deliberations to keep that very much in mind because these people have made a choice. They've made, with their time, their efforts; they're doing something. They're doing something very positive. And where many others haven't been, or many others put the task of educating the children onto the school department or the guidance counselor or the minister or someone else, these people, these parents have come forward. And I think that's critical.

I think the second thing, in addition to the background of the student community, is that, while the accountability piece -- and I know it's the reason -- I think it's the reason Dave felt compelled to step forward, and I stand behind that. It can't be sloughed off; it can't be ignored, but that when we look at the breakdown of what's happened here, children who have attended the school for a longer period of time are doing better than some of their classmates. Since the new administration with Ms. Marx, there's been a strong improvement in the administration here and the mission of the school. I've also had a chance to review, and in some detail look at the remediation plan, and that seems to have great validity. I do believe that given an opportunity, some period of time to put their administrative, or the accountability piece in order, that it can be done.

I'll finish up. I'll certainly be glad to take any questions. I could go on for an hour on this because, as I say, I've spent the last ten years in the Legislature on -- you know, education has

been the hallmark of really what we've done up here. And these two pieces of it have really been -- and I'd share some stories with you, but it would take too long -- that both on the charter school and the accountability, I have been a big supporter of both, unquestioned, unflinchingly, un-anything. And I don't think here that's mutually exclusive. I think that the population and what we have here today is -- as I'll repeat myself -- the absolute core of the Charter School's mission. Now, it needs some buffing up. It needs some work. There's no hidey-tidying that over. But I would suggest to you, don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Let's give us some breathing room and, hopefully, be able to bring this up where the rest of the public school children and other students educated here in the City of Lynn are going. I thank you very much. I'm not leaving. I want to stay and listen to a lot of this. But I thank you for taking me out of turn. But I'm going to be very interested in staying and listening to hear what everybody's got to say. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Does anyone have a question?

MR. THOMAS: I'm just curious to know, if one can identify the areas of challenge and need of improvement within the Lynn Community Charter School, to what extent is the city administration and the school district prepared to provide some support to the Charter School to enhance those areas or improve those areas that are in most need?

MAYOR CLANCY: I can certainly extend a welcoming hand of cooperation. My administration -- and I haven't got into it in any great detail with the new school committee -- I would want -- the Charter School is a public school, and it's part of the Ed Reform Law, and it would be -- you know, I would be willing to do anything I can. We have got a very serious issue with the Chapter 70 projections. I think we know that even the first numbers that were released by Governor Swift seemed to be on very unfirm footage. So whether it's the city as a whole or this particular entity, dollars are going to be tight here. I certainly can't promise any additional appropriation.

MR. THOMAS: I wasn't thinking money as much as I was thinking technical assistance and other kinds of support.

MAYOR CLANCY: My door would be open. As I say, I've been with them from day one, the concept from day one.

MR. THOMAS: Thanks.

MAYOR CLANCY: Thank you all very, very much for being here.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want to thank you, and I want to acknowledge what you have said about your longstanding support for charter schools and for education reform, and your willingness to step up to the plate as Mayor. As Chair of the School Committee here in Lynn, I think it's a great testament to your commitment because it's not easy work, and you are engaged in it every day. So thank you very much. Thank you for coming.

MAYOR CLANCY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Next if the representatives from the Department would come forward. And Kristin, for the record, could you introduce yourself and your colleagues?

MS. McINTOSH: Yes. That's actually my only role at this table. Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, and Commissioner, for allowing us to appear briefly before you today. We will try to keep our presentations as short as possible. I'm Kristin McIntosh. I'm Legal Counsel for the Department of Education. I'm also the Acting Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools. With me today, at the end is Rebecca Wolfe. She's the Director of Charter School Accountability, and Robert Lee, who is a data analyst with the Department of Education. Rebecca will be giving you a brief overview of charter school accountability generally, and then, specifically, as that relates to the Lynn Community Charter School. And Robert Lee will be going through a statistical analysis of Lynn Public Schools versus Lynn Community Charter School, as was requested by the Board of Education at its January meeting. Robert's analysis specifically controls for those demographic characteristics that the Board was concerned may be having an undue influence on the impasse results.

MS. WOLFE: Thank you, Chairman Peyser, members of the Board, and Commissioner Driscoll. First, we have sent a number of documents to members of the Board. You understand the accountability process, and you've read the summary of review that was in the last Board packet. But I just want to very briefly re-introduce the accountability process, and especially as it applies to Lynn.

First of all, the Board of Education authorizes charter schools. And in doing that, the Board has set up an accountability process, which you have outlined in the accountability handbook. I'm not going to go over particulars on what happens in year 2 and year 3, but more the general idea behind the accountability process, which basically says, as authorizers, you have set forth this process that says a school has five years -- five years, at which time, we're going to give you increased freedom to be able to set your mission and your goals that your school is going to try to reach. In return, you're going to create the accountability plan, which answers three questions. At the end of five years, you have to tell us, is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and has the school been faithful to the terms of its charter? That is what's outlined in here, and that's what charter school accountability sticks to.

This is an accountability process that is well known throughout charter authorizers. This is a process that a lot of people have looked at as a very solid process, the cornerstone of which is outcomes; that you say you're freed from a lot of these things, but you have increased accountability. This is a process that the schools are aware of, and it's a process that is different for charter schools than it is for traditional public schools. It's completely different. And so, charter schools are held to a higher standard of accountability, and it's something that schools -- every time I talk to a school, those three questions are mentioned. Every time I go into a school, the three questions are mentioned. So schools are aware. They're not blind-sided in year five.

So just to speak very briefly to Lynn. Again, you have all the information. I'm willing to answer any questions on the particulars. But I would actually like to turn the tables a little bit. If you've read the newspaper articles or heard the news, the big focus has been on the academic program. And that is only one of the three questions regarding charter school accountability. So I'd like to actually jump first to question number two, which is organizational viability, which, as the sole authorizers and the sole oversight, the Board of Education needs to be really looking at the viability of an organization.

Like I said, you have the documents. There has been a history at the school over the four and a half years of organizational instability on a lot of different levels. It's been on the Board of

Trustees level, and Board members have many documents to understand that. It's been at the administration level with some turnover. It's been even at the teacher level with the high rate of teacher turnover and other things that Board members have in front of you. And this instability has not -- while there have been some major changes that have happened, there's no evidence that this instability has been fixed. This really speaks to whether the capacity is there to move forward in a way that the school needs to move forward.

The school organization -- let me say the school is fiscally solvent and stable. It's not about to go under. That's not a question. There is parent satisfaction. They have had a decent amount of student attrition, not only from moving, but also from people choosing a different option. But they have high parent satisfaction. But it does go beyond that. As holders of the charter, the Board of Trustees -- there are a lot of questions that remain there. And as I said, it really is important in this capacity.

The question becomes extremely important when you go forward and see the plans the school does have to make changes, and the plans that they have going forward. This also kind of segues into the third question, which is faithfulness to terms of the charter. And there has been a real misunderstanding, I think, among the Board of Trustees of what the vision is, what they are trying to be faithful to, what they're continuing to put forward as the main goal. I think that's something that's been found in the documents since the very beginning of the school, especially in the renewal inspection report, which Board members have in front of you. And so, those are those two questions.

Then, we go to the academic success question. I'm going to let Robert Lee tell you in more detail the impact analysis, which I think Board members have been sent. But looking beyond MCAS -- because it's not just that -- they do give help on your achievement tests, and analysis of that, cohort analysis has shown no appreciable growth in student achievement. There has been some student achievement on the assessment they do for reading. But then there's this huge piece that's very important that they have had missing, which is the internal assessment. They haven't got a viable assessment system as it stands. And that matters. That puts a heavy emphasis on the standardized test, which we'll talk about more what that shows.

So basically, as a Department, we're unable to answer affirmatively to any of the three questions that guide charter renewal, which is a really important part of the process. We can't stand before you and say that this school has been able to do it, and we can't say with sincerity that the capacity is definitely there. And I will just end with a quote from the accountability handbook, which basically talks about this freedom that charter schools receive, and it says, "In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate good results within five years or lose its charter." And that's good results academically. But let me say, for you all and for the press, organizationally, and as it deals with faithfulness to the terms of the charter.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Rebecca, based on the process that's been established, does there need to be a yes answer to all three questions? Is it okay to have a yes to one and not to another, to the extent there are rules or guidelines for that?

MS. WOLFE: Right. To the extent there are rules and guidelines, it's not that clear. But there is something about saying a school is not an academic success, but has a clear organizational capacity to bring that into being any additional plans that they say, any remediation plans. So I think there's room for variable answers for a yes on some and no on others. But that's the real

crux of the issue here is that, as we see it, and as the evidence shows from the documents. It's three no's.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In addition, there are these annual reports or annual visits that are done. How many would have been done prior to the renewal inspection?

MS. WOLFE: There's an official full day site visit that has a protocol that's followed, et cetera. That happened in the second year and in the third year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And can you just summarize what the findings were and what the recommendations might have been?

MS. WOLFE: Well, they do no recommendations at that point. There are just findings. In the second year, they were in a start-up. As with most schools, the academic success piece isn't as big because they usually only have one year of data. A lot of times, they don't have data at all because they haven't had a grade that MCAS is in, or there wasn't MCAS, or whatever the situation. The one consistent thread between them all has been the tension between the Board and the administration. Academic, they did find -- which is one of the things we look in the third of where their curriculum stands -- and they did a great job at aligning the curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, or having a consistent curriculum. The problem is that the team in the fifth year found that that wasn't implemented. So that's where it kind of can fall off is the implementation. And that has a lot to do, I think, with teacher turnover and issues of that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Again, the annual interim visits are not intended to be quite as judgmental, if you will, as the renewal report. But were some of the weaknesses that have been identified in the renewal report identified in those earlier reports?

MS. WOLFE: Yes. Some of them. Not all of them, but some of them, yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And who were the members who did the inspection? Do you have that information?

MS. WOLFE: I have, but not in front of me. But it was -- I know that on one of them, it was the Director of Accountability at the time. I actually don't have that information in front of me. I can get it for you. I can have the second and third year visits given to you.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER:: That would be useful, if you could provide copies of that, as well as some background on the numbers of the inspection team for the renewal visit.

MS. WOLFE: Okay. Their titles will be there. How much information I can get about their background -- It was different people at the time, but --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But in general, it's fair to say that the inspection teams maybe four or five people?

MS. WOLFE: It depends on the size of the school. But it would probably be around -- for the size of the school at the time, it probably would have been four or five people. It would have been at least one Department staff person, and then, people from the community, practitioners, educational leaders, the kind of people who know a lot about organizational issues.

MR. LEE: To introduce myself, I'm Robert Lee. I don't work with the Charter School Office. I work with accountability in the area of assistance, helping them put together the data that they use for their reviews. I was asked, under special circumstances, to provide this analysis. And specifically, the questions that were put to me were, do the demographics of the Lynn Community Charter School differ substantially from those of Lynn in general, and do those differences account for the relatively poor performance in the last couple of years? The second aspect that I looked at was, is there something unusual about the distribution of results? Are there two or three or four or five kids in a small school that are driving the performance?

Let's get right into it. I'm going to go right to the punch line. The demographics are, in some cases, significantly different. For instance, there were no Asian students in the group that was tested in fourth grade in 2001. Their low-income rate is somewhere in the middle of the Lynn Public Schools. There are 12 schools that would have higher poverty rates, and 18 schools that have lower poverty rates. So you'd say that they were in the range, but they were somewhere around two-thirds of the way up there. So there are differences in demographics. That means that we proceed with an analysis to see whether those demographics had an effect.

Now, among Lynn Public Schools and Lynn Community Charter School fourth graders, when you control for demographics on the MCAS, the math performance was not significantly different from LCCS from the public schools in 1998 or 1999. The math performance was significantly lower than district performance in 2000 and 2001. The Charter School's ELA performance was significantly better than the district performance in 1998. It was not significantly different in 1999, and it was significantly lower than district performance in 2000 and 2001.

A second analysis I conducted involved using the fourth graders who took the 1999 MCAS, and then, took the math test in sixth grade. So in this analysis, I not only controlled for demographics, but how much math did they know when they were fourth graders. Are they losing ground when you compare them to their peers throughout the Lynn community? When I conducted that, there were differences but they were not significant when you control for fourth grade baseline performance and demographics.

The third analysis that I conducted involved the eighth graders that, just for the first time in this school took the MCAS in 2001. And on that, when you control for demographics, performance was significantly lower on both tests. I've looked at the third grade and seventh grade results, and I can answer questions about those later. These were the areas that I was told to concentrate on.

These are some of the variables that you can look at in your packets, I should say. And those of you who picked up the packets, there are two pages that contain demographic information. I don't have them in the PowerPoint presentation. You can go down the list. There's no point in reading the numbers to you. But I sorted that list on the percent low income in the school. And you can see that Lynn Community Charter School, among Lynn schools had the 13th highest percentage in low income. These are some other comparisons you can see. All the blue lines here would be the Charter School, and all the purple lines are the Lynn Public Schools. And this is just of the fourth graders who took the test in 2001. You can see there are differences. First of all, in White percentage, there were 45 percent White in the public schools, 22 percent White at the Charter School, somewhat more African Americans. Again, there are no Asians. You can go down this list. I don't want to just read percentages to you that you can look at on your own. So using some of these factors, and not all of them -- for instance, you wouldn't want to use the reading homework scale result. That's a questionnaire item. There's a difference,

but that's a difference that the school could control, and it's not really a demographic question. I just presented that for your information. Other items like how many books they have in their home and whether they are a computer user, I did use, and I controlled for the average effects that those variables have in the Lynn community. This is the model. I don't want to spend a lot of time on this. It's somewhat technical.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I interrupt for just a second? In the special education and LEP section, it appears to be zero. I mean, I'm not sure exactly how to interpret the numbers, but there's no blue bar in your ---

MR. LEE: There were no students in the fourth grade class that ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right. Now, I think the school would probably argue -- at least it appears so to be the case in their renewal application -- that there are students that, were they in the Lynn Public Schools, would be categorized or classified as special education or LEP. But because of the way in which the school is operated, and because of the sort of ethos, I guess, perhaps of inclusion, that those students aren't counted.

MR. LEE: And they don't have an IEP plan.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Correct.

MR. LEE: Actually, I discussed this at some length with Dave Perda and Christyan Mitchell, who are colleagues of mine at the Department, and we decided to exclude them. If you look at this model, you'll notice when I was controlling for demographics, I did not include special education or LEP, which would normally be quite substantial. It would have a substantial effect. That effect could only have benefited the public schools since none of the students in fourth grade were categorized as SPED or LEP, which sort of means I assumed that there was a similar percentage, even though there wasn't. I just felt that the analysis should be conservative on that question. I can explain more about that if that's not clear, but ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's clear.

MR. LEE: --- we did think about that when we were developing this. I don't think I should explain this unless there are some specific questions, but this is the model, and these are the variables that I did include in the model for the fourth grade group, and for the eighth grade group. And I was able to use similar variables for the other groups, but not all of them were available for all the cases. And when you see the items answered there, I used the raw score because we have some issues with the scales right now where the scales are flat and steep in different parts. So a difference of four items is not the same in all parts of the scale. For a technical analysis like this, it was more appropriate to use raw scores. And that's what I'm going to be using throughout this.

When you put all those different variables together, the math and English variables, you develop what would be a demographic index. It's an index just based on how many items you would expect a kid with a certain set of demographic characteristics on average in Lynn to answer correctly. And as you see on the top, we have the red bar and the green bar on the top are for Lynn Public Schools; the red bar and green bar on the bottom represent the Charter School. And this is a box and whisker plot that gives us a sense of the distribution. The box represents the middle 50 percent of students; the line in the middle is the 50th percentile. So in this group,

there are 27 Charter School students. The 14th student would be at the line. And then, there were about 1,100 students; the 51st would be the line at the top. And then, they're surrounded by the next 25 percent. And you can see, this tells you whether there are outliers, if there were some extremely low scores that may have caused the mean to change. You could walk into a high school class, for instance, and find that the average age of the people there was 25; that's because there were a bunch of 17-year-olds, and a 65-year-old teacher. But we're not finding that here. It's not a case of outliers. The whole box from Lynn Community Charter School is within the whole box of the public school.

Okay, now on the bottom, those are the items that one would expect them to answer on the math and English test. This is what you've been waiting for, a t-test, right? This is comparing whether those differences were significant. As you might have guessed because the boxes and whiskers were so similar, there's a quarter of a point difference fewer, given the demographics at the Charter School. I'm referring down to the purple area now. You would expect that on the math test, that they would have answered a quarter of an item less, which is half a scale point, and about one-six of an item fewer correctly on the English Language Arts test. And the significance figure there tells you it's not significant; that you wouldn't be able to tell the difference between students in the Charter School and the public schools based on just their demographics as a composite. Like I said before, there are differences from one variable to another. But on the whole, it's difficult to see the difference.

This next chart is another box and whisker plot. Now, this is their performance on the Grade 4 MCAS exam. The Charter School is at the bottom. And I'll talk about the scale for just a second. This scale is in standard deviations. So the zero zero where that line is leading up right here in the middle, that is the average student in Lynn and the Charter School combined. That's the student who performs exactly as you would predict demographically.

And again, we have the Charter School here on the bottom. So the median student at the Charter School was performing below the 25th percentile of students at the public school in math. And over here, I've extended the median line of the English Language Arts, and they're below the 50th percentile, the median student. But it's somewhat different there. You see the top-scoring student -- again, relative to their demographics -- is around where the 75th percentile student in the public schools would be. Now, when you do a significance test on that, you can see the difference on the math test down here in the purple area was nine-tenths of a standard deviation, which is substantial. The significance test tells us that that is significant by any alpha, or any measure used in the social sciences.

Another way of putting this is if you took the 1,100 in the public schools and the Charter School and randomly drew out 27 of them and looked at their test scores, about three times in ten thousand would you see a difference this large. And so, it tells us it's not random. It's a significant difference. The English Language Arts performance in 2001 we see as a half a standard deviation, and the significance test there shows it is significant, and it tells us that about one time out of a hundred, if you drew 27 students from a whole distribution would you get a difference that large. Now, what does that look like? On this graphic, the gray boxes represent students from the public schools, and the red dots are Charter School students. Now, you see the blue line here is the public school mean. They answered 28 questions correctly on this math test. The red line represents the 20 questions that the average student at the Charter School answered correctly. And down here, we have the predicted score that I told you about that was part of that model. Up here, they're actual scores. So anyone who was scoring on their -- what would be predicted demographically would be on the black line. And you see, there

are substantial variations. Students always showed substantial variation with regard to the demographics, which is probably a good thing.

This next slide will show it a little more clearly -- these are the Charter School students. You can see two of them actually scored above the win mean, and four of them scored above their demographic mean, and the remainder, the 23 others in this model are down here, scoring -- and the group in this basin here are what drives nine-tenths of the standard deviation. That's what it looks like. They're well below the line, okay. It's not totally significant. I told you it's not an outlier, and this is what it looks like. So they're different from the public school mean, but are they different from every other school in Lynn. You know, every school in Lynn has its own set of scores, its own set of demographics. So here, the Charter School is over here on the right. This is their math score. Again, that's nine-tenths. You can't see it on the screen right now. There's nine-tenths of a standard deviation difference there, and this is the half the standard deviation here. And I carried that average across to compare to all the other schools. You see some are above the nine. On the average, these schools over here are at the Lynn average; these schools are below. And you might categorize -- the English performance when you do tests individually is in the group. It's in the range of the three or four other schools there that are down about half the standard deviation below.

Their math performance, though, is different from other schools. And in the Harrington, which was brought to my attention -- it's the one that was closest geographically here, I did do some -- I showed the t-test here. They were four-tenths of the standard deviation behind the Harrington on their math performance, and they were a quarter of a standard deviation ahead on their English performance. The quarter of a standard deviation was not significant; the four-tenths was. So you would say they were significantly lower performing than Harrington in math, but not in English. This is the grade four to six, just a sketch of the results when you compare the students, controlling for their grade four scores that I told you about. Here the Charter School is in the middle. This difference was not significant. And I think the rest speaks for itself. It's the same kind of analysis I did on the grade four.

Moving ahead to grade eight, these are the demographic indices. Again, you see Lynn Charter School here, there are just nineteen students here. But they're in a similar shape, similar distribution to that of the public schools. They're outliers in both cases. And you can see that demographic index. That was not significant. The demographics were not significantly different at grade eight. And then, when you look at their performance adjusted, down here, I've summarized the differences. They were half a standard deviation below in ELA, and two-thirds of a standard deviation below the public schools in math, which was significant in both cases. This is a similar scatter plot. Again, you have a couple of students above the Lynn Public School mean, a couple on the mean, and then, a large number down here. This is what's driving that significance. There are students, as you see, across this range, from 15 to 25. That's a lot of different demographic characteristics. That's low SES to high SES, and they're all below their line. There's no pattern showing that they do differently with low SES students or high SES students that were visible. These are the eighth grade schools in Lynn, and the Charter School performance stands out on the under-performing side. I omitted the Welcoming Alternative School from this graph because they had fewer than ten students tested. They had scores that were similar.

So we go back in time, 1998. This is when the Charter School was on the other side of the line. Right here, you see their median was seven-tenths of a standard deviation above the Lynn mean, and their math performance was also above the Lynn mean. It wasn't quite enough with

13 students to give you confidence that it was significant, but it was above the line. You can say that. It just describes it. They were above average. 1999, there's a drop. That cohort is different. It's a little larger, and the English Language Arts has moved pretty much right on the Lynn mean. The math drops below it. And then, in 2000, now we have math and ELA both significantly lower, and then, 2001 very similar to 2000.

I can answer any questions that you have above these. I was asked to see if I could find whether demographics were a factor, and whether the differences were significant between the public school and the Charter School and -- not for all tests, but in some cases, they are. They're significantly lower.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One question, and then I'll open it up to others who may have questions or general comments or observations about the data. To what extent does the sample size you're dealing with in terms of the Lynn Community Charter School make this analysis more or less reliable or valid?

MR. LEE: That's where the significance tests come into play. There are substantially larger error bars, as we would say, around the score of 27 kids. For instance, a few little experiments. If you took the two lowest students at the Charter School and gave them the scores of the highest students, they would be around the average. That would be on the highest scores in the Lynn Public Schools. But there were no students that had scores that high in the Charter School. So, yes, it is affected. You could randomly draw them out, but it would be unusual to draw a set of 27 kids that were -- it wasn't just one or two. It was the large number, 25 of them that were below.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So in your view, given at least the pattern of performance, the fact that there's a small sample size, fewer than 30 students at most in all of the samples that were taken, does not in any way undermine the findings or the basic conclusions?

MR. LEE: Well, it means that they could change quickly, too. You saw that they were well above the line in 1998, and that they were so far above the line in English that it was a significant finding, even with 13 students. And within two years, they've shifted. They've moved that far, and further in the case of math, below the line. That is a factor. A small school can be affected more dramatically by a large group of causes. And I try not to deal with causation. I'm talking about correlation here because there's an association here. And that association is significant by bedrock principles used in the social sciences.

MR. THOMAS: Well, in that case, because actually, Jim was asking a question that I had, as well: concern about sample size and distortion factor. Where do you set alpha?

MR. LEE: You set alpha at the .05 level when you're dealing with a school in the range of 10 to 1000 students.

MR. THOMAS: And if you set it at .04, would that have a markable difference?

MR. LEE: You would be more likely to make the alternative error, which is to not identify a difference when there was a difference. When you're setting alpha, the statistician doesn't set alpha. The statistician goes back to precedent and sees if the case fits the precedent. There may be a few statisticians who disagree with the precedent, but none will disagree that .05 is the level of the confidence -- I'm sorry, .05 is the alpha that you wanted to set because it's a

balancing act. If you had students that couldn't read or compute at all, couldn't count, but there were only 12 of them, and you were unable to identify that they were different that a group that were doing calculus, then you're failing in the other way. You're failing to notice a difference that common sense or any other number of factors would identify. Type Two error is -- if you think about the outcomes, failing to identify an under-performing school has consequences, as does identifying them. If you identify them and they weren't under-performing, that would be a Type One error.

MR. THOMAS: Jim, I don't have a copy of that presentation. I could have asked some more questions.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Rob, could you give me a four sentence summary of that?

MR. LEE: Okay, I have a football analogy. We have a team that was making the playoffs in 1998, and they saw the 500, and they just had two, two in fourteen seasons.

MS. McINTOSH: I'm now lost.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The last question I have, again, in part, going back to this question of the confidence we would have in the analysis, given the size of the sample, does the trend over the four-year period, if not a statistical point of view, from a common sense point of view, does that reinforce the findings? Does it give you more confidence that it's not just sort of random fluctuations and next year could look totally different?

MR. LEE: In the Accountability Department, we have always -- and I think the Board has always supported this -- that we've tried to use two years of base line data, and even though it's hard to test shifting and so forth, and two years of comparison data because you reduce your amount of random fluctuation by a quarter. It's not just 50 percent less random. Like you may have drawn the three in ten thousand chance that you get in a group of students, and that can happen in any one year at any school, and we have 1,800 schools. It's going to happen to a couple of them every year. But you don't want to identify them as under-performing just based on one year's performance. And yes, so in short, yes, it makes a big difference that these results are similar in 2000 and 2001.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If there are no more questions, Kristin, is there anything else that you or anyone else from the panel might like to add?

MS. McINTOSH: Well, I think Robert provided you with quite a bit of information. And if you have questions, obviously, you can ask them.

MS. SCHAEFER: The letter that you sent us sort of ends with the inspection in early November. Has there been anything else since then, any kind of correspondence between the school and DOE?

MS. WOLFE: No, only regarding the renewal and non-renewal questions. But no, there has been no additional ---

MS. McINTOSH: We did meet with the school when we realized that there were some very significant concerns to discuss that with them and get their views and their arguments to the contrary.

MS. WOLFE: About renewal or non-renewal.

MS. McINTOSH: Right.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe to put it somewhat differently, to your knowledge, has there been any material change in the condition of the school since your report was completed and since the inspection was done?

MS. WOLFE: To my knowledge, no.

MR. THOMAS: Two questions. One, there was some reference that there were some changes made with respect to organizational structure of the Board, et cetera. I mean, that's one of the things that you cited as being dysfunctional within the school. Those changes haven't made any material difference?

MS. WOLFE: The organizational structure actually hasn't changed. There was a notion that the school was thinking of changing the organization structure, and then decided not to. Their structure as such says that there's an Executive Director, which they don't have right now. The Executive Director, who was also the founder, left at the end of the fourth year. So there has been no -- much of the leadership, the Board Chair is the same as the time of the renewal inspection report, as is the principal who was the principal last year, as well.

MR. THOMAS: Is the Board Chair the same?

MS. WOLFE: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: In prior reviews, have we had any reviews -- and some of this predates May, so I would not know. Have there been any schools up for renewal that received a no in all three categories?

MS. WOLFE: No. That have received a no in all three categories, no. There have been schools up for renewal, but had no significant issues, and they've been dealt with in different ways. But there has never been a school where the summary review says no to all three questions.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, I think to use an example, we had actually had a preliminary report from the then, it says here Commissioner of Charter Schools which indicated that the recommendation was going to be negative, but I don't know if it was negative in all three questions.

MS. WOLFE: And they were only in their second year.

MS. McINTOSH: Yes, but that was a case for revocation, not non-renewal.

MS. WOLFE: Right. Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's a good point. That was a revocation.

MS. WOLFE: They hadn't gone through their five years. It was just they were on the track for a different -- but this is not -- we're not revoking the charter. It's just not a renewal. So they went through the whole five-year cycle.

MS. McINTOSH: And also, North Star Academy came before the Board in the packet last January and potentially for a vote in February, and decided voluntarily to close its doors.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you all very much. I have a list of five people who will testify on behalf of the school. I don't know if there is a Master of Ceremonies here for this, but let me introduce Amy Marx first. And then, perhaps you can -- if you want to change the order that's your call, as well. But, you know, certainly for the next two hours -- we would like to manage the appearance of the five individuals. Obviously, we're going to have some questions and that sort of thing. But I will turn it over to you.

MS. MARX: Sure. I'm going to have myself and two others come up for a short period of time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could you introduce yourself and your panelists, including your title and respective school?

MS. MARX: My name is Amy Marx, and I'm the Principal of the Lynn Community Charter School. The first thing I would like to do is thank the Commissioner and the Chairman of the Board, Jim Peyser, as well as all the Board members yourselves for coming to our school and allowing us this opportunity to present before you. The people at the table with me are Darlene Gallant, who is a Board member here at the school, and Ron Walker, who is another Board member here at the school.

As we go through our presentation, I will also have two other people coming up to do brief presentations. One is Barney Brawer, the Director of the Program for Education Change Agents at Tufts University, as well as Steven Levy, who is our Outward Bound coach. So I'm going to go right into our presentation ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Herb Fox had been on the list?

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: He's the Chair of the Board?

MS. MARX: Correct. Herb is the Chair of the Board, and he is not able to be here today. So Darlene is stepping in. Having said that, I'd like to go ahead and begin with our presentation. Certainly, you'll have an opportunity to ask us questions throughout. After each presenter, if you would like us to stop and answer questions, we can do that, as well. I believe you all have a copy of this. And I'm going to go ahead and begin with our presentation.

What we are presenting before you today is our actions steps that we have already taken to address some of the areas of weaknesses that have been identified in the school, as well as our remediation plan that we have developed moving forward. This plan has been developed with input from a variety of all of the stakeholders at the school in the last three-week period of time and to the possibility of non-renewal. The overview of the presentation is that I'm going to speak briefly about our school's weaknesses, as well as our strengths. And then we're going to go through the remediation plan that we have developed to address the weaknesses.

As many of you have already heard, and this has been discussed previously, the weaknesses of our school have been identified as the academic program. Clearly, the standardized test results are a concern. It is not something that we take lightly at all. And you'll see as we go through the plan that that's a lot of what we are addressing in our remediation program in the academic program. Inconsistency in the effective use of instructional time in the upper grades was another finding in the inspection report that we also agree with. In our upper grades, we have a larger percentage of new teachers. It is an area that we've already begun to address and will continue in the coming years if we are given that opportunity. Our internal assessment system has also not been fully developed, and you'll hear more about that as we move forward. In the viability of the organization, the capacity of the Board has been questioned. The lack of clarity in roles and responsibility, the allocation of resources not being fully aligned with academic need, and varying interpretations and understanding of the school's mission. And in terms of faithfulness to the charter in the Accountability plan, the specifics that have been detailed is, again, that our academic targets have not been reached, and that our goals have not been met in the areas of affiliations and alliances, and parent and community involvement.

The next part that I'm going to go through is obviously what we believe are strengths, and what we believe gives us a foundation to build on in making significant improvement in each of these areas. The first thing that I'm going to speak about is the statistics that you've been given several times now about our continuing students. And we believe that this is very significant because, as you heard the analysis of the data from the Department staff, what we have continued to say is that students who have not been here for a substantial amount of time, who have been in their first and second year at the school are scoring significantly lower on the MCAS than students who have been here for more than two years. And that relates directly to some of the findings you heard about our MCAS results. And I'm going to go through that briefly, and then add one more piece.

I think you've all seen these already, but in third grade reading for our reading results, clearly, our continuing students are performing much better with 60 percent Proficient, and only 10 percent of those students scoring in the Warning category. In fourth grade, this is the only area in English Language Arts where there is not a dramatic difference between the continuing students and the first and second-year students. In math, although our math scores are still not where we want them to be and where they need to be, you still can see a dramatic difference, with 50 percent scoring in the Warning for our continuing students, as opposed to over 70, about 73 percent for our first and second-year students. In sixth grade math, again, our scores are still not where we want them to be, but you will see 70 percent scoring in the Warning for our continuing students, as opposed to 100 percent of the students who are in their first or second year at the school scoring in the Warning category. Seventh grade MCAS, again, there is a dramatic difference, with about 26 percent scoring Proficient, as opposed to 14 percent of first and second-year students. And that trend follows in the Warning category, as well. And for eighth grade, again a dramatic difference, with 50 percent of our eighth graders who had been with us for more than two years scoring in the Proficient category, as opposed to 10 percent scoring in the Warning category, who are in their first or second year.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'm not sure what -- special education, I'm not sure -- is that special education students?

MS. MARX: Yes. All that indicates is the number of special education students in that sample, and the failing in the warning category. So it's just the number in the sample who are on IEP's.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: May I ask you a question about that, because again, in the data that the state -- and this may be different. Maybe it's because we're looking at eighth grade numbers here.

MS. MARX: Yes. If you go back to fourth grade, you'll see there are no children who were on IEPs at the time of the MCAS last year. Some of those students now are on IEPs, but at the time of the MCAS, they were not.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: But that also indicates that all of the special needs students are also in their in their first or second year?

MS. MARX: No, it does not. The three students is for the whole sample that scored in the Warning. I'll clarify that. When it says three special education students, it's just for the whole sample of all the students in the Warning category. I did not break that out more specifically. I certainly could if people were interested in that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Can I ask you a couple of questions here? One is, do you expect to see -- this data is all LCCS data?

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In terms of comparative data with respect to the Lynn Public School system, would you expect to see the same pattern, that the longer students are in a school, the better they do?

MS. MARX: I would assume that to be the case, but I don't know. I know that this is dramatic in terms of when we broke this out, that in our school, particularly students who have been here for a longer period of time are scoring more significantly. I would think that would be a general pattern, but I don't know that for sure. And then, in your renewal application, you provide some cohort analysis using California achievement tests in reading and math, and you've got two different samples. One was for students who entered at Kindergarten in 1997, and then, who were tested in third grade, I think, in 2001.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And another who entered first grade in 1997, and were then tested in fourth grade in May of 2001.

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And the results were sort of hard to interpret because they seemed to move in different directions. In both cases, you're dealing with students who had been in the school for three years or more. And on the reading, using -- and I don't know if the Board members have this with them or not; it's on page 7, if you've got it in front of you -- on the reading tests, there was improvement, going from 13 percent of the students scoring at or above the median, going up to 55 percent in 2001.

MS. MARX: Correct.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But in math, it is basically the same, slightly lower, going from 33 percent above the median down to 30 percent in 2001. And then, when you look at the other

cohort, the one that started in first grade, and then were tested in fourth grade, it's sort of the opposite findings, where there was little or no improvement, actually a somewhat negative change on the reading, and a positive -- if I'm reading this correctly -- well, I guess it would have been a negative change on math, as well.

MS. MARX: Well, it was negative after the first year. But then ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: After the first, that's right.

MS. MARX: --- it persisted positive after that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Positive in the second year, right. Which sort of says, on the one hand, the reading went up and the math went down, and using the other one, it was the reverse, which is hard for me to interpret as being meaningful, one way or the other. All of which is to say that, in these cases, you were dealing with students who have been at the school for a numbers of years because that's why they were selected for this cohort. Yet the overall picture is of no improvement or, possibly, even negative change.

MS. MARX: I will tell you honestly, given that we have a very small school, particularly in this cohort analysis, when you look at our fourth grade group last year, there as a turnover in one of the teaching positions mid-year in that grade, which had a significant impact, that I know personally and anecdotally can tell you about. But I don't have data to corroborate that. So certainly, I think that it is important to recognize that in reading, in both of those years, there was, for the first cohort that you talked about that started with us in Kindergarten, there was that continuing growth year to year in their reading scores. In the fourth grade results, there is that drop in fourth grade, and the best explanation I can give for you on that at this point is, knowing that there was a turnover of a teacher in one of our fourth grades last year, and another fourth grade teacher whose strength was math are the two reasons that I can give you. And it would be the stronger teacher in that area.

The next aspect on here that I want to review quickly is the next bullet which says, "Third grade students who have been with us since kindergarten had strong results on the 2001 MCAS test in reading." Again, this is our cohort that we believe represents most strongly what we have done here at the school, and the academic program that we've built at the school because they started with us in kindergarten; are now fourth graders this year, but were in third grade last year. When you look at their results across all the Lynn Public Schools -- no, I did not, I was not able to make sure that the demographics was the same, but we do fall about a little below the middle of the Lynn Public Schools, but significantly higher than several, or many of the Lynn Public Schools, and below several others. And then I simply have compared, to show you graphically, if you look at our continuing students, again, the ones who have been here for more than two years, the second pink bar that you see on that graph is our continuing students, which has 60 percent proficient. The next piece that I want to move to -- and I'm going to bring up Barney Brawer now ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just for a second -- again, to underline the point, in the comparison of the continuing students with the other Lynn students, you're not breaking out the Lynn continuing students?

MS. MARX: Correct. I do not have data on students who have been there for more than two years.

MS. SCHAEFER: What is the turnover each year in the school? I mean, what percentage of students?

MS. MARX: For student turnover, is that what you're asking?

MS. SCHAEFER: Yes.

MS. MARX: Approximately -- when you look at our cohort of continuing students who are in third grade, 21 of them were returning and eight were new; over there for more than two years. So I don't have the exact percentage each year of what the turnover had been, but I certainly can provide that for you if you would like that, as well.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, in the renewal application, I think there's a reference to 188 students over the four years of the school who had left, and it says 90 returned to their home district -- which may or may not have been Lynn -- but returned to their home district; 56 left town; 18 left for academic reasons; 12 went to parochial or private schools; three went to home school, and two dropped out, and six left for unspecified reasons. So that's 188 students over the four years, and a total student enrollment of about 250.

MS. MARX: Two-fifty last year.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And it started smaller. I mean, I don't know how to do the math on that, but it would seem as if the -- as a percentage, that you're certainly losing more than a trivial sum of students every year.

MS. MARX: I would agree with that. I mean, I'm not sitting here -- I will say very clearly that the school had some tumultuous times in the first two or three years of this school. And a lot of that caused higher student turnover than we would have liked. And that has stabilized to a certain extent this year. We've lost very few students this year, other than for students who have been moving to another city. So in my opinion, having been here this year, enrollment is much more stable, and I certainly can present numbers to you of how the enrollment has stabilized this year, as well.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe this is jumping ahead, and if you're going to get to this later, you can certainly defer the answer. But it sort of fits the discussion. On page 25 of the renewal application, there's an enrollment chart which talks about the projected enrollments in each of the grade levels. And it starts out in kindergarten. Let's just take this year, 2001 and -- yes, this year that we're completing, 2001-2002. It says kindergarten 48 students, and then, first grade drops to 32, the current first grade, okay. Next year, the expectation is that first grade -- which is this year's kindergartners -- will then be 43. And then it's sort of gradually going down to 38, 33, and 30 by fourth grade. I wonder if you could explain that pattern and how it fits with the conversation about turnover, as well as what it says about the approach, I guess, to admitting students who weren't initially enrolled in kindergarten?

MS. MARX: We actually made a strategic plan this past year, and adjusted so that we now have three kindergarten classrooms, where we used to have two. We used to have two kindergarten classrooms. And after discussion, both about the issues that we were having with new students coming in in the older grades with significant academic or behavioral or emotional issues, we made a policy decision at the Board level to change our enrollment structure so that

we do not admit seventh and eighth grade students anymore. When we made that decision and that policy change, we also made a decision to add a third kindergarten -- we used to have two kindergartens -- increasing the enrollment at kindergarten from 30 to 48. We've done that purposely, again, so that then, as students leave and we have attrition due to families moving -- Lynn is very mobile community. People move very frequently in this community to better themselves and better their lives. And so as that happens, we do not plan now to fill those spaces as frequently and as vehemently as we used to, due to that it has financial implications for us. Since we've built this pyramid structure now, it will allow us to have that attrition happen and not refill those spaces. So again, we will have continuing students that we are educating, as opposed to students coming in, and then playing catch-up as we have.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Does it raise any concerns with you or members of the community that, perhaps not the only, but that the principal means of entry is in kindergarten, and if you miss that window, it's very difficult for anyone to get back into the school?

MS. MARX: I think for myself personally, I think it will allow the education of the children who do get in through lottery in kindergarten to be much more successful, and that's what our parents want. The children who do get admitted in kindergarten through a lottery process, what has happened in the past, and what we saw happen in the upper grades was, as we brought in additional students, that that would disrupt what was happening in the educational program for the students who had been here for multiple years. And we had many families upset about that, and upset that that was happening. So I think, in my perspective, it is better for the children who are here, and the education of the children who are here and who have been with us for a longer period of time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Now, would the folks on the district side, if we're dealing with comparison, say that sort of creates an unfair comparison between your school and theirs?

MS. MARX: They may. I certainly think we are not excluding, and we will still maintain the 270 enrollment that we said that we would have. And we are not saying exclusively that we will not fill those spots. Only in seventh and eighth grade have we made that policy decision. So in the younger grades, we are still planning to take in students to try to maintain the 270 each year, starting off with whoever is returning from our student population, and then, if there are additional spaces, filling those from the waiting list. So we're not making a decision across the board not to accept students for spaces that are available.

MR. THOMAS: Approximately how many students do you accept a year?

MS. MARX: It's been fairly substantial. I'll have to go back and get the exact numbers for you, and I certainly can provide that. I don't know that off the top of my head. Each year, in kindergarten, we have our new kindergarten class of now 48; it used to be 30. And then, additionally, across the school, at each grade level, we usually are filling approximately five or six spots.

MR. THOMAS: Do you have a waiting list?

MS. MARX: We maintain a waiting list of approximately 200 over the life of the school. It's fluctuated, but that's the approximate level.

MR. THOMAS: With the attrition being as significant as it has been, how does that impact recruitment and new enrollment? In mean, in a small community where it gets out that there's some dissatisfaction and maybe some problems.

MS. MARX: What I can respond is, simply, it hasn't impacted. As we've had students, we've had a large number wanting to come. So it has not impacted our ability to maintain a high enrollment and to meet our enrollment goals, or to have a waiting list.

MR. THOMAS: And do you do exit interviews with everybody who leaves?

MS. MARX: Yes. Every student and parent fills out an exit form, which is our exit interview, where they state the reason for leaving. The next piece that I'd like to do is to bring up Barney Brawer to present briefly about his findings, the third bullet, about the high proportion of LCCS's minority students who are passing the English Language Arts test. Barney has worked with us on trying to look carefully at our data, and also, to keep us very honest about our data, and being very careful about looking at our data in order to inform our remediation plan, as well as all improvements moving forward. So he is an independent third party that we have brought in to do that.

MR. BRAWER: I'd like to thank the Board and the Commissioner and the Lynn Community Charter School for this opportunity to speak with you. I am Barney Brawer. I am the Coordinator of the Program for Educational Change Agents at Tufts University. And our work is focused on what does it actually take to bring all our population of the students to the high standards which are now defined by the curriculum frameworks and tests. And we've been working with the Lynn Community Charter School actually about the last year as they move towards the process of applying for renewal of their charter. I think that if any of us had a magic wand and could rewind the tape back a few years and do two years ago some of the things that we know now, if we had a magic wand, I think we would all wish that we could do that.

What I would like to say -- we work with quite a number of schools. And I've been strongly impressed by the honest, open focus that this school has taken in looking at some data which is, in many cases, painful to look at. And we've worked with a number of schools. And too frequently we find that, when the data is not what the school might have hoped, there's a process that could almost be called denial, or don't tell me; please tell us just the good news. At one school, the principal always describes me as 'Barney's job is to tell us everything we don't want to hear.' I have been quite impressed by the Lynn Community Charter School, and Amy Marx's leadership in having the courage to address very directly, here's what seems to be working, and here's what seems not to be working, and here's what we plan to do about it.

What I am presenting on this one-page sheet is an area that I think is working quite well at the Lynn Community Charter School. I think it would be unfortunate if this particular success would be something that was not allowed to continue. Let me explain. This is a focus on the success of minority students attending the Lynn Community Charter School in the area of English language arts, as measured on the MCAS. First, it is to be said that the Lynn Community Charter School serves a much higher portion of minority students in its population than other schools in Lynn. The Charter School is 79 percent minority students -- African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and multi-racial students -- and that is the highest for any of Lynn's elementary or middle schools. Only the Thurgood Marshall Middle School and the Harrington Elementary School have comparable portions of minority students in their student population. The Lynn Community Charter School has succeeded in bringing a high proportion of

its minority students to passing grades and beyond on the 2001 MCAS English Language Arts tests.

The group that I think is most important are the third graders. These are the students that have been at the Lynn Community Charter School, the cohort students, or the students who began here in kindergarten, and as of 2001, were in third grade, are now in fourth grade. Ninety-one percent of the minority students received passing grades on MCAS test in English Language Arts, and 50 percent scored Proficient. What that means is that the Lynn Community Charter School brought its minority students to a level of proficiency which is comparable to that of other schools in Lynn which have far fewer minority students.

Part of our work at Tufts has focused on achievement gaps. And unfortunately, we know that in Massachusetts, there are sometimes very large and very painful gaps between the performance of minority and the White students. And what Lynn Community Charter School has done -- and I particularly focus on the third grade group -- has brought these students to a level of success in passing and proficiency which matches that of the other schools in Lynn with far fewer minority students. Also, it must be realized that these are young children that are around nine years old now, and this is the only school they've attended, the cohort students. This is the school that has brought them to that level of success. And to disband the school at this point would be to send them either to schools that are comparable racially and have lower scores, or to schools that have not served as many minority students that have not demonstrated that they can bring minority students to this level of performance.

So my final comparison is that the rate of efficiency for third grade school students here at the Lynn Community Charter School in English -- the math scores are not what they could be or should be -- but in English is comparable with that of other Lynn schools with far fewer minority students. If you look at the schools in Lynn, for example, there are only a few of them that are high minority schools. They tend to have efficiency rates at 20 percent or below, while the minority students at Lynn Community Charter School have a proficiency rate at 50 percent. There are other parts of this picture which are not successful at that level. But I would argue that it is worth the Charter School having two more years to demonstrate that they can maintain that level of academic success for the minority students, as well as their White students, as they move past the third grade into the fourth school.

I think everyone knows that the fourth grade English Language Arts test is a challenging test. Of all the MCAS tests, it's the most challenging for its grade level. So that if they can maintain that level of success through fourth grade and beyond, they will have demonstrated that if you give them the children at the beginning, their success is noteworthy, even as other areas of the program need to be addressed.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If you know, what percentage of students in grade three, last year's grade three, let's say, were from homes where English was not the language spoken?

MR. BRAWER: I don't have the numbers. That figure is not high. There are other schools with a high percentage of limited English proficiency students. I think what is notable about this school is the education is provided to African American and Hispanic students in particular. They are not as proportionately English proficient, but they are groups that on a statewide perspective, have not been performing at the levels that all of us believe should be the case. And my argument is that here in Lynn for that group, they're doing what needs to be done, and it

would be a shame if they don't have the chance to demonstrate that they can maintain that as we get to the area where the fourth grade drop-off begins in many schools.

MS. SCHAEFER: That number was in here, the school's report on the demographics. Long-range proficiency, 72 were identified as minorities.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Seventy-two in the school as a whole.

MS. SCHAEFER: Right. But only five were designated as ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right. And it doesn't tell us specifically about last year's third grade class.

MR. BRAWER: One thing about the upper grades, which is in some ways stating the obvious, but I think it's true of many charter schools. Those of us who have worked in other places in Lynn think it's a phenomenon. In many cases, the students who come to a charter school in the upper grades are those who have had a painful experience somewhere else in the system. And so, part of the phenomenon that Amy Marx was describing is what it means to be accepting from the other schools in the system the fifth graders and the seventh graders who are already far behind, and that's why they've changed schools, to come to have another chance. What the school has done in the first several years is to open its arms to those students and treat them very well, but has not succeeded in bringing students who come in that late, as far behind as many of them do, to the standards that they have set, which is why, I think that that comparison, to look just at those students who arrived here and began their schooling, and where the pattern I think is more successful than at other levels in the school.

MR. THOMAS: Do you know what percentage of those students who come in beyond kindergarten and the upper grades come in below grade level?

MS. MARX: I don't have exact numbers for you. I tried to do that, and I'm going to tell you my assessment of that. Based on both kids coming in reading below grade level, at least one or more grade level below when they enter -- because we do have that data -- or coming in with documented significant behavioral or emotional issues, so coming with an IEP that represents that, or some other documentation that represents that when they enter the school. And looking at that across the grade levels, the average ends up being about 79 percent of the students who entered, so who were in that group of first or second-year students, had significant issues, either academically significantly behind, or emotionally and behaviorally. It's 33 out of 42 students. So that's the best I can do for you in terms of that statistic is 79 percent.

MR. THOMAS: The percentage of students who are -- who have IEPs in your school is what?

MS. MARX: The exact percentage, also, I apologize, I do not have right now. It is about 17 percent, approximately. But that's based on numbers from last year, and I don't have the exact numbers for this year, and the numbers that are going through evaluations right now is fairly significant.

MR. THOMAS: And this may not be fair. If you don't happen to have the answer, don't worry about it. You don't lose any points on this one. With respect to the Lynn School District, what percentage of the minority students are below grade level?

MS. MARX: I don't know the answer to that. I don't know.

MR. THOMAS: Does anybody know that?

MS. SCHAEFER: Would anyone know offhand what is the rate of the Lynn Public Schools?

MR. BRAWER: In response to your earlier question about minorities, no, sir.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm sure we could get that data.

MS. MARX: I'm sure that's data that we could get.

MR. BRAWER: Because there are quite a number of schools in Lynn, and virtually all of them have fewer minority students than Lynn Community Charter School, we can say for the schools that have a comparable portion of minority students, the Lynn Community Charter School is outperforming those schools. We didn't want to get into the discussion of individual schools and, again, criticize someone else.

MS. SCHAEFER: Maybe a debate for another time, but I guess I am concerned about the policy of not taking students, or trying to avoid it after a certain point. And after all, somebody has to educate them. And so, I guess on the one hand, I'm wondering why is that the Charter School has a greater percentage of minority students than the regular system, and on the other hand, I'm concerned about the idea that you're in effect excluding students from coming in in a later grade. So there are two different issues here that to me raise some concern.

MS. MARX: The only thing I would respond to that is that we've only made that decision in seventh and eighth grade because we felt that when we brought students in at that level, it was not enough time for us to have a significant impact. And that's why we made that decision, only at seventh and eighth grade. But I understand your concern.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The plan is not to replace all the departing students, even in the earlier grades?

MS. MARX: Well, there's not a policy decision about that, and that is not the plan. So if I made that appear to be the plan, the plan is for a pyramid structure in enrollment in order to facilitate us not filling spaces in seventh and eighth grade. So the pyramid structure is only to ensure that so that we can remain at 270 in our enrollment without filling spots as we have attrition in seventh and eighth grades.

MS. SCHAEFER: Do you have some theory as to why the Charter School would have such a greater percentage of minority students than the Lynn Public Schools?

MS. MARX: The only thing I would say is that it's part of our mission to ensure that we're creating a diverse community that's representative of the Lynn community. And the one aspect that we've failed in that area is in terms of Asian population in Lynn, and we are actively trying to recruit student applicants from the Asian population. But we have made effort to make sure that we have a very diverse population at the school because our mission celebrates diversity and wants to have a population, a student population that is very similar to the City of Lynn itself. Are there any questions for Barney before we move on?

MR. THOMAS: The percentage of minority students within Lynn Community Charter School is about what, 23-24?

MS. MARX: The percentage of minority students at the Charter School?

MR. THOMAS: Right.

MS. MARX: According to self-reporting on the MCAS, which is what Barney based his percentage on, it's 79 percent on the MCAS.

MR. THOMAS: Seventy-nine percent of your school is minority?

MS. MARX: Yes, on the MCAS.

MR. BRAWER: And almost none are Asian, so that that 79 percent are African American and Hispanic students, and students who identify themselves as mixed race.

MS. SCHAEFER: And what's the minority percentage in the Lynn Public Schools?

MS. MARX: I don't know the answer to that either. I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's easily acquired.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It's right in the front.

MS. MARX: The summary of that is from the Commissioner.

MR. CROWLEY: Barney, you said that you didn't want to get into specific schools, but that you're doing a better job of educating the minority students than any of the other schools in Lynn.

MR. BRAWER: That are high minority.

MR. CROWLEY: Where in all this data is something like that, that supports what you just said?

MR. BRAWER: We didn't bring all the charts that Amy and I have talked about. And should we identify -- at one point -- we take out Thurgood Marshall and Harrington because that's not where we want to go. So we have that. I'd be glad to provide that, but we felt that presenting all the data for all the schools in a hearing that is really only about this school was just inappropriate. But we're at Tufts University. I'd be glad to show you all that.

MR. THOMAS: I guess what I'm having a problem with, I'm trying to understand, so what is the deal? What's the problem? I mean, if you have minority students who are performing at a rate of improvement that is exemplary -- not to cast it or shed any negative light on the district, but just facts are facts -- and the balance of the students, who are now minority in terms of classification, even though they are, in fact, minority in the context of the school, they are the ones who are under-performing more so; is that what you're telling us?

MR. BRAWER: I'll go back to the question, what's the problem. One problem is that this success is in English Language Arts, and not in mathematics. Second problem is that it's not in

the upper grades, where there's been much more of a complex pattern of students coming and going. And MCAS only begins at the third grade. So this is the first cohort about which we can say this school can fairly judge on how it was educating these students from the beginning. And if we look at continuing students, even at the upper grades who have been here for several years, they're doing far better than the students who have just arrived. And this group which were here from day one, are performing in English at a level that is quite solid.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: How big a difference is kindergarten here? In other words, because if you look at the fourth grade scores from last year, I don't know what the percentage of students in that cohort would have been there since first grade is, but, I mean, the English Language Arts performance in that fourth grade test was not strong, and it was not strong relative to every other school, with the exception of the Harrington. And again, I think, without having the data, I think there are mobility problems in everyone's school, as there is there. So how do you explain the difference between the fourth grade performance and the third grade performance? Is it that first, second and third grade is getting better, and that it's just, you know, that will be reflected later? Is it that kindergarten is sort of the critical year, or is it there was a problem in fourth grade last year? Even the fourth grade ELA results last year don't really seem different from the year before.

MR. BRAWER: Let me say first, I'm a third party, and what I'm about to say is not speaking for the Charter School. It's speaking only for myself. I think they have a very strong program. I think in previous years, they have not always had this strong program in all the grades as they wanted to have and should have had. But the real question is, do they get two more years, let's say, to demonstrate that what seems to be happening now to these third graders is real and can continue, or do we close the school now and really never know whether something that looks very solid is the beginning of a very different pattern of achievement than what they've had in previous years?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Now, what if we come back two years from now, having done that, and the results for that cohort don't look great, but the next round of third graders look even better?

MR. BRAWER: Amy, can I give my opinion?

MS. MARX: You can give your opinion.

MR. BRAWER: I'd say give them two more years, and if the patterns are similar, then you'd know.

MS. SCHAEFER: Since you asked the question before about Lynn Public Schools, whether the kids are at a various school a long period of time, I mean, I can't speak about Lynn, but I do know in the Worcester Public Schools, that is in fact the case. When they look at mobility rates, those kids who have been there the longest, those kids are performing much better. So this is a pattern that is not uncommon. And so, the question is, what distinguishes this school from any other public school where this is going to happen, if you can get the kids to stay there for a long enough period of time?

MR. BRAWER: I would say they now have a program that is delivering disproportionately minority parents something that in the Commonwealth we struggle to deliver in our urban schools everywhere. One question that was asked before, why do minority student parents come here? Again, I'm speaking only for myself. In our experience, parents are searching for a

school that can say we will deliver your kids to a level of performance that is defined. And I'm not saying that the school is doing that uniformly, but I believe they are doing it with a significant and important cohort of students, and that the parents who are searching for that should not be, in a sense, tossed back into the system to take their chances when they're in a school which is delivering to their children in a Commonwealth that is struggling to deliver that to all children but is not succeeding.

I also speak as the author of a report on how well is Lynn is doing, a work-in-progress report which is about some wonderful things that are happening in the Lynn Public Schools. I'm not critical of the Lynn Public Schools. But I think we are at a place where the delivery of this level of performance to minority students, to a full cohort of students is unfortunately still too rare a phenomenon that to ask for two more years to continue doing it is a reasonable request for parents.

MS. MARX: I'm just going to run through the rest of these pretty quickly because they are in the inspection report and verified by the site team's visit. One is around our internal reading assessments, which has shown consistent growth of more than a year for our students across the school, and as documented in the site visit report, that they noted that LCCS staff across the school is strongly committed to the well-being of the whole child. Again, a component of our mission and a part of what we have tried to create here to support children who have a variety of needs.

And finally, I think that this is an important strength because I think it relates to the discussion that we were just having, but has been found by the site visit report that the early grades academic program -- and they've stated K through 3, and possibly 4; I put K through 4 here -- is strong, and has a solid foundation in effectively early childhood practices. I think that this is very important because I think that we have built a strong foundation in our younger grades, in K through 3, and even now, moving to our fourth grade program that is producing the results that you see in our third grade students. We are now poised to ensure that in the upper grades, 5 through 8, that we strengthen that program significantly to ensure that there is success of those students, as well.

Viability of the organization, the strengths -- it has already been noted that financial management has been effective and strong throughout the life of the school; that enrollment at the school has remained strong, and the school has continually had a waiting of approximately at least 200 students, and that our parents have been highly satisfied. In terms of faithfulness to the charter and our accountability plan, we have successfully reached our goals in terms of developing grade by grade skill standards that are carefully aligned with the Massachusetts frameworks in all academic areas. We've made effective progress in developing and implementing all components of our comprehensive internal assessment system, although there is still problems in terms of fully implementing those. And we've maintained effective enrollment and building expansion over the first four and a half years of this school.

I'm going to move right into this remediation plan. And again, as I stated, this is a plan that we have been developing in the last three weeks approximately, with input from all of the stakeholders in the school, from input from the instructional leadership team and staff at the school, parents, as well as Board members. And I'm going to begin to talk to you about the academic program and what we would like to suggest we can do if we are granted renewal with conditions.

So the overview of the remediation plan, in terms of the academic program, I'm going to speak to you specifically about how we are going to ensure that there are effective and consistent standards to raise skills and skills instruction in all instructional areas in the school; how we are going to improve our internal assessment systems; how we are going to increase the consistency of quality instruction across the entire school. Then some of my colleagues from the Board are going to speak about the viability of the organization, and how we are going to increase the clarity of the mission; heighten Board capacity; and improve clarity of roles and responsibilities. And finally, in terms of faithfulness to the charter, there were two areas talked about other than the academic results as areas that we still needed to show significant improvements, and those are strengthening the family and community involvement, and increasing our affiliations and alliances.

So I'm going to jump right in and talk to you about effective skill-based and standard-based instruction in all areas. You will see throughout this section that I'm going to be talking to you also about Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound. We are in our first year of the Comprehensive School Reform demonstration project with the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model, and that is integrated into what we are planning to do in this remediation plan. So the first part is action steps that we've already taken, to show you that in the beginning of this academic year, we had already taken substantial steps towards addressing these areas. So, obviously, the first one, as you can see, is ensuring that through Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound, our primary goal for improvement in work with our school coach has been the improvement of student skill mastery within classroom expeditions. The model here is that students in each classroom are engaged in learning expeditions that are interdisciplinary and based around an essential question. And the focus of our work with that coach has been ensuring that within those expeditions, it is clear how students are mastering the essential skills at that grade level. And the next bullet relates to that, as well. Through the work with the coach, the teachers have had ongoing professional development and meetings with him, and ensuring that that is occurring. We've sent a small group of teachers to attend an expeditionary learning site seminar at King Middle School in Portland, which is a high performing expeditionary learning school.

And then, we move into the work that we've done around the MCAS. We have done a more detailed assessment of our MCAS than we have in the past this fall, although we have further steps that we are going to take. And the staff has been fully involved in that process, understanding what the student weaknesses have been in our past results so that we can adjust what we are doing in the academic programs to increase their success. And we've continued that work, specifically starting with open response questions because in our first analysis, the first thing that was very evident is that our students are scoring very low on open response questions. So we've done a great deal of work now talking with teachers, and having teachers work collaboratively together during professional development time to think about how they can adapt their instruction to ensure that students are understanding how to respond effectively to open response questions. We've also increased the amount of time that our external writing coach is working with classrooms with teachers, again focusing both on the writing for the MCAS, and the kind of organization that students need to have in their writing, as well as topic idea development in their writing for the MCAS, as well as in their writing in general, as well as tying back into the open response and how to write effectively about your thinking and your answers to all types of problems.

We've implemented daily corrective reading groups for outward students in grades 1 through 4, to ensure that no kids are falling through the cracks. And as we see students struggling with

reading, they're intervening immediately. We've initiated a math skills Saturday program that's now in its fourth Saturday. This Saturday will be the fourth Saturday for students in grades 6 through 8. Many people have mentioned that our math results are not as strong as our English Language Arts. Our focus has been trying to improve and strengthen our literacy program first. And we know that we now need to adjust and ensure that we are putting additional resource into our students' math skills, and this is one of those steps.

We've also increased the length of our math instructional blocks in grades 6 through 8 to a minimum of 75 minutes, and we've regrouped our students by skill level in the upper grades for their math instructional blocks as well, again, to try to be able to tailor the instruction to meet their needs more effectively and ensure that they are building the skills that they need to, to be more successful. We've also formed full-staff instructional discussion groups that are focused on effectively literacy instruction, effective math instruction, and again, the effective integration of skill mastery into learning expedition.

For the remainder of the school year, the steps that we plan to take, as we are sending teachers to professional development through Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound that is, again, linked to mastery of high standards through learning expeditions and projects-based learning. We are sending eight staff members to the national conference. The entire focus of the national conference is how to ensure that students are reaching high standards through learning expeditions. We will then also send small groups of teachers to site seminars at the Harbor School in Boston, as well as to schools in Dubuque, Iowa. Are also are implementing an after school remediation groups for third graders in reading, and fourth graders in literacy and math right after the February break, again to ensure that the students who are more at risk for failure on the MCAS are getting additional support.

We are planning as well to conduct full-staff professional development with Barney Brawer, and more intensively to understand the MCAS, the kinds of the questions that are asked on the MCAS, and how to prepare students with the skills that they need to pass that test, as well as how to use this assessment data to, again, go back and adjust instruction. We also are developing and implementing consistent test-taking skills across the school so that there is common language that we are working with kids about how to take tests. This is not a school that in the past has done a lot with test-taking. We have not done a lot of standardized test taking or preparation of students on how to take a standardized test. So this is a change for us. And finally, we're going to work on developing or deciding on what we will adopt for school-like skills curriculum in the literacy focus areas for next year of expository writing, math problem solving, and technology integration and literacy.

And now, I get to the action steps for the 2002-2003 school year, if we are allowed to have that opportunity, or granted that opportunity. The first one is very important to use. We've been in conversations with the Community Day Charter School, and Sheila Balboni is the head of that school, around serving as a mentor and doing intensive professional development with our staff here at the school, as well as in coordination with our Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound work, on this issue of skill development, and how to create effective systems within our school to ensure that the skill standards are effectively integrated into all curriculum instruction and planning, as well as into our assessment system. That work would happen during the summer, and then, throughout the next school year.

Another significant plan or change for next year is the addition of instructional coordinators. And these coordinators would spend time coaching teachers in the classroom in order to ensure that

they were effectively implementing the appropriate instructional strategies, and that skill-based instruction was being implemented effectively in the classroom. So we would add a literacy coordinator who would be coaching and supporting teachers 75 percent of the time, and do instruction 25 percent of the time, doing some remediation groups; a math coordinator who would coach 50 percent of the time and instruct 50 percent of the time; and an expeditionary learning assessment coordinator, who would coach, again, 50 percent of the time and instruct 50 percent of the time. These positions are key to what we think can make up much more successful in the coming years. These positions would be key positions to work with me on ensuring that the instructional program moves forward effectively, and that the plans for improving in terms of effective standard-based instruction actually are implemented successful.

And the final one is implementing the school-wide skills based curriculum that is developed this spring in the areas of expository writing, math problem solving, and technology integration. I suppose I will pause there and see if there are questions on that category before I move on to the next one, an internal assessment system.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes, I've got a few questions. There's a lot here. This has been a school that's had a hard time implementing. And I guess my initial impression is that you're trying to do an awful lot of things at the same time, which would challenge the most high-functioning organization I can imagine. Why do you think that the organization is prepared to move on all these fronts simultaneously?

MS. MARX: I will tell you that we're in a very different spot than we've ever been as a school. In the past, as a school, as you know in the documents you've received, there's been conflict between the Board and the administration that has caused attention to be diverted form student achievement and from high student learning. There has also been problems in terms of the support positions, of my position, which are no longer there. I have a highly effective assistant principal at this point, which is a key position in terms of my functioning and my role as an instructional leader. And the addition of those three positions is key to moving forward. And the Board is very ready, and looking at the budget right now, drafting the first budget for next year by the March Board meeting that will fund those positions. Those three positions are essentially in terms of making this work. And if those positions -- and I am confident that they will be funded by the Board in the March, and then in the April final budget are put in place, and we have competent, skilled people in those positions, that dramatically changes the capacity of this school to make those changes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is it fair to say that educationally -- I mean, reading the original charter, which central curricular structure is based, at least again -- and the language of the charter is based on the Waldorf model. Is it fair to say that we're talking about really an entirely different school now than was envisioned by the original charter?

MS. MARX: I would disagree with that. The Waldorf influence in this school was always talked about in inspiration and in influence. And that influence has continued throughout the life of this school. Even in the site visit, the team themselves thought that they saw good evidence of the focus on the whole child, and the integration of the arts into the classrooms, two of the key aspects of the Waldorf philosophy that we have adopted here at this school. We never, even in the charter itself, claimed that we were going to be a Waldorf school. We always said we were going to be a Waldorf-inspired school, and have all their influence in what we do. And I think that that is still the case. We also in the charter talk very much about the idea of project-based learning and authentic learning. That's exactly what we are doing through expeditionary

learning, and through the expeditions that occur in each classroom. What we're talking about is simply ensuring that through those expeditions, it is clear how students are mastering skills; that that's very clearly mapped out and known by everything in the school, and that's effectively monitored. That's not changing the philosophy and the approach of the school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There's another -- and this may be getting a bit beyond this area -- but there is another aspect of the charter which I think is in dispute among -- well, maybe the dispute has been settled, but it's not clear from my perspective whether that's true, about the role of co-counseling in the management and operation of the school and the classrooms; in particular its connection not only to just the governing ethos of the school, but also classroom management practices. Could you talk about that a little bit, and how that fits into here or doesn't?

MS. MARX: Sure. I can definitely talk about that. The co-counseling aspect of the school was officially removed. We wrote and requested to remove it. The Board approved the removal of that from the charter. I don't know the date of that. The Board members will have to get back to you on that, but it was last year at some point. And so, the model of co-counseling is no longer used in this school. We still emphasize with our staff the importance of focusing on the whole child, and ensuring the staff are trained in what we call listening skills. They take a brief class on this, and brief workshops and training in the summer on listening skills to ensure that, if a student is having struggles with learning, they're paying attention to how this might be related to emotional or social issues. But co-counseling itself is no longer a part of the school.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And I'll just ask the Department folks, there's no evidence of an amendment to the charter with regard to that; there was an amendment that was provided with respect to governance, which was subsequently withdrawn. But I haven't seen any amendment to the charter with respect to the co-counseling aspect of the mission.

MS. WOLFE: Well, that's the Board of Education -- that's not in our power, the amendment or ---

MS. MARX: My understanding -- and again, the Board will have to be ones to answer that more clearly for you, and we'll have to clarify that probably after this meeting -- but my understanding was it was voted at a Board meeting here at the school, and then, a letter was sent to the Department.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, the material that I have, I think, which is some -- you know, there are memos from Herb Fox, and there's a draft mission statement. And my understanding is that was not adopted by the Board, or if it was adopted, that that decision was overturned. Can anyone enlighten me on that?

MS. MARX: The issue of the mission, I believe, is a separate issue. The issue around co-counseling -- and I'm going to turn it over to the Board members to answer for themselves -- but my understanding was that the issue about specifically co-counseling being removed from the charter was voted by our Board to be taken out of the charter, and I thought that a letter was sent to the Department to request that amendment.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Would anyone like to clarify that?

MR. WALKER: Ron Walker is my name, Board member. And Amy is correct. We as a Board spent considerable time discussing the pros and cons of co-counseling. And I can't give you the exact date, but we did decide unanimously as a Board that we wanted to have co-counseling extracted from the charter. And again, in agreement with Amy, that process was to be facilitated and a letter sent to the proper channels.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There was some substitute language that was being put forward. Was that adopted?

MS. MARX: The language that you're speaking to, again, I believe was around discussions that happened with the mission statement last spring, and that is a separate discussion that happened, after the decision about co-counseling being removed. That discussion about the mission, there was never a final vote by our Board to change anything in the mission of the school as it was written in the charter, and never a letter sent forward to request that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay. Well, maybe I'll save the rest of this for a different part of it. Who is -- I know Steven Levy is here. Is he going to come in and talk about expeditionary learning?

MS. MARX: Yes, he is.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is this the appropriate time?

MS. MARX: I was going to go through the next two parts of this briefly, and then, he was going to speak at the end of my overview of the academic program.

MS. SCHAEFER: Yes, because I wanted to talk more about that, because that's obviously --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There is also something else in the renewal application which talks about consideration of a bilingual -- essentially, what sounded like a two-way bilingual program.

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What's the status of that?

MS. MARX: There's the consideration of that. The Board decided to begin a task force to look into that possibility, and to study that possibility and bring it back to the Board after studying it. The task force was initiated. I don't believe -- I think they said that they were going to begin meeting in January, and then, we've been a little waylaid by what's occurred since January.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What's your opinion about whether that would make your job more difficult or more successful?

MS. MARX: My opinion of it is that it's not the right time right now; that if we move forward successfully --- if we are given the opportunity and we move forward and successfully address the concerns in the academic program currently, that three or four years down the road, that that might make sense. And I certainly think that bilingual education programs have run successfully; are wonderful in enhancing both the Spanish language, as well as the English language of the students of the school.

The next part is around the internal assessment system, the steps we've already taken. We've revised our math benchmark to be aligned to be aligned with our math skill standards. We've administered our benchmark assessments three times a year, as opposed to two. We've improved the consistency of our portfolio organization and use across the classrooms in this January selection that just occurred. We've implemented the use at the beginning of the year of school-wide rubrics for assessing portfolio core items, and we've discussed clear promotion criteria linked to skill mastery as demonstrated in student's benchmark assessments, California achievement test results, and portfolio core items.

For the remainder of the year, we have stated that we are going to review the current portfolio implementation that occurred in the January collection in order to further increase the level of consistency in the June collection, and we are going to finalize promotion criteria by the middle of March, linked to students performance on these benchmark assessments, their California achievement tests, and their portfolio core items. We are going to research and purchase a more standardized math assessment for next academic year. We currently use a teacher-made math assessment, and we'd like to find something that aligns with our academic program that's more standardized; train a small expert group to score all writing samples this spring in order to further standardized scoring. Right now, we do swap samples among teachers and score in that way, after training all of our teachers in the use of our rubric, but we would like to have that even be more standardized by an expert group.

And then, this is a key piece at the end is implementing a transitional year program, at fifth grade and seventh grade, if needed, for students who do not need promotion criteria at the end of this academic year. And that is key for us. We have not had a transitional program before. We have done some retention if necessary, but we think that this is a key way to ensure that students who do not master the skills that they need to are placed in a different program instead of repeating the same program, which is a smaller classroom with more tailored instruction to their needs moving forward.

Actions step for the next year -- again, this is the piece I already mentioned, but a key part in this would be the addition of the Expeditionary Learning/Assessment Coordinator, whose job it will be to oversee the effective implementation of our internal assessment system, and to ensure that it demonstrates skill mastery. We will implement the standardized math benchmark assessment that we will hopefully purchase this spring, and we will implement quarterly performance assessment tasks in science and social studies so we can monitor student skill development in these areas, as well. In the summer, we plan to develop, anchor our exemplar portfolio core pieces, which was always the plan for the next step, to then have exemplars of what meets the standard at each grade level for our core pieces in our portfolios, as well as what pieces exceed or approach that standard. And this will ensure greater consistency in the scoring of portfolio core items. And then, in the following year from this year, we will implement a transitional year at third grade, and seventh grade if it was not already implemented. The last section of the academic program improvement is increasing the consistency of quality instruction across ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Back up just one second. You're sort of moving on two fronts simultaneously. One is to strengthen the portfolio assessment program. The other is to expand the use and improve the quality of standardized testing and its application to curriculum development, as well as monitoring student performance. Again, do you think there's any resource constraint here in being able to do both those things simultaneously?

MS. MARX: I honestly -- we've been moving on the portfolio front for our first four years, and we have been making good progress. We are not where ultimately the system we want it to be, and that's these final steps, around the anchor papers and ensuring consistency of the scoring of the portfolios across classrooms. Now, we are moving forward on the area of the benchmark assessments very linked to the skills that they'll need on the standardized test. So that is the next step for us. We probably should have started that process sooner, but we did not. Now we are ready to do that.

Are there any further questions from anybody else before I move on? I'm just conscious of time. So I'm sorry if I'm rushing. The last area that was talked about in the inspection report was concern about the consistency of quality instruction across all classrooms. It particularly talked about this finding in our upper grades, and that in the younger grades, they saw quality instruction, but in the upper grades, there was inconsistency. So the steps that we've already taken, one step we took going into this year was restructuring our classrooms in the fifth and sixth grade to include 16 students with an inclusion specialist. This was a specific structural change that we made to address the need of our Special Education students, as well as to reduce the size of those classrooms. I've already spoken about the change in the admission policy to no longer admit seventh and eighth grade students. We've also now recently increased the administrative support and presence in the upper grade, meaning both myself and the Assistant Principal spending more of our time as we do walk-arounds each day supporting the teachers in the upper grades, and ensuring that instruction is improving significantly there through our coaching with teachers.

We've implemented a new discipline system, as well as Habits of the Heart, based on the Expeditionary Learning design principles, which have improved our overall school climate. This is an important step. I think that it's referenced in many of the documents that there were struggles in the past with the discipline system in the school. And we've made dramatic improvements this year in terms of improving school climate, and ensuring that within classrooms, students understand what the discipline system is, and are working to demonstrate positive attributes, which are our Habits of the Heart. We've focused substantial amount of time of our external literacy coach's time in the upper grade classrooms to support the high percentage of new staff at these grade levels. And I want to just elaborate on this one briefly because the issue of staff turnover obviously has been brought up. And we have had -- I corroborate that we've had a great number of new staff in our upper grades.

However, when you look across the school, due to turnover -- due to restructuring and changing of positions so that people who are currently positions were not able or eligible to fill those positions, the actual turnover going into this year from last year of positions that remained the same and turned over is only 37 percent, still higher than we want it to be. I'm not claiming that that's ideally where I want my turnover percentage to be, but it is not at 52 percent which is implied in the site visit inspection report. We've established a mentoring relationship between myself Dr. Clare Crane at Lynnsport Elementary School, which is a high-performing K through 8 school in Lynn, as well.

For the remainder of this year, we plan to continue the higher level of administrative support in coaching in the upper grades. We plan to send small groups of upper grade teachers to high performing schools, such as the Academy of the Pacific Rim, Community Day Charter School, which we plan to have a relationship with moving forward, and the Kipp Academy of New York. And we plan to continue to effectively implement our new discipline system, and refine it and improve this system as necessary.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I just ask you a question on that because it sort of jumps out? What do you think this school has in common with Kipp in terms of its approach to education?

MS. MARX: I'm not sure we have a lot in common. It actually is more a relationship I have with the leader of that school. And I know that the school has been very successful in standardized test results. So it is put in there specifically because of that, because I have a relationship with the leader of the school, the prior leader of the school, and I know that they are very well-known for having very good results on standardized tests.

The next part is action steps for the 2002-2003 school year. First is around having a partnership moving forward with Research for Better Teaching. Research for Better Teaching is an organization that has done a lot of work in order to understand the general knowledge base around effective teaching. And the plan is to move forward with them working intensively with our teachers in the summer; to have all of our teachers to through a course around understanding effective teaching, and then for cluster leaders to support the implementation of these practices within our classrooms in the next academic year. The next bullet is back to that same addition of those positions in the next academic year: the Literacy Coordinator, the Math Coordinator, and the Expeditionary Learning Assessment Coordinator. And the final is around providing classes on site for individuals to pursue, advance in their own careers educationally; to pursue initial certification for people who we have come into entry-level positions who are not yet certified, as well as for people who are here to get additional certifications or higher level of degrees. And let me stop there and see if there are questions before I move on to Steven.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to be clear, you at the moment don't have a Literacy Coordinator, Math Coordinator, or an Expeditionary Learning Assessment Coordinator, right? How would you describe the importance or significance of those positions to the success of the plan that you've laid out?

MS. MARX: I think it's key. I think that those positions will allow me to have a strong team that is working to ensure that there is quality instruction across all classrooms, and more specifically focused on discrete areas to ensure that there is effective skills-based instruction in those areas, and that the instructional practices are successful in those areas. So they are key.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And they don't exist yet? They're vacant at this point?

MS. MARX: They do not exist yet.

MR. THOMAS: What's your estimated turnaround time to have those positions advertised and placed?

MS. MARX: The budgeting process right now, which you'll hear about from the Board when they present, the first draft of our budget is planned to be done by the March Board meeting, which I believe is March 12th, and then, a final budget for approval by the April Board meeting. So if it's looking positive by the March Board meeting, I would start advertising in late March/April.

MR. THOMAS: Do you already know whether you have the financial capacity to bring these individuals ---

MS. MARX: And you're going to hear about that again in their presentation. The Board is going, through the Finance Committee, a process right now of looking very carefully and analyzing our budget to align it more effectively with our academic need. I'm very confident that the Board is going to find a way to fund those positions.

MR. THOMAS: Are you getting any support outside of your per diem revenue stream? Foundation support?

MS. MARX: Yes. We have some foundation and competitive grant support that we've had, you know, ongoing. Right now, we have foundation support. In the past, we've had it from two key funders, and we certainly pursue that. As we move forward, we will pursue additional foundation funding.

MR. THOMAS: I your relationship with Tufts an ongoing relationship, or is it with the professor who spoke earlier?

MS. MARX: It is just with Barney Brawer and his organization to look specifically at our MCAS results and how we are addressing -- adapting instruction to --

MS. SCHAEFER: I guess I have a general observation that this is a very ambitious program. And I guess I'm sort of wondering what was happening in the first five years. And it looks as though we're just kind of starting again; that there were many things that should have been done in those first five years that were not. I mean, looking at using the test results for analysis to -- again, and you're talking about that now, and what was happening --

MS. MARX: My best answer for that is that there has been a substantial change in the leadership of the school. Beginning last year, I did move into the Principal role. But I was still working with the founder and Executive Director. And this year, there has been a dramatic change in the use of our professional development time, the focus of our time with our teachers to really be using all of that time around how to improve the academic program related to our test results. So I can't answer that, other than I think the change that has occurred is significant. Okay, I'm going to bring Steven Levy up now to speak about Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.

MR. LEVY: Welcome, members of the Board. I'm pretty excited to be part of this process. What I've seen happen in this school since you sat down with them and brought forth a lot of your findings, and even more particularly before that has been really encouraging to me as to what's possible to happen in a school where people are really committed to their mission. And I really want to emphasize that where before any of the evaluations were done and the site visits were done by you, I think this was a school that had in place and was aware of the problems that have been surfaced so clearly now, and mobilized and beginning to take action on many different fronts. And I think that's an important point. When I look at one thing that's going to be essential in a school being able to continue to grow and develop is that it has a reflective capacity; that it's able to identify the problems that it's facing; that it's able to mobilize and take action on those problems.

And I agree with you, there have been lots of things that have prevented that from happening as deeply as it might have in past years, but it really has begun to take hold this year. I think one of those reasons, if I can be bold enough -- she might even be here. Is Lisa here? Lisa Drake, could you stand for just a second? Lisa was the founder of the school. I taught her daughter.

And a person who had a deep commitment to Lynn; who worked here as a social worker; who had a tremendous vision for a school; who wanted, more than anything, to do something for his community; who had a passion, and an ability, I think, to describe a vision that brought all kinds of resources and people to get involved with it, including myself. But Lisa wasn't really a school person. She really wasn't trained in schools. She really did not know effective management of schools. And I think she learned a tremendous amount as she came in and tried to make this happen. And she brought so many gifts to it, but not all that the school needed. And so, I think that really was part of what was trying to happen, and as she was trying to figure that out, the Board was trying to figure that out, why the attention to real teaching and learning just wasn't happening to the degree that it might, and that I think it is now.

Expeditionary Learning is new on the scene this year. I think it's another example of the steps that the school has already taken to begin to try to focus and mobilize the tremendous strengths that I think are here toward the end of student achievement. Let me just, a little bit about this design. Expeditionary Learning has been around for ten years. And we have ten years of experience in working with schools around the country and trying to figure out how to really be helpful and to try help students to really achieve high standards. We have a national network of approximately 120 schools throughout the country, including a pretty strong local network in which some of our strongest schools happen to be located nearby. The Harbor School in Boston is an Expeditionary Learning School, as well as the Hernandez, and the King Middle School in Portland, Maine are three schools that I'm really proud of, and I think have really demonstrated that it's possible to teach in a way that both has high results on the kind of tests that our students need to take, and does that without neglecting the wholeness of who these children are, and giving them opportunities to engage in real and authentic work, and meaningful and relevant to their lives.

We have a variety of unique professional development opportunities that I'll talk about in a minute. And finally, we're one of a number of new American school designs. There's also a collaborative of designs that are all under the sort of umbrella of new American schools that also are collaborative. They're all in some ways trying to achieve the same goal of how can you, as an outside organization really support and help a school to become effective in really educating our students. There has been a number of independent studies of Expeditionary Learning. And the research shows that this is a prudent model for comprehensive school reform.

Expeditionary Learning delivers very highly effective professional development to its partner schools, and these are the kind of things that you can look for when this design is implemented. Number 1, it does bring about significant improvements in student achievement, as measured by standardized tests and portfolios of student work. Number 2, it changes instructional practices in school culture for the better. Three, it improves student attendance and parent participation, and four, it reduces the need for disciplinary actions.

MS. MARX: I apologize if that's not on the slide.

MS. SCHAEFER: Before you go on any further, can you tell us what this is? Can you explain it in laymen's terms what it means?

MR. LEVY: So the nature of the design itself?

MS. SCHAEFER: Yes, what do you do?

MR. LEVY: Expeditionary Learning is a design that actually grew out of people who were involved in the Outward Bound movement. And they saw a couple of things. One is what a great teacher nature was, and two, they saw a process of learning that was transformative of who were. They saw peoples' lives change. And they kind of started out with this question, I wonder if it's possible to bring something of that impulse into our classrooms. And in a nutshell, as clear as I can say it, it's sort of a model of an outdoor expedition, where pretty much, there's an impossible goal. I mean, we can't imagine that we're going to be able to get up to the top of that mountain or get down those rapids or explore those caves. And then, there's all kinds of skills that you have to learn in order to be able to achieve that goal. And there's a lot of teamwork that has to happen in order for you to be able to do it, because the goal isn't just that you get there by yourself, but it's like we are all going to make it up there together. And then, you achieve the goal. And on the way, you run into all kinds of problems. And you get to the end of your own rope. So it's ---

MS. SCHAEFER: What is an example in the classroom of doing this?

MR. LEVY: So I'd like to call on a teacher here in Lynn. I could tell you many things from my experience. Let's just see. Is there anybody out there who has an example of an expedition that you've done in your class?

(***Chris spoke away from a microphone***)

CHRIS: An example that comes by the way is, I've been working on last year and this year to link an expedition in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service on Atlantic Salmon -- native Atlantic Salmon in the Merrimack upriver the watershed. That's our product, that's our expedition. But I use it in the context to teach the biology and science, things like construction of an organism, the level of organization starting with atoms, cells, tissue, organ systems. We teach that same curriculum and I pulled what I needed to directly from the framework, but it's always went back to the larger expedition of why am I learning about this stuff. Well, it has to do with the organisms that we're actually raising in the classroom that we will release to a river in the spring. So, there's a (unintelligible) context (unintelligible) the biology to an expedition, somehow a product that has real relevance in the world to be released into a river and (unintelligible).

MS. SCHAEFER: So is it just in biology, or do you then relate it to history, literature, et cetera?

CHRIS: My primary focus in the Middle School is a Math/Science teacher. So I primarily focus on the Math/Science. But for example, if you want to learn about salmon, you can read a (unintelligible) in literacy, particularly around the area of the spots (unintelligible). I could teach technology skills, word processing, research on the Internet as we look for sources. And again, in writing, I do a lot of the writing within the context of my science. So the literacy skills are directly embedded in that, as well math. But that's my particular focus is mathematics, science and aquatic writing and research. As much as possible, in that expedition, I try to link it back, take all the skills work back to (unintelligible) direction.

MR. LEVY: Thank you, Chris. I think that's the key, that somehow, we want to teach the content and the skills that the students need to know, but we want to do it in the context of work that's meaningful and relevant and of service to the community and real to the students. So that's the goal. And it's a hard goal. I don't want to say that it's just easy to get in there and do it. That is really a significant challenge, and one in which a lot is demanded of the teachers.

And therefore, a lot of support needs to be given in order to give them time and expertise to be able to do that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: How far into Expeditionary Learning would you say the school is? Is it 20 percent implemented? Eighty percent? Somewhere in between?

MR. LEVY: I gave you -- One of the things we do is to what we call an implementation check. So we visited the Lynn school in November ---

MS. MARX: December.

MR. LEVY: --- in December with four or five of my colleagues, and then gave a report to the school which measured them along ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are you employed by Expeditionary Learning?

MR. LEVY: Yes, I am. I work for Expeditionary Learning.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Because I know you were identified as a consultant or developer at the beginning of this whole process five or six years ago. Were you then employed by Expeditionary Learning?

MR. LEVY: No. Then I was working as a consultant for a ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: How was Expeditionary Learning chosen by the school? I think maybe that's --

MS. MARX: Sure, I can answer that. We looked at several different models. We looked at Expeditionary Learning. I looked at the Atlas model pretty extensively, and a couple of different other school reform design models. The staff was involved in discussing most specifically the Atlas model and the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model. And then, we had discussions with the entire staff and with the parents about the adoption of the model, and voted to adopt the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model because it most fully aligned with our mission and our charter and what we had already said we were intending to do as a school.

MS. SCHAEFER: But it hasn't been in the school until this year?

MS. MARX: This year, correct.

MS. SCHAEFER: What was the model before? What was being used?

MS. MARX: Within the charter, we already had stated that we were, within each classroom, working to create authentic project-based learning, focused around a central question. So within each classroom, each classroom had a year-long essential question, and then, each project was guided by essential questions. And those projects -- which now we call expeditions -- had many of the same components: were to be interdisciplinary; were to be linked, if possible, to the community; and related to the community around the school; and to be relevant to the children and their lives. So it had many of the same components that we now are doing officially through the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model. So we did not dramatically change what we were doing, but it did enhance. It did allow us to have access to a more

professional development, to be a part of a network of schools that is creating this type of learning within classrooms, and ensuring that children are engaged in meaningful projects, but also mastering skills.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is there any communication with the Department over amending the charter with respect to the school design?

MS. MARX: No, we have not communicated with the Department about that because we did not feel that we needed to amend the charter. Again, I mean, what I just stated is why we have not communicated in that way. We felt that the charter and everything stated in the charter fit so perfectly into the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model that we did not feel that we were amending it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's sort of water over the dam, I suppose. But adopting a whole school design, which this is, is certainly a major change. Whether it rises to the level of amendment is something that the Commissioner and his staff should determine. But that's certainly something that would require, in my mind, at least notification to the Department that there's a major change going on which could affect the character of the charter, and at least a question raised as to whether an amendment should be submitted.

MS. SCHAEFER: Why was this not selected, since you were working with the school, five years ago? Why was it not selected then?

MS. MARX: Five years ago, when the school began, I was not here, first of all. But I don't think at that point, we were thinking about a comprehensive school design model as being a part of what we were doing as a school. When we moved to adopt the model last year, the decision was made partly because we felt that the support of being a part of a network of schools that were all working to establish this kind of learning within their classroom would help us dramatically to improve what we were doing.

MS. SCHAEFER: Okay, but I don't understand. What was your role five years ago?

MR. LEVY: So I was friend of the school. As I mentioned, I was a teacher of the founder of the school's daughter. So she had asked me to come in and do some workshops with the faculty around how to design projects.

MS. SCHAEFER: I see.

MR. LEVY: I would come in maybe once a month and just be thinking business to help them. I was a distant friend and just an independent consultant. And I think that one thing that I've learned in working the schools is, there isn't any one piece that's sufficient in terms of really being able to turn things around. So we could develop great projects. But if there weren't the structures and support, if there weren't the ongoing support to implement them, if there weren't the models to really help teachers, if there weren't the structures to allow teachers to keep discussing and reflecting on what they were doing and how to make it better, then it just couldn't be sustained. And I think that's what Expeditionary Learning brought. I'll show you on the next slide ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I just back up again? One thing is, you're being very modest, I guess. But in the charter, you're called out specifically by name as, it says, "The Curriculum

design of Lynn Community Charter School informed by the work of Steven Levy," both in the Lowler School and Bowen Public School. So I mean, it sounds like it's more than just the consulting part; that the design itself was at least in part inspired by, or informed by, certainly, the work that you had done as part of the development of the charter or part of the school.

MS. LEVY: As much as I was inspired by Lisa, I guess she was also inspired by me.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER:: Is there a certification process for Expeditionary Learning schools? If anybody says I want to be an Expeditionary Learning school, or do you have to go through some kind of process to demonstrate that you're implementing the model as intended?

MR. LEVY: They have usually a year of exploration where -- I kind of changed hats. And I guess last year, just kind presented, here's what I learned, and here's the additional services that they would have to offer; here's what they would be able to bring to the table. And then we require the faculty vote on whether or not they want to do this, and there needs to be an 80 percent buy-in in order for us to move forward. So exploring your faculty commitment to making it happen, and then ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are you in the exploring year, or was that last year?

MR. LEVY: No, that was last year. And the school, had to go through a process of gaining the money to do it. So they applied for a CSRD grant, and received the grant for three years, Comprehensive School Reform Design. So that money is available to schools that have a certain level of poverty or need. Is your grant for ---

MS. MARX: Two years.

MR. LEVY: Well, it was three years altogether.

MS. MARX: Three years originally.

MR. LEVY: So this is our first year.

MS. SCHAEFER: What's this?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is this federal money?

MR. LEVY: It's federal money.

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound certify schools as having achieved some level of competence or proficiency, or whatever it might be, in the model?

MR. LEVY: There isn't anything formal as a certification process. But there is an ongoing assessment of where they stand in terms of the Expeditionary Learning benchmarks. So we have a book that identifies all the key features of the design. And we give regular feedback to the school, both through our visits to the school, and then, through their own self-evaluation of where they are in regard to those benchmarks, and to identify areas in which they really want to work with us to improve.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And when was the most recent assessment?

MR. LEVY: You have a copy of it. It was just January 31st the report was delivered.

MS. MARX: They visited in December.

MR. LEVY: We visited in December. So it's called a -- right, you see the Expeditionary Learning. This was a report of our first -- yes, and I think, partly because of the work that I've been doing with Lynn, and partly because I think this is a school whose spirit is just naturally inclined in the same direction that we're going, that as far as schools that I've worked with in the first year, this school is well along. Although you still see they're in Phase 1 in most of our areas because it's pretty rigorous in terms of what has to happen to grow. I'd like to show you just -- give you a little bit more of a sense of what we do at the school, and what opportunities it makes available that I think, again, are going to be things that make a difference the effectiveness of implementing a lot of the ideas that you've heard today. So if you could go on, just a couple of examples. But here's what kind of the school gets through our involvement. One is just the on-site technical assistance. We have a summer planning institute. So there will be a week during the summer when we come together, and teachers really have a chance to plan the kind of curriculum that they're going to be implementing. We have a leadership retreat for the leadership of the school.

The bimonthly professional development activities are mainly visits from me. So probably 25 to 30 times over the year, I'll come in and I'll spend a day here doing different things, depending on what the goals are that we've established and are working on. So a lot of that is all built now around the designing of these expeditions around our standards, and ensuring that the kind of products we're asking students to show us that they've demonstrated learning are deeply embedded in the frameworks and in the standards, and in the content and skills they need to learn. So there's that link between what could be fluffy project stuff and really hard content and skills that I really try to help forge.

MS. SCHAEFER: How long is that summer leadership planning ---

MR. LEVY: That's a week.

MS. SCHAEFER: The planning institute is a week?

MR. LEVY: Yes.

MS. SCHAEFER: Where would you say the bulk of what the teachers learn to do under this comes? Is it at the planning institute in the summer?

MR. LEVY: I think that's a launching, you know. And I think, during that time, there's community activities during that time; sort of larger broad strokes that we want to accomplish, and ideas for expeditions; begin to develop teachers; begin conversations around the resources begin to be gathered. However, certain instructional practices can be modeled and taught. But it really is in the ongoing work that anything has to -- at some of the schools I work with because even visiting twice or three times a month, sometimes, you feel like, well, gee, nothing's happened since the last time I was here.

MS. SCHAEFER: So how do they ---

MR. LEVY: So that ongoing and sustaining of it is what's crucial. And I think that's one of the reasons why Amy's put in the budget this idea of someone on site to be the Expeditionary Learning Assessment Coordinator would have a job. And now, you are supposed to have that position where that person would work more closely with me, and more actively and presently and continuously with teachers in their classrooms to keep a head on the front burner because it's just so easy to lose site of that when you've got so many urgent things before you all the time. So it needs somebody there really watching it over, holding people accountable, creating opportunities to meet and discuss it. That's what that person would do. Off-site, I think we have some other significant opportunities for teachers. Something we call educational summits, there again, are week-long experiences, often during the summer, where we try to bring teachers together to learn in the same kind of way that we're asking them to teach their own students. And sometimes, until you've had that experience yourself, it's very difficult to imagine conceptually what that would be like for someone else.

So, for example, I ran one on the bicycle. And we spent the week really with about 30 teachers from around the country seeing all we learn about the bicycle, particularly scientific investigation. And so, the teachers were asked to go through the same kind of learning, at an adult level, that again they were then going to turn around and do in the classroom. So we had those on physiology, on literacy, on making books. There's a variety that teachers can choose from. And those have been transforming experiences for many, many teachers. We have another opportunity for teachers to go on Outward Bound courses together, and there is a sort of drawing on our Outward Bound connection. So we've had groups of teachers go through what they experience together in teamwork, and just their own courage, and their own being a model of the kind of things they're expecting from their students: taking risks, showing vulnerability, asking for help, working together as a team. And they learn something on that experience, and what does help us to learn about teaching and learning, and how can we bring that back to our classrooms, that cultural community. So again, I think it's been transforming for many teachers.

We have an national leadership conference coming up, and a number of teachers from here will be going. And that's all about integrating standards. And also, a national leadership conference, where leaders in schools, again meet and come together and share what they're learning and how to make this go. And being part of that network, I think, is just so supportive and so helpful than trying to do this thing all by yourself here. And I think that's been evident also in Amy's presentation. I know even we can't do it all either. So some of the other collaborations that she's forging I think are going to be crucial in helping the school. The last is just the site seminars. And there's a pretty active communication with other schools in our network, particular the Harbor School and the King Middle School in Portland, where they have these site seminars where teachers come and spend several days really working there at the school and learning about how a successful school has really been able to make ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Can I ask a question which may relate to both you and Amy, but it has to do with professional development in general. How many hours of professional development do teachers, on average, does the average teacher have in this current year? How many hours do you expect in the next year? And how would you estimate that's going to be divided up between Expeditionary Learning, portfolio assessment, data analysis, Waldorf, other types of training that you might want to run?

MS. MARX: We do two weeks of training in the summer before we return each year. So there's a solid two weeks that the teachers ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Was this one of the weeks, or is this an additional week?

MS. MARX: Every year, we do two weeks in the summer. And this year, moving into next year, we will have one of those weeks for Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound. Then throughout the course of the year, we have early release days every Thursday, where then our staff has professional development time from 1:30 until 4:30. Usually, approximately two hours of that is professional development time, or collaborative instructional discussion groups, for example, as I've talked about before. And we also have staff meeting time, and other things that have to occur during that time, as well. So two hours a week, approximately. And then we have two professional development days built into the calendar each year.

Additionally, teachers are encouraged to go to things such as the Expeditionary Learning site seminars and other events, which then we provide coverage here in the building for them to do additionally. The division, you know, right now as I'm looking at it is certainly, that one week in the summer will be focused on the Expeditionary Learning model and moving forward with that model. And then, as well, the Research for Better Teaching, which we've talked about having a link with them, we'll probably do one or two days during our summer training time, as well.

The link with Community Day Charter School, which is around the improvement of our internal assessment system and skills-based instruction, we will work about -- will happen primarily with a small group of teachers over the summer, who then will share that with the rest of the group during our August training for at least one or two days, as well. And then, throughout the course of the year, you know, there will be a balance. Right now, currently, we spend approximately two of those Thursdays more focused on Expeditionary Learning in our time, and I think that that will probably continue. And the other two Thursdays, we will use to focus on moving the work with Research for Better Teaching and Community Day Charter School.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What's the annual budget?

MS. MARX: I can't tell you that off the top of my head. I can get you that number, but I don't know off the top of my head.

MR. THOMAS: I was going to just -- and I appreciate the full description of the Expeditionary Learning program. It's a full integration. I mean, it's fairly comprehensive. And I guess one question I would have is, when staff was first hired, this was not necessarily the model that you shared with them when they decided that they wanted to accept this challenge. Do you have the buy-in from staff for the model now?

MS. MARX: My answer to that would be completely yes. The staff is very buy-in to the model and to the work that we are doing with Expeditionary Learning. When we did the vote to adopt the model, I believe -- I don't know the exact number, but it was very close to 100 per cent of the staff who voted in support of adopting the model. So as I said, partly because the model was so well-aligned with what we had already stated in the charter, and we did talk to staff members about as we hired them to work here at the school. We would talk to them about the idea of project-based learning and authentic learning, and learning focused around meaningful explorations, that it was very much aligned wit what we had already -- people had already come here believing in.

MR. THOMAS: So you really do think that it's interchangeable with project base lining?

MS. MARX: Project base lining, when it's done in an authentic, meaningful context, yes. They may have additional components, but it is very similar. As long as the project-based learning is done with an authentic learning for the community is how we come to the idea of Expeditionary Learning.

MR. LEVY: And you'll see, I have a little book about that, about Expeditionary Learning, of which project-based learning is one part of, but it's not the whole thing. And I'm just going to say one other thing about the teachers' volume because before we came to the Board meeting, the last one that you had, on the one hand, I really felt like sticking my neck out and saying, you know, just putting myself on the line and Expeditionary Learning on the line that this school could make it. And the only thing that held me back a little bit from doing that was I just didn't know where the faculty here was with it, and if they were going to be willing to go all the way with it as well. I kind of felt the parents were there. I knew the kids were there. I knew the leadership was there. I knew the Board was there. And we did a kind of anonymous survey, which I ran. It had nothing to do with the teachers, and people of the leadership, and people were interested. I invited people, look, I want to be able to go in and say that 100 percent of this faculty is committed to making this happen and is going to be here with us if you give us a chance to go on. And there's probably still some that have come in that I haven't seen, but it was like two of everybody here who were not going to be returning, and one was they were going to be moving, and the other, I don't know. And I felt that was really a strong statement, and I felt it kind of game me the courage to say, yes, you know, they're going to make it, and I'm willing to put myself out in whatever way it has to be because if they're behind it, then I think it will happen. So I think the faculty is committed.

And the work that I've seen them doing already -- and again, I just want to stress that it's not all generated by this whole process. It was already begun before. You kind of put it into really high gear, and Jim, you've been pretty wise at discerning the vastness of this plan. I mean, you know it's over-ambitious, and you know, as every wheel has been spinning and every person's been getting together. And that I think says a lot in itself, that this community is mobilized, and people are putting in tremendous amounts of time to come together and make it happen. And we're thinking of all kinds of things that probably in the end, aren't all going to be able to happen. But the fact that it is coming together the way it is, and as we begin really working out the finances and every other part, the essential parts are going to go forward.

MR. CROWLEY: Are the marginal costs of implementing this program covered by the grant?

MS. MARX: Yes. At this point in our first year, they are. When we begin next year's budget, you know, we'll have to look at that, as well, because the funding does reduce slightly from the federal money. But this first year, it has been completely covered.

MR. CROWLEY: What's the total funding in Year 2?

MS. MARX: I don't have that number. I'm sorry. But I will get it for you. I'll show you the decrease.

MR. CROWLEY: Here's where I'm going, and I know you're going to get to it on the finances. You're looking at '01. You had a deficit of almost $200,000. You had a fund balance of about

150. We're hearing new teachers, which is great. I've not seen anything in the package on the current fiscal year. One of the things that I think you got a thumbs up on was the financial management of the school. And I'm curious as heck as to how you're doing this year relative to budget, and then, next year, with all these additional costs. I would hate to see all these exciting new programs bring you to a point where now one of the things that you're strong on is now an issue.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think we do need to get into the governance issue. But this is certainly one of them. In some ways you could segue because understanding is, you've also brought the financial management in house. I'm not sure who is responsibility of the staff for the financial management piece of it. I mean, again, we've had this discussion in passing about the restructuring and the creation of the Executive Director's position, which I guess is vacant. And presumably that's the person who would ultimately be responsible for managing this, and for making sure that there isn't, not only a shortfall in sort of the year to year finances, but that the organization is setting itself up in a way to be sustainable over time, given the reasonable sources of revenue that are available. So maybe, if you want to address any those specific things, but also, if we can get into the governance.

MS. MARX: Right. I'll move into the viability part which specifically being presented by the Board members. And we have our Treasurer from the Board, Chris Hogan, here who chairs the Finance Committee. And he works with our Director of Finance and Operations, Bob Sullivan. They weren't originally on the presenters list, but they can answer questions, if necessary, from the Board members. They are here and able to do that. The Director of Finance, Bob Sullivan is the one who oversees the in-house financial management.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: As we get into this -- and I don't mean to ask an unanswerable question of you because it's really, I suppose, about someone else, but I'm very disturbed that the Chairman of the Board is not here, and I wonder if you could explain why that is?

MR. WALKER: My understanding is that the Chairman of the Board is under the weather. Under the weather. Ready to proceed?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Yes.

MS. GALLANT: My name is Darlene Gallant. Amy told you that I am a Board member. But the most important thing is, I am Tashima Gallant's mother, and she spoke to the Board of Education at your last meeting. I have been a parent here for the last five years. And I've only been a Board member since December. So I don't have a lot of information to give you on the Board. And my first motion that I could vote on was to appeal.

So with that, I will talk a little bit -- I do know a little bit about the mission. And our mission statement covers a broad range of ideals and goals that are understood by stakeholders in different ways. The absence of the common vision hinders the school's organizational direction. The school's goals are attainable, but not without a concerted effort to focus resources and attention on the central aim of student learning. And I apologize. I just found out this afternoon that I was going to be here, so -- part of the solution is for the mission. And we have been talking about this over a year, is to clarify the mission. I think on the site visit, when people were asked to describe the mission of the school or to explain the mission of the school, that different people explained it in different ways, and that nobody wanted to be redundant and say what the person before them said. So everybody said a piece of it, but I don't think the whole thing was

captured by everybody at one time. That was the feedback that I got from the groups that were asked about the mission.

So one of the things, obviously, that we have to do is clarify the mission statement, without changing its fundamental character. The first thing would be to express its basic components in straightforward jargon-free language of the Lynn community; not that we don't understand it. I certainly have a background in Human Services and Counseling Psychology. I understand what it says, but I think we need to put it in simpler terms. I agree with the mission. I just think that it needs to be clarified, replacing insupportable statements of belief, involving all stakeholders in the process to establish broad ownership, and including references to high academic achievement appearing in the charter. I think that every parent group that I sat on that talked about this when the Board was thinking about this before I sat on it, every parent said, 'Where in that statement does it say that our kids should excel at learning, should be high academic achievers, and never said the word "education."' So we were a little -- we want to change that. We want to change that to include education.

So part of it was to provide auxiliary forms of popularizing the mission statement and establishing it as a guide, to practice in LCCS. This includes summarizing the mission in forms of slogans. So it's going to be a whole campaign around people knowing what the mission is. I think if you talk to each and every parent here, they understand what the mission is. They don't put it in words that may fit into the way the mission reads right now. So we'd like maybe just three things: Expeditionary Learning, community involvement, and looking at the whole child. And I think every parent understands those three concepts. And we want every parent to be able to say, 'this is why my child goes to the Charter School.' They all sent you their stories. So I know you know why they're here. And I think under this framework, that we could just make it simpler, and maybe have a slogan, and maybe have some visuals to clarify and make concrete the evidence of the mission statement, and even using the mnemonics. We talked about that.

Establish a practice of using that mission statement to guide the school's planning, allocation of resources and activities. When we were sitting in a room, we said we need that mission statement sitting up on the wall every time the Board makes a decision, and saying to ourselves, how does this decision fit into that mission, rather than the opposite. So looking at that tool and saying we need to -- when we need to think about resource allocations, we need to look. Is it taking into account the whole child? Is it taking into account project-based Expeditionary Learning? And how does that affect the community and the families. I am a Community Services Director. So I have to ask myself those questions all the time, how is it affecting the community in which I live.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I wonder, we have before us a memo that had been prepared back in, I'm not sure when, June/July by Mr. Fox, and a motion I guess that he made, or a proposal that he made to change the mission of the school. And in his view -- and again, he's not here, unfortunately; so I can't ask him myself -- but in his view, the school should be about, if I read his memo correctly, “community-based integrated education”. I wonder if any of you could clarify or express what that means?

MR. WALKER: Well, I think a lot of what it means Steven Levy articulated. It's a commitment that we as the Board, along with the school leadership believe that all students should be active, involved members of the community. I think that's implied in a significant way to the current mission statement as it reads here. I think what the interest was on the part of Mr. Fox -- I'm trying to interpret for the Board selectively speaking -- that to the fullest extent possible. We

believe that every student here should be an active, contributing member of the total Lynn community. And that should reflect itself in the kind of class-based work they do. That's linked to understanding what Lynn is all about; understanding the role they play in Lynn, whether they're born Lynners, or whether they're new students to the community.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me just read a little bit from this because, again, some of this may relate to your concern about the jargon, because I think there's a fair amount of jargon in what I'll read to you. But I think there is an underlying philosophical issue here, which apparently, the Chair of the Board holds, and I don't know the extent to which it's held by others. But he's obviously in a leadership position. And therefore, one would hope that he is carrying the mantle of the Board in defining what the mission of the school is about, not only to the outside world, but also, inside of the school.

Again, some of the stuff you'll have to interpret for me because it's hard for me to interpret myself. But says, "Community based integrated education also addresses the important subject of discipline, which is often a major problem where the dominant educational paradigm. Discipline is not treated as a separate subject, or to be taught or imposed in schemes of classroom management." -- which is in quotes. "The learning of appropriate social behaviors effuse throughout the integrated curriculum is modeled by the teachers and the adults in the community. Because the focus is community, they learn through participation. For example, the concepts of 'right' and 'wrong' are introduced in terms of what is supportive of the community and enables the community to be supportive of the individual and what is dysfunctional in the community. In the community of learning, which is their school, students participate in making the rules by these criteria."

"One of the prime sources of inappropriate behavior in traditional schools is boredom. But in this environment, because the integrated instruction is made relevant through continual reference to the community, boredom is minimized. Community-based integrated education speaks to the problem of modern U.S. society manifest at every level. The overwhelming variety calls for assumption" -- it goes on. "No surprise then that few answer to what was once designated as a calling. Although with these massive systemic trends, there is also a growing culture of resistance with increasing numbers of artists and young persons dedicating themselves to helping others, the antidote to the psychologizing of the imagination is the strengthening of the sociological imagination. Real communities, by definition, a social category, and is a living demonstration that the collective consciousness is not the simple sum of the individual psychologies." I mean, he's trying to -- And again, I don't pretend to understand what his point really is here. But I'm concerned when the Chair of the Board describes the mission in these terms, which I don't recognize anywhere in the discussion we've just heard today. I wonder if you could comment?

MR. WALKER: Well, I think you made the point. And I think one of the reasons why we reference in part of our remediation plan -- and Darlene underscored it -- is that that certainly doesn't seem to be user friendly. However, I distill it, I think the essence of that is, again, to get our students involved in community pursuits; to show that the instruction of our teachers and the commitment of our parents and Board is around building students with character. So that must be distilled as part of our aim as a Board to include the process; to have our documents reflect something that's discernable, understandable, understood by all, and that says right to the heart of the matter that students will do well if they're known well; they'll do well if they see that they're tasked and involved in meaningful experiences that have value added to the community. So in essence, I think that's what it was supposed to say.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, I guess my concern is twofold. One is, there are some other documents that are in the record which suggest that there is a sort of social activism agenda that is underlying this statement that I just read, again, which may not have been explicitly stated, which certainly is not as part of the existing charter or mission statement, but which seems to be a deeply-held view of the Chair of the Board. And that's troubling. And then, the second issue is, why is it taking so long to work this out? I mean, here we are five years now into the charter. There's a discussion and debate over what the mission is, which in theory, is the starting point for all of the work that ought to be done. And yet, that's still up in the air. We're still not at a point where we can come to some conclusion about what should be the foundation for all the work that's going on. And in the absence of it, there's a lot of work going on, and it's not clear to me that it ultimately ties back to whatever the mission ends up being. I mean, so the question is, which is the cart and which is the horse, and who's in the lead?

MS. MARX: If I could respond just briefly to that. I think that the document that you're reading from stimulated discussions last spring, where we had a lot of discussions about the mission of the school with all stakeholders, involved parents, teachers, Board members, everybody involved in those discussions. The culminating sort of agreement out of those discussions was that we truly agreed with the mission statements as it stands, although we felt that we needed to ensure, just as Darlene said, that it was clear that the mission statement was all in support of high academic achievement. What we plan to do now is go back to where we left off in those discussions this spring, and revisit through focus groups how we want to reword the mission statement in clearer terms, in action statements that link to high student achievement, and the three components that were stated in the mission originally still being there, being the idea of creating a community school, support of the whole child, and project-based learning, all still being very important elements of the school that all support the ultimate goal of high student achievement. And that's sort of where we left the discussions in the spring of last year when we ended this academic year. And then now, we need to pick up and solidify how we are going to reword the mission statement in that way.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: From the perspective of our work, how are we to know what the mission of the school is for the next 12 months or five years?

MS. SCHAEFER: Why was it left off last summer and not returned to until now when you know that there are some very serious issues?

MS. MARX: Again, I mean, my only -- what I will say again to that is, as we finished those discussions that were stimulated in part by the document you're talking about, the ultimate end of those discussions was that, in general, we all agreed with the mission statement as it stood. And the only piece was around rewording slightly to ensure that the focus on high student achievement was heightened. And why was that left? That's a good question. And we, you know, have been distracted by the renewal process and many other things that happened this fall. And we are ready now to finish off those conversations, to reword it slightly, and to popularize it across all stakeholders.

MR. WALKER: And I would add and underscore that probably the reason why -- well, I know that Darlene and Chris, and maybe the majority of the Board is relatively new. And so, we can speak for at least maybe a year or more into the process. And part of our resolve is to take a look at processes and procedures and certain mission statements. And, you know, I think Amy was accurate in her assessment that absent from the mission statement -- and we all agree that

it needs to be shown with rigor and focus -- is the academic component. I think the other pieces of it pretty much reflect what we believe.

MS. SCHAEFER: Why has there been such turnover on the Board?

MR. WALKER: Well, I speak from my perspective. I think that in building a Board and understanding the work responsibilities and commitments are to a Board, we went through some tumultuous times in terms of -- And I really can't speak past the first three years. But I think this Board, albeit it small right now, is dedicated to building its numbers; to making sure we have the appropriate expertise. And I think it was a combination of some things that have been said earlier by Steven. I also know and spent time with him in a consulting capacity. And I think there was misuse around understanding roles of -- all respective roles that leaders play. And that would include the Board. And so, I think in the shake-out process, you know, people made decisions not to stay on the Board or decided that, you know, it was more than they counted for. So we're starting with a new core, and we'll build it up.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Has the membership been stable for the last 12 months?

MR. WALKER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Have new members been added over the last 12 months?

MR. WALKER: Darlene has been added.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And there are how many members on the Board right now?

MS. MARX: Six.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Six?

MS. MARX: Six, and one on a leave of absence. There were seven, but one had to take a leave.

MR. THOMAS: What do the by-laws require?

MR. WALKER: Twelve.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: So do you have a quorum for meetings?

MS. GALLANT: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What's a quorum? Is it a majority of the twelve?

MR. WALKER: The majority of the number who's there.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But do the by-laws read that a majority -- it's only a majority -- I mean, what's a quorum? A quorum isn't a majority of those present because everybody present is present. A hundred percent of those present is there. But the question, is a quorum required?

MS. MARX: A majority of the members.

MR. WALKER: A majority of the sitting members.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: A majority of the sitting members is what the by-laws say? Are there minutes available from the Board meetings?

MR. WALKER: Yes, there are.

MR. THOMAS: You referenced that the mission statement needs to be slightly amended. I really have a problem with that, to be candid with you, because that mission statement is very difficult to track, to stay with. And it really, I don't think, is representative of what I've heard tonight of what you guys are trying to achieve from an academic and from a community perspective. And perhaps you're trying to be diplomatic in your response to that. But, from my perspective, leadership is part of the key to the kingdom. And the Board is the first step in the leadership of the school and how it operates. And it appears, from all that I've read, that you have a dysfunctional scenario here with respect to the Board and staff. And if we put this in the best light as it relates to your interests, we could perhaps argue that there are some substantial measures being taken from an operational standpoint that looks like it might be moving in the right direction. If we gave you the benefit of the doubt on that point, it still wouldn't mean a hill of beans if you don't have the leadership intact.

Now, we have Board members here saying that there has been some changes, but I'm very disheartened, as well as the Chairman, that the Chairperson of your Board is not here. And I think that there's a statement, a non-verbal statement being made by the fact that he's not here. Now, maybe that means that he's not here because there's some turmoil that is still going on. I won't try to make any presumptions or be presumptuous, but I would like to hear a little bit more about how the Board has -- you're talking about the school and the operations. And you're talking about teachers being transformed by virtue of its experience with the new paradigm of approach. How is the Board really -- has it been transformed? Are you in motion? Are you going to take a look at leadership with respect to the Board? Where are we on that?

MR. WALKER: A good question. Thanks for asking. I think the Board has taken some definite steps towards transformation of itself and being stewards that it needs to be for the school. I think to that end, you know, when you get to the point of asking more specific questions, money questions, Chris can help us out with that. But we are looking at the budget in terms of how we can support the recommendations that Amy has made in the remediation plan. And I can say, without a doubt, that all of us are committed to the fullest end possible of bringing that budget alive, and bringing those recommendations alive. So that's one piece. I think we really are looking at the allocations necessary to support the plan.

A second piece would be the kinds of question that we are asking. And it so happens that even before we got the report, we really began to take a close look as a Board at the data and what it said about the school; disaggregating the data; asking the leadership to give us reports on how every student are doing in the school, and what we need to do as a school in terms of the academic program. So I think as a Board, the way we have been unified in our commitment to ask the right questions is starting to be transformed.

I think the third thing is that those who are on the Board -- and all of you would know that we have learned how to be a Board. And so, we've committed ourselves to Board development, through contracting with Executive Service Corps, some retired executives to give us some

training in Board development. We recognize that it takes more than just being willing. We need to be ready; we need to be able to perform our function, and understand what those functions are; to understand what functions we play in different committees on the Board. So that's a commitment that we've also made.

So those are three definite steps that I know that we have. I think with Darlene being a new member, her understanding of the Lynn community, and also, the parent component, we really want to make sure that parent voices are heard and parent needs and interests are met. In addition, I serve as the -- a liaison to the staff. So I meet with them regularly, a representative group of staff, to talk about teacher issues, staff issues, ways in which their voice can be heard by the Board. And we're trying to understand our roles better; trying to give a focus as stewards, as has been pointed out.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, I just think I would point out, it's important to keep in mind here is that the charter is issued to the Board; it's not to the staff. The staff has really no connection whatsoever to the chartering, to the charter document itself and the responsibility for ensuring that the school is meeting its obligations. That is the sole purview and responsibility of the Board itself. So the Board -- and it's important in trying to understand the sort of relationship here that, obviously, it's important to have a strong staff in order to make a school work and function on a day-to-day basis. But it's absolutely critical to the whole notion of chartering and the delegation of authority from the State to citizens, to understand that the Board of Trustees is the steward, certainly, but the repository of responsibility for ensuring that the school is meeting its obligations.

MR. WALKER: Right. Well, in no way do I want to minimize the responsibility. I think that we all also are very aware of the major importance of our roles. And I think that's why, to the fullest extent possible, we want to bolster that understanding with the appropriate training that we need that will help us to lead. I think one additional thing I didn't point out is that we -- Recently, I was involved with the Board Chair in making an outreach to the Lynn public schools, because I think that's one of the important facets of our work as Board members is the role that the school plays in the context of the City of Lynn.

We met with the interim Superintendent to talk about possible relationships over time that could we could involve between the Lynn public schools and the Lynn Community Charter School, understanding that an original purpose of the Charter School, one of the original purposes of the Charter School was to be beacons of excellence and innovation within a community. So over time, how can we play that role? See one connection that we've made with one school or one principal to work with our principal. So we are both well aware and focused on the point that you made, that our roles are significant ones.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are there other Board members here?

MS. MARX: Yes, Chris Hogan is here, and Mary Brown.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We sort of interrupted you, but we also are running already past the hour.

MS. MARX: Yes. We sort of talked about a lot of things.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't want to cut you short. On the other hand, I want to encourage your speed and brevity.

MR. WALKER: Well, much of more capacity that was talked about with your questions, so we're actively interested and focused on increasing the membership of our Board, as you pointed out. So that will be a goal that all Board members will play. And these members have to, obviously, in our mind, be dedicated to the mission of LLCS; be focused on high academic achievement on our students, and to improving public education, and capable of sharing the role with school leaders, the Board of Trustees, and the entire school community.

Now, for the next slide, expansion, allocation of resources, and oversight, the steps already taken in the 2001-2002 school year, that we've recruited one new member with an extensive background in the Lynn community. We have engaged Executive Services Corps for Board member consulting to provide training or strategic planning to the Board. And we've initiated an advisory board recruiting process in order to tap into additional skills and expertise outside of the Lynn Community Charter School community. And we've also launched the FY03 budget planning process. Further action steps for the remainder of 2001-2002 is to continue to aggressively recruit Board members with deep experience and commitment to the school; develop a training program, as we've mentioned; and build a community structure based on clear assessment of the Board's capacity and objectives at the local school commission.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What are the current committees?

MR. WALKER: Personnel, Finance ---

MS. MARX: Personnel, Finance, Community.

MR. WALKER: Number 2, strategic allocation of resources. Budget plan vision statement in this area is to align the FY03 budget to support and demonstrate high academic achievement by all students. And the actions taken already in the 2001-2002 school year is an analysis of the FY02 budget; it has begun to determine which programs and expenses line up with the budget plan vision statement. And all remaining FY02 expenditures will be carefully scrutinized in reference to the mission of high academic achievement.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm very interested in talking about '02, but thinking ahead to '03, I think as everyone is aware, there are a whole set of fiscal constraints that public schools are dealing with right now. Have you given any thoughts in terms of kind of where your priorities, in particular on what things you might cut, reduce, pull back on your investment on in the coming year in order to make it all add up?

MS. MARX: I was just going invite Chris to come up. He's the Treasurer.

MR. HOGAN: Chris Hogan, the Treasurer of the Board, and also a parent. I think that in terms of building the FY03 budget, definitely we have to start really by looking at the FY02 budget. We're in that process now, which means we're going to really look at all the various components of the budget to see which ones really align with high academic achievement, and then, which pieces, you know, are kind of variable, you know, don't really match up with high academic achievement. We begin there. And then, when we start to build the FY03 budget, we need to put everything on the table. And that's what we are -- that's what we plan to do. And this is my second year as Treasurer. I inherited the last budget, but I helped to build this budget. This

budget is -- We're expect to have a balance at the end of the year. And, you know, I think it has to do with, you know, the Board development we're talking about. We have regular Finance Committee meetings. We meet with the staff. We go over the budget in detail, and we hold them to task in terms of where the budget is.

And so, that's the way we plan to build the new budget is by bringing in all the various constituencies; getting what their priorities are. Our first priority is to fund the remediation plan. And that puts everything on the table. So we have to look at what all our needs are. We have to put them out there. And then, we have to prioritize our needs. The first priority is to fund the remediation plan. And then, we move down from there in terms of all the, you know, all the extra things that we do that maybe draw on our resources. We kind of subsidize various parts, like the after school program.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just as an example, you're going to be hiring three new coordinators who presumably are senior people. The average teacher's salary, as I understand it, is reasonably low, which may have more to do with the age and experience of the teachers than with pay scales per se. But if you assume sort of status quo on the revenue side, and you're bringing in three senior people on the expense side, what does that mean for your, the staff expenses? I mean, for instance, has there been any discussion about reducing the number of teachers or letting the teacher course shrink through attrition or fund the coordinators?

MR. HOGAN: Sure. I think in terms of building the FY03 budget, we've pushed the timetable to respond to this kind of crisis. And so, yes, we need to look at all of those things. We need to look at what position -- what's our staffing got to be now. In order to fund the remediation plan, we may have to switch our staff around in terms of the number of teachers we have, in terms of our associate teachers. So we have to look at all of that, and make sure we align our dollars -- which is one of the criticisms we had last year -- to our high academic priorities. And so, that's absolutely part of the process. There's no way we can fund this without cutting something else. So we have to -- again, we've just begun the process of really analyzing data and really taking a look at, when we put all these things into our staffing, and we put this grid on the wall, what does that look like? Where can we -- where do we have to shift our resources in order to meet these high priorities?

MS. MARX: At the next Finance Committee meeting is our time line of where we're going to begin that discussion and process. And now, we're going to begin to cut and reallocate resources.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Okay.

MR. WALKER: Chris was talking about the point that additional steps already taken in 2001 and 2002, we put in place an interim leadership team composed of teams which include the Principal, Director of Finance and Director of Development. And we have, once again, we've engaged Executive Service Corps to help us with more development, training, and mentoring.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: By the way, do you have a consultant from Executive Service Corps?

MR. WALKER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Who is that?

MR. WALKER: Keith Mann.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Keith Mann, okay. Go ahead.

MR. WALKER: Strategic governance and oversight steps, we've modified and restructure; better support and mission objectives; provide critical support to the administrative team. And in March, to review the feasibility of hiring Executive Director for the 2002-2003 school year. Area three, the clarity of organizational roles and responsibilities.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Could I just back up? How does this collective leadership working?

MS. MARX: I can respond from my perspective. From my perspective, the three people in the positions of Director of Finance, myself, and the Director of Development have functioned, I think, highly effectively. We've met and talked about issues that are broad organizational issues, and come to agreement on how to move forward in those. If we ever came to a place where we disagree, that's when then in our model, we would go to the Board. That has not had to happen at this point. We've been able to discuss those issues and come to agreement amongst the three of us and move forward in those areas.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Are Board members concerned at all, at least -- and I don't know exactly the dynamics of this, but no one's in charge; that there are three people who have collaborative or joint responsibility, but there's no person to be held individually accountable for what's going on in the school?

MS. GALLANT: Well, that's part of the ongoing assessment, I think, of this group, is whether or not they're meeting on a -- what types of decisions are they making, how are they coming to those decisions. We've been talking about that since I've been there, which is only a couple of months. So we're really looking at the model to see whether or not it's effective. It seems it's been effective thus far in the decision-making, but we're really going to have to take that piece apart. And I agree with your assessment that we should look at it further, and we're going to do that.

MR. THOMAS: Can I follow up? What's your plan with respect to hiring an Executive Director? Is there any action plan on hiring one? And if you do, what's the ---

MS. GALLANT: We don't have that answer yet. We were -- We had projected to make a decision by June, but we're going to move up that process. And we actually want to tie it to the budget now. So we want to tie the budget to whether or not this is effective; whether or not we need an Executive Director. So that's all going to ---

MR. THOMAS: So the first decision is whether you want to maintain the organizational design or the architecture that you currently have, which incorporates an Executive Director?

MS. GALLANT: That's correct.

MR. THOMAS: And then, once you make that decision, if you decide to do that, then you hire. Now, what will be the determinative factor that will enable you to decide on the question?

MR. HOGAN: I believe I can respond. I think that we've left that line item in the budget. And I think, initially, we've had ideas in our head. I think you can see that in your document that this

kind of design would work with the three directors. But I think what's happened is, over the course of a year, it's becoming clearer to us that we probably do need another person in a leadership role. But what that role exactly looks like, given the strengths of the current people, is what we need to determine. And if that position is going to be called an Executive Director, how do we move forward with that position. But our idea is that there is another leadership position at this point, due to discussions. We do need another person, and that our plan was to start -- give this year a little time. We ran to the crisis. We had initial discussions about beginning the process in January, and start recruiting an Executive Director. Once we ran into this and the renewal, we had to kind of push back on that one.

MR. THOMAS: Well, I understand the degree of difficulty in trying to sort through all of this, in light of the fact that you're going through a renewal. My concern is that you're going to burn out Ms. Marx over here.

MR. HOGAN: That's one of our primary concerns.

MR. THOMAS: It appears that she's carrying quite a bit of the -- I'm not trying to give her ratings, but I'm just saying ---

MS. MARX: The only thing I would like to add to that is, as I said, we're functioning fairly effectively. But I'm not sure that's a model moving forward, as well.

MR. THOMAS: It just appears from that position, you may ---

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I know we don't have, at least in our Board packets, a budget for the current fiscal year?

MS. MARX: We can provide that for you.

MR. CROWLEY: Actually, that's -- you know, I want to back up to Chris. What's the last month that you closed for financial statements?

MR. HOGAN: The last month we closed was December.

MR. CROWLEY: Okay. Could you give us a balance sheet and P&L for that period?

MR. HOGAN: Not right now.

MR. CROWLEY: Not right now.

MR. HOGAN: Absolutely, yes.

MR. CROWLEY: You did reference in the renewal documents that an '02 budget was attached, and that thee was a five-year financial plan. You know, I have a lot of paper, but I haven't seen it. I'd be interested in seeing it.

MR. HOGAN: Okay, absolutely.

MR. WALKER: Carrying on, clarity of organizational roles and responsibilities. We've talked a little bit about the administrative structure that we have currently in place, and the assessment process that we will use to determine what uses is the best vehicle for ongoing leadership. Restructure instructional leadership team in order to include representation across all roles in the school, as opposed to only cluster leaders and program coordinators as was the case in 2000 and 2001 school year. The instructional leadership team sets long-term improvement priorities based on the analysis of data regarding students as to their performance. Continuing cluster leaders supervise lead teachers, and oversee the day-to-day presentation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The program coordinators oversee discrete programs in the school, such as SPED, discipline, counseling, and school help.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let me ask you a question there with respect to the team that's in place. First of all, how many people are we talking about there that comprise the cluster leaders and program coordinators?

MS. MARX: Cluster leaders is five; program coordinators is approximately four.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And are they -- they're not the same people?

MS. MARX: No.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Those are nine people in total?

MS. MARX: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And they together comprise the instructional leadership team?

MS. MARX: No. The instructional leadership team is made up of individuals across roles in the school. So it has a representative from each role in the school, and across grade levels in the school. So there is -- there are cluster leaders who do sit on the instructional leadership team, but not all of them do. As a matter of fact, two sit on the instructional leadership team.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And how many staff are there total, teaching staff?

MS. MARX: Teaching staff, if you include all lead teachers and classroom teachers is nineteen. If you include all specialists, as well as associate teachers, it's about 31-32.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For Board members, I'm curious how you would answer this question. If Amy Marx were to disappear tomorrow -- she decided to take a job somewhere else, or God forbid, got hit by that proverbial bus -- does the school have a leadership team in place to carry on without, maybe they'd miss a beat, but to continue the work that's been laid out in this plan?

MR. WALKER: From a Board member's perspective, I think that would be an issue that would concern us if she ever did leave tomorrow. But, you know, in the interim, I think the Assistant Principal, one who is newly on board, has played, in the short time she's been here, a good leadership role. So I'm assuming that she would play a major role, along with some very sincere and good cluster leaders. So I think there is a cadre of people who could take the reins of leadership in the short run.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Who is the Assistant Principal?

MS. MARX: Her name is Sherry Fine.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And what's her background and experience?

MS. MARX: She had been an assistant principal in Lawrence for two or three years before coming here.

MR. WALKER: Action steps for the remainder of 2001-2002 ---

MS. MARX: She's here.

MR. WALKER: Action steps to be taken, redraft the cluster leader job description, as Amy described, to accurately reflect the new focus on coaching and curriculum instruction and assessment; and also, play a key role in training of the instructional coordinators.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: By the way, are cluster leaders, are they given more time to do the direct supervision and coaching? And if so, how do you make for that in terms of their teaching?

MS. MARX: Yes, they have a full classroom load. But they have, in most cases -- not in our upper grades, which is a concern right now -- but in most cases, in our younger grades K through 4, they have a classroom teacher who works with them who is a more experienced teacher than in our other classrooms, what's called an associate teacher. So that person is able to take on more of the planning and instruction so that they can be freed up.

MR. WALKER: We also are in the process of clarifying all the roles currently in place and ensure that these are widely distributed and understood by all, as well as drafting the literacy coordinator, math coordinator, and ELOB assessment coordinator job descriptions for these new positions for 2002-2003.

Further steps to be taken in 2002 and 2003, hire a literacy coordinator, the math coordinator, the ELOB assessment coordinator, who will oversee the consistent use of effective instructional practices, and the implementation of standard instruction and assessment in their designated areas, and implement new leader job descriptions that will be focused on direct supervision and coaching of lead teachers within their cluster in the general knowledge base of teaching as evidenced by the work of Research for Better Teaching.

MS. MARX: We're going to quickly go through the next step, which focuses simply on focusing on family and community involvement. Darlene?

MS. GALLANT: We've hired a full-time family and community resource coordinator. We've formed a formal PTSO, with elected officers. We now have a committee that meets. I am the liaison of the PTSO and the parents to the Board. I had a former job as a parent involvement coordinator. I come from a Head Start background. So I know about volunteering in a classroom. We planned the PTSO multi-cultural fair and fundraiser. The family resource coordinator now works with teachers to accomplish participation at mid-year, the student/family teacher conferences.

We've created a Community Resource Notebook to aid teachers in linking their expeditions with the Lynn community. We've create the Family Community Involvement Ad Hoc Committee.

That was the one that I just told you about. I have also been a classroom parent here for five years. And we're recruiting again classroom parents to be the liaison between the teachers, the parents, and the Family Community Involvement Ad Hoc Committee. We are conducting an assessment in capacity -- an asset in capacity assessment, which is a survey of peoples' talents. The first year that I was here, we did that. So we had people who knew how to play a musical instrument or teaching music; we had people who were doing origami, doing that in the classroom. We kind of got away from that, so we're going to back to that again. We're going to implement a more effective system for logging and tracking all volunteer hours. We currently have a tracking system. I stole it from Head Start. We have to track volunteer hours for our in-kind donations.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I won't tell.

MS. GALLANT: We just brought that right over. Enlisting some more supportive community agencies, conducting workshops. Lynn Economic Opportunity, which is the agency that I work for, will be do a Fuel Assistance workshop. That will be me. Lynn Housing Authority will be doing a First-Time Homebuyers workshop. DSS is coming in to do prevention of child abuse, and grief and loss issues. Planning home visits to all Kindergarten families in the spring and in the fall for subsequent years. We, as you know, at the Head Start model, we go and visit families before they ever come so they bond a relationship, and with a family advocate. We're continuing to hold family literacy nights in the spring. We're continuing to reach out to the Asian community, and I'm familiar with both the agencies in Lynn who work with Asian families, and I actually have a translator on staff. Developing and implementing family support groups. We launched this spring. There are agencies out in the community who are doing more family and caregiver support groups, especially for caregivers other than the parents. We have a lot of families in Lynn who either have a grandparent or an aunt, a sister, somebody who is caregiving for the kids, rather than the parent.

Creating a partnership with North Shore Community College, so that the students can begin to see and understand the importance of college. What we plan to do, effective this year, and utilize information from assessments. We do this every year. Nobody's taken that information and given it to everybody and say, 'these are the people that you need in your classroom to do this specific thing.' We're going to do it. Design and implement a new contract for all families in regard to their 30 hours of volunteer time, and ensure 100 percent signing of contracts, with follow-up phone calls and home visits as necessary. Conduct trainings for family and staff on effective family community school partnerships, that will be done by -- we have some parents here and some other staff who are willing to do these trainings, and have already committed to doing so. Increase communication with family in regard to their progress, and meetings about their required 30 hours of volunteer time. Increase family connections and service. Learning through classroom exposition by the family and community resource coordinator working with teachers on determining and contacting appropriate community organizations. We really think the parents are already doing 30 hours. We just don't think we're doing a good job of tracking it. So basically, that's what we want to do is to make sure that all families understand they have a commitment. We're going to hold them to the commitment, and we're going to find ways for them to volunteer.

MS. MARX: In terms of affiliations and alliances, I'm just summarizing what you've already seen throughout this whole presentation; that we've created some affiliations and alliances moving into the next academic year. One is the Community Day Charter School and Sheila Balboni, and we're working with them intensively with a small group of teachers over the

summer, as you've heard me talk about in the academic program. The next is Research for Better Teaching, to work with our staff on improving the consistency of quality instruction across all classrooms. And finally, my already ongoing relationship with Dr. Clare Crane at the Ford School; in addition, bringing in Salem State, which she also has a relationship with to ensure that teachers here are able to move forward in pursuing their own certification or additional certifications at graduate studies.

In terms of viability of the organization, you heard the Board speak about moving forward with the Executive Service Corps playing a role in significant Board development work that needs to happen. And the advisory Board was sort of rushed over in the presentation, but the Board also has a proposal around creating an advisory board that would include Charter School leaders of successful Charter schools, local politicians, other people that we think would bring expertise to our Board and would meet perhaps quarterly. That is a proposal coming to the Board at their next meeting. And faithfulness to the charter, we've talked about creating more of a relationship with North Shore Community College right down the street, and we've begun conversations with them about that. I've got a multi-faceted relationship with them, and we have an ongoing relationship with Girls, Incorporated across the street, as well. That is the overview of our entire remediation plan. And if you would allow, me I'd love to just make brief closing remarks.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Go ahead.

MS. MARX: So in conclusion, I want to, again, highlight the strengths of our school that we can clearly building on in the coming years. The Lynn Community Charter School has a committed and dedicated teaching staff, the strong support of its parents, and a solid academic program in the younger grades that has shown impressive results in third grade, particularly for our continuing and minority students. We have made substantial changes this academic year to address our shortcomings, and have developed solid plans to aggressively improve in the coming years. But we need more time in order for these changes to be shown in our students' standardized test results.

What we have presented here today is a work in progress that has been developed with the input from all stakeholders at our school. We welcome income and suggestions from the Commissioner, from the Charter School office staff, and from the members of the Board of Education. We humbly and respectfully request that the Board of Education give us this additional time so that the Lynn Community Charter School can be an example of how the Massachusetts Charter School Accountability System has worked and as resulted in turning around a Charter school to produce high levels of student achievement. If the Board will grant us renewal with conditions, we will work diligently and relentlessly with the Department of Education in order to produce significant improvements in our standardized test scores, and to ensure that no child at Lynn Community Charter School is left behind. I thank each of you for your time and attention. You've given us an incredible amount of your time, and I just want to appreciate that again in closing.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Thank you. Any members of the Board have any final comments or questions? If not, I want to also thank you who have served on the panel and others who have been on the panel and have taken seats in the audience. And I want to make sure that you understand, regardless of how this comes out one way or the other, that all of the members of this Board, as well as everyone in the Department of Education, holds you in the highest regard for the work you're doing. No one forced you to start a Charter school. No one forces you to come to work every day and do the best you can for the children who are in your care. And it is

a tribute to your spirit and your character that you've done with such enthusiasm, and that you stand by the work that you've done and are here pleading your case to continue to do it going forward. Again, you have our admiration and respect. And I thank you all, and I thank you all who are here and have sat through all this. And I certainly thank Board members for their patience, going forward without a break of any kind. And we will reconvene on February 26th, in Malden, if I'm not mistaken. Thank you all.