

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
*****SPECIAL MEETING*****
THE PUBLICK HOUSE HISTORIC INN
ROUTE 131
STURBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

MONDAY, MAY 22, 2000
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION PRESENT:** Mr. James A. Peyser, Chairman, Boston
Dr. Roberta R. Schaefer, Vice-chairperson, Worcester
Ms. Patricia Crutchfield, Southwick
Mr. Marcel LaFlamme, Monson, Chair, Student Advisory Council
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION ABSENT:** Mr. Charles D. Baker, Swampscott
Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, Boston
Dr. Judith I. Gill, Boston
Mr. William K. Irwin, Willmington
Dr. Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington

ALSO PRESENT: Nancy Catuogno Varallo, Registered Diplomate Reporter

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Call to order the members of the Board of Education.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: A small but august body.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And guests.

DR. SCHAEFER: We are committed.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm not entirely sure who is in charge here.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Lyle and I are in charge.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I will be happy to cede the floor to whomever wants to take it. The purpose of today's meeting is to carry forward a discussion we began several months ago concerning goals and strategies for the Board of Education. In that earlier session and Board meeting that followed, we came to agreement around what we are calling a Mission and Strategies document, which essentially is a framework of goals.

The goal of today's meeting is to try to move this process forward a little bit so that we can develop some more concrete measures of progress towards these goals and strategies. This should allow us to start thinking about what our specific quantitative goals should be from year to year. So, with that, since you're standing, Pat, I guess you're up.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Thank you. I've had great conversations about the notion of engaging the Board in discussion about the issues listed under the heading of Massachusetts Board of Education Mission and Strategies. What we want to do today is talk about the things that you see in front of you under Creating the Vision and Measurement for each strategic agenda.

Our overarching goal is to raise student achievement and our question is: How do we know that we've done that? Is it going to be something that we can measure? When you look at Accountability for Results, what we're going to look at are things like Measuring Performance and Improvement, and Developing Effective Intervention Strategies.

And I would add to that that we also understand that there are some effective intervention strategies that have already been developed, so we're going to take a look at benchmarking against best practices. We are also going to look at the broad heading of Creating Conditions for Effective Schools. More specifically, Restructuring for Effective School Management. How do you measure that, what does that look like; Replicating Models of Effective Schools; Recruiting Talented Professionals; and Developing Leadership for Educational Excellence? And then, we'll take a look at Next Steps. I think I've covered the agenda! Lyle and I will be working back and forth just to keep conversation going. Do you want to put up your handout on the overhead here? And I will stand here with you.

MR. KIRTMAN: Pat talked about what we're going to do today. This is just an outline of the basic planning processes that we wanted to use for today and then beyond, because this is just the start of a plan. Basically, today we are working on number 1, Formulating Vision/Measurement for each area, then looking at gaps in data that we still need. So, we'll look to see how far you can get with that today and what's needed. But then, the next step will be some kind of education process or forums. Jim is talking about leadership forums a variety of ways to get others involved to comment on some of the work that's been done today or in follow-up meetings. And then, ultimately, the product of that is Board policy. And that's the process we want to go through and just start today. Today we're going to focus on the vision, what we can measure, and data that might be used that we already have or can get access to and what's needed. Okay? Any questions? All right. So, we can get started.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Open the floor for discussion.

MR. KIRTMAN: First one we want to look at is the Student Achievement piece.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We have a scribe.

MR. KIRTMAN: We want to start off with Student Achievement. The first thing we want to say is: If we had a vision, what date do we want to look at, and how far out should we be looking? Does anybody have any thought?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, 2003 is obviously a date that comes to mind.

MR. KIRTMAN: Before we get into what data would be looked at, what would it look like if you said we were there at 2003 and say student achievement is where you want to? What would you see in place?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: At one level, obviously, we would want as many students, if not all students, in the class of 2003 meeting the graduation requirement. Now, that is more of a statement of faith, perhaps, than a statement of some quantitative directive. I'm not sure how to state an objective at less than a hundred percent for something like that. It's my expectation that some students in the class of 2003 are going to take more than 12 years to finish their degree and meet the standard. So I don't think it would be a failure if it were less than 100 percent. But somehow we want to get as close to 100 percent over the threshold as possible.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What's a range we are comfortable with?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Boy, I don't know. I guess depending on how you write the denominator, I'd like us to get within five percent. That seems to me --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So that's 95 percent.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's correct. Does anybody have a different take on that? I hate to even mention the number, just because it suggests that we can live with 5 percent.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Well, we can't live with anything less than 100 percent, but what is it, what would our vision accept as a range, perhaps? Lyle.

MR. KIRTMAN: You try to make this realistic at the same time.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: To put it slightly differently, the other side of the coin in this discussion is the dropout rate. If you're talking about getting over the "MCAS bar", the other side of the coin is the dropout rate. I would certainly want to see that the dropout rate doesn't increase.

DR. SCHAEFER: What's the statewide dropout rate now?

MS. HESS: 3.5 statewide.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I thought that was the unemployment rate.

DR. SCHAEFER: That's less.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just so we are clear what that means. Is that the cohort number, so entering 9th graders?

MS. HESS: Those are the first numbers that I have in front of me, 97 to 98, so that's --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Does that mean that if you're the class of 2003, that 96.5 percent of the 9th graders --

MS. HESS: No, that isn't a cohort number.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's putting together all the high school numbers.

DR. SCHAEFER: Why don't we look at it on a district basis and say the dropout rate should be no greater than the district, currently?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I understand that you start with a date-- you start with 2003. You go immediately to MCAS. I feel like we should get the visors out-- we're a bunch of accountants. I understand we want to get to results, but I think we're going to talk about vision and where we want to be in 2003. Besides assigning rubrics and numbers, I'd like to talk a little bit about the characteristics of what that vision ought to be. For example, we now know, again, it's pretty clear, that the statistics on student achievement, be it MCAS, by the way, or SAT's, runs along socioeconomic lines. There's no question about that. So, my vision, at least for 2003, is that we start to close that. We can talk about numbers, but the key issue to me is that we are changing the rubrics, the landscape of that clear picture, which is tied to parents or mothers' education level, so forth. In other words, public education in America and in Massachusetts has been about taking kids who have support and helping them continue to achieve as they may even without us. But we have not been able to overcome those kids who don't have those advantages. I just throw that out as one.

There's a couple more I have but I will leave it there. I'd like to see whatever you want for statistics as something we could set later and have some sense, realistically, of our goals. You couldn't say by 2003 that every kid in an urban area is going to score like suburban kids, but we have to close the gap or we are not --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Or else we are not going to do--

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Any of this, right.

MR. KIRTMAN: We should try to look at all the different parts of that landscape.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So what looks different in 2003 as different from today.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: By the same token, maybe we want to close the gap by accelerating the improvement of the bottom half without reducing achievement at the top half.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So that it looks like achievement all the way. It doesn't look like this, it looks like that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In theory, faster growth at the bottom than the top, but we are nonetheless looking at growth at the top as well.

MR. KIRTMAN: We are saying maintain at the top or the top goes ahead.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I would say looking at MCAS alone, the numbers of students in Proficient and Advanced categories are much lower than any of us would expect over the long-term, so that itself needs to go up. By the same token, it's pretty clear we need to make fast progress on reducing the number of failures. That's the first priority. Wanting to close the gap is not to simply bring down the top, but to raise the bottom at a faster rate.

MR. KIRTMAN: Are there other areas that define student achievement, other aspects of a successful student that you're looking for that's not measured by any of these areas that we talked about?

DR. SCHAEFER: Percent going on to higher education.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We covered dropout, right?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There are two categories that come to my mind that don't necessarily get captured by any of this. One is special education. Now, having said that, a lot of special education does get captured by it because most special education students are part of the regular academic assessment program. But there is a not so insignificant part of the SPED population that is outside of it on the margins. I think we need to do a better job of understanding the extent to which those students are meeting their educational objectives, whatever they might be, as specified by their own IEP's, and possibly other measures. And then the other is limited English proficient students and looking to the extent to which those students are acquiring English proficiency.

MR. KIRTMAN: So your vision around special ed. is --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My vision would be that students are meeting their educational objectives. And with LEP students, that they are rapidly acquiring proficiency.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We talk a lot about characteristics that block student achievement, therefore, it seems to me, we have to have a vision that goes to the cause and effect of that. For example, what blocks student achievement in many ways is risky behavior -- drugs, alcohol, etc., and then there are things like motivation. My vision is to see a comprehensive, fuller program for kids because we know if they do well and are active and motivated in art, music, character education programs, student service programs, et cetera, they do better in general. My vision for 2003 is not to see this rampage to study mathematics every day to get the MCAS up, but to really have kids come to a school as a place that's connected, that's motivating, and it is about their full lives. It is a full-service bank. And I think if you don't have those things, you're not going to get student achievement. So my vision is of broader, more comprehensive, effective programs across the board.

MR. LaFLAMME: I would say we could even add, although it applies to motivation, peer culture. Mass. Insight had some interesting insight on that, you might say. That's a broad comprehensive sort of thing, but it's something that we need to talk about as far as a roadblock.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: David, I see that vision; I also see the rest of it. I see it as a parallel piece, I see it maybe as a big umbrella, too. But how do we measure this programmatic stuff? What's the impact? How do we measure it? How do we know that we've arrived some place and how does it come back to student achievement?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Hopefully, it will get even better, but I think you get some of it through the negative. You measure some through your youth risk behavior survey, which is pretty comprehensive. It is, by the way, showing that even though the number of teenagers is increasing, a lot of activity is decreasing. That's a place to find out what the trends are, for example. Beyond that, is there some sort of input? I don't know if we have a student satisfaction list or not on our MCAS. We do ask a number of questions that relate to a comprehensive program, but I'm thinking of things like: Do schools have these full programs? Are they offering full programs? We hear a lot about physical education for example being nearly eliminated. There are some ways to get at the rubrics.

DR. SCHAEFER: The youth risk behavior survey is self-reported and I'm wondering if there are some more objective measures that we can look at. There are more accurate measures of teen pregnancy.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The youth risk behavior survey does have the disadvantages associated with self-reporting, like some of the questionnaires on MCAS about homework and parents and hours of reading outside of school and so on. Like I say, it appears to be fairly accurate in that it's carefully crafted so that if a kid is trying to claim what isn't, they catch them. There are ways to double back. But I agree, it's self-reported.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I come at this from a slightly different way, because I want to make sure we stay focused on outputs and that we are clear about what the ultimate priority is in terms of those output measures which have to do with student achievement. But there is, under the heading of Creating Conditions for Effective Schools, this subheading called Replicating Models of Effective Schools. I think that's where to look for things like an effective arts program for schools that have more comprehensive sets of services for students. And further, actually doing research to determine whether or not those are being translated into higher academic achievement. Because we make the leap of faith that, in fact, all these things do contribute. And we know the arts is a great example where there's been a strong effort over a number of years to try to demonstrate that a strong arts education program contributes to academic achievement in other areas. And to the extent that's true, I think our focus there should be identifying effective models that we can identify for replication and demonstrate through research the direct connection with student achievement.

MR. LaFLAMME: I can't help but think of the "this is our MCAS prep time sort of thing", and then "this is the other stuff we'll squeeze in". Since the Board is clear that that's not what we are trying to accomplish or what we are looking for, that's a message that we need to send. We need to say that the comprehensive programs, the components of the school are inseparable. We need to say student achievement and the "other stuff" are not separate schools of thought.

MR. KIRTMAN: So somehow this belongs in here to flag it as part of the approach for policy, but it also belongs in the other stuff.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. If it's not in the vision, it won't be recognized; it won't be on the horizon.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I'd like to build on Jim's point towards outputs. One way to do it is to try to replicate it, to do research on whether it's working and then say okay rather than just making an assumption. A school could get very good student achievement, have a very good arts program, but they also have a great Boy's Club or Girl's Club or something.

MR. KIRTMAN: Anything else or do we feel that in the first cut we've covered the major areas?

MR. LaFLAMME: I'm not sure how we are approaching this logically, but on the first page where we are talking about percentage of passing and all these things, is this the stage of the game where we say "how"?

MR. KIRTMAN: I think that's going to come after. I think what we want to do here is get some idea of the vision and then ask about the data you use that's out here now for these areas, and which areas do you need. Like we just talked about, research on comprehensive programs and how they connect is probably an area to look into. So that's what we want to do next. The "how" piece is going to come in later. Are there any other parts of this Student Achievement or have we covered all the general areas?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm not sure. Can we summarize what we have done here?

MS. HESS: Do that on a separate page?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. Where are we? I understand that we have a vision of student achievement that is measured by various elements that have to do with MCAS, and I understand that we have a vision of student achievement that is measured by successful community programs. I see us as having a vision about learning communities, basically.

MR. KIRTMAN: So we have MCAS as a piece, learning communities is another part.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Support programs for students. I mean, that's sort of a broad summary.

MR. KIRTMAN: Then we have special ed. and bilingual.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm just wondering if anyone else sees the --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In thinking about those two points, learning communities and comprehensive programs, I still think of those more in terms of the Creating Conditions for Effective Schools than a measure of student achievement.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I don't disagree with you. I'm just saying I don't see these components. I absolutely agree with you. I'm just trying to figure out a way to summarize the components that we're talking about.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Another thing on MCAS, I would broaden that to include NAEP scores and probably even SAT scores, and I'm not sure if there are any others that would be worth a check.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Also, local people use a whole series of data which I think would be informative too, Stanford 9's, Iowas.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Although if we are aggregating, I have never seen any statewide aggregation of that.

MR. KIRTMAN: What about the closing the gap part of it?

DR. SCHAEFER: That's not on there. That should be on there. And the dropout, however we decide to do it.

MR. KIRTMAN: And student risk.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think the summary is from what was not just MCAS. It was also subgroups under that, if you will, or looking at the cross demographics, I guess. We had dropouts, we had LEP.

MR. LaFLAMME: Maybe dropout rate coupled with higher ed., continuing on in higher ed.

DR. SCHAEFER: It doesn't have to be coupled with. I think it's a separate measure.

DR. SCHAEFER: It doesn't do much good if there's improvement on MCAS but the dropout rate goes to 50 percent.

MR. KIRTMAN: That's why you said in some ways your overall vision is to move ahead with everyone, but then there needs to be some building up of support systems or gaps, and you work on that.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right.

MR. KIRTMAN: Then you make sure that it's comprehensive, but it really is measurable.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I have a clarifying question. Are we talking about the class of 2003 or 10th graders who are taking MCAS in 2003? What's that date? Or are we talking about all of it?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I look at 2003 as essentially but pointed towards seniors in 2003. Especially around dropout rates, for example. I'm more interested in dropout rates for the class of 2003.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: The graduating-from-high-school class of 2003.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Exactly, which is not to say the other data is unimportant to us, because if you drop out in 11th grade, you're probably not going to be back in 12th. But I'm thinking of it in those terms.

MR. LaFLAMME: So perhaps the second and the third addressed the "how" in a way, just as far as the format.

MR. KIRTMAN: Yes, somewhat. It leads us to it.

MR. LaFLAMME: In that they are more info based than alpha based, I guess.

MR. KIRTMAN: The other thing I want to look at, is the data. Are you more comfortable now that you have these? Is there anything you want to add to these? Let's look at data. The first one you said around MCAS, et cetera. In all the other areas do you feel you have all the data you need, just not maybe put in the --

DR. SCHAEFER: I think that kind of data is available.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: One interesting piece of data we ought to be looking at is the percentage of 8th graders scoring in the Failing category who move up into a higher category in 10th grade. Will we be able to do that for the class of 2003?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: For the class of 2003? Yes. They are in --

MR. LaFLAMME: 9th grade now.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We might be able to.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It may be possible.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We can do it generally, but not specifically. And we can sample and do some things like that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Because districts have some data. Over time, I would be interested in seeing what percentage of 8th graders are actually improving and moving out of Failing into at least Needs Improvement, if not higher.

MR. LaFLAMME: I'm sure that this will be available if it isn't already, but just specific data on kids who fail particularly the 10th grade the first time and pass on subsequent tries, because that exposes best practices of what was done.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Of remediation. What are the best practices for remediation. Is it Saturday programs? Is it an intensive three-week program? Is it after school? Is it pulling them out and having them tutored?

MR. LaFLAMME: Right.

MR. KIRTMAN: Other data on MCAS or other areas that you want us to --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There are some of the specific things on MCAS, harkening back to the conversation we had earlier. I would like to be looking at students moving out of Failing into higher categories, but also the percent of students in Proficient or higher as opposed to looking at average scaled scores. I think using the categories is more meaningful, especially given the criterion referenced form of all this. So looking at the percentage in Proficient or higher. Percentage growth in that, obviously.

MR. LaFLAMME: It might not be a bad idea somewhere in this document we are creating to codify what you said in terms of moving everyone forward at the bottom more quickly. I'd like to see that in there somewhere because that strikes me as a good thought.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Just for the sake of the audience, I don't want them to think we are operating in a vacuum here. We have a whole series of conditions for effective schools that is part of the whole --

MR. KIRTMAN: Put it on the overhead.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Just so you're not thinking we forgot all about teachers and principals and some of the other conditions.

MR. KIRTMAN: That's the list.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I just want to make sure they didn't think we are operating on just kids.

MR. KIRTMAN: Does that help to see the categories? Anything else on any of the standardized tests or something like that, other type of data you would want? Because you talk about SAT's, you talk about other areas, too.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Well, the NAEP data has similar performance data where they also have it broken down by racial and ethnic groups. I don't know if they have demographic or economic information on the NAEP.

MS. HESS: They do by community type. Like urban districts, urban/rural.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There may be some ways to more roughly compare the NAEP performance.

DR. SCHAEFER: We do need to keep in mind that NAEP is a sample as opposed to a test of every student, so I think the testing people would find a difference.

MR. KIRTMAN: What was the second one on the list back there? Going back. After MCAS, et cetera. The second one is learning communities. The learning community, Pat, I think that's a comprehensive culture.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Overarching cultural environment, programmatic issues.

MR. KIRTMAN: Realizing this one at some level goes to another section on the plan, what's the student achievement data piece that you want on this? Is it best practices?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: From my perspective, those are the programs that directly support student achievement. I don't know. I mean, obviously things would be the kinds of work that teachers are now doing in some schools that are MCAS prep parties, you know. I'd like to see if those are working, how they are working. Sometimes the simplest things take us so far and we don't capture them. We don't have any conversation about them. We have no way of knowing their impact. And I think that we need to begin to capture data about things that are sort of dismissed as soft because I don't think that soft necessarily means ineffective.

MR. KIRTMAN: So these may have to be areas to create the information as opposed to you have information now that could be used in this form? Or do you? Is there any place the Department gathers this?

MR. LaFLAMME: It seems a lot of it is anecdotal.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Would you be talking, Pat, for example, about a well-structured after-school program?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Sure.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We might have the ability to track their progress, just what Jim talked about, 8th through 10th grade. That would be another. The same with MCAS remediation work. Student achievement is captured within the school setting. We've talked about these conditions for effective schools, we've talked about

student achievement, MCAS per se, et cetera. When you're talking about learning community, essentially you're talking about those programs outside the normal school day, if you will.

MR. KIRTMAN: That could be within the school day.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It would be?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There are two places where I think this comes in under Accountability for Results, the section on Measuring Performance and Improvement, and the data collection and analysis piece. In particular, I believe that's intended to reference data with regard to district schools and programs. We have a certain entree into a lot of grant programs that are going on. My general view is that we ought to be consciously evaluating these programs by creating some outcome measures that are connected to not only the goals of the program itself, but also raising student achievement. That's one area. Then under Replicating Models for Effective Schools, to the extent we're talking about something that's more integral to the way a school functions as opposed to this particular program, I think this is where we need to do more research and promote the results.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That works for me.

MR. LaFLAMME: Especially in regards to the latter classification. I know that "measurable" is a recurrent motif with the Board, and understandably so, but when you're talking about things like peer culture, ipso facto it's hard to put that into percentage points. When we are talking more about effective schools and less about accountability for results, with the quantifiable implication that that has, talking about input is not necessarily such a terrible thing.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No, it's a very important thing. And also things that may be somewhat hard to measure or at least hard to count, like school culture, are probably critical elements of effective schools. So being able to, for instance, first identify that here are high-performing schools and then going in and saying what kind of characteristics do they have and which ones do they share and are they different, that can get into a lot of areas that are softer, I guess.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think that one of the reasons we are in trouble often is because we don't think that we can measure school culture and, in fact, we measure organizational culture all the time. We measure the effectiveness of educational programs all the time, and I'd like to see us be far more intentional and wide-sweeping about it and define a way to take a look at things as they have an impact on student achievement. Most of what we do I believe could be tied into and could be seen to have some impact, and as we measure, we'll find out what's more effective than what isn't. As we begin to measure intentionally, we'll find best practices. We'll find ways to replicate them.

MR. LaFLAMME: But it doesn't have to be a separate entity under Accountability for Results, MCAS and such. If you're talking about a question as fundamental as: Is high achievement socially acceptable among students?-- that's certainly an important question.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That's a culture question. It's a big culture question.

MR. LaFLAMME: But very much an MCAS question at the same time.

DR. SCHAEFER: It's a message that could be sent by the student leadership about but the importance of what kids are doing. But in terms of the total school community, apart from an after-school remediation or whatever, it's a total program. If you have chorus or a drama club that kids get engaged in and then that carries over to the classroom, that is not such a bad place to be.

MR. KIRTMAN: It's engaged learning.

DR. SCHAEFER: So how do we get to that? I know that it's part of the measurement, but --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There's another thing that may be worth bringing in here as part of the school evaluation process, especially as we look at schools other than the low-performing schools. We will be doing school evaluations of high-performing schools. The data we will be collecting on the depth of that evaluation may help us in looking at some of these things. I don't hold out high hopes that this is going to be a highly quantified process, because, in part, we are going to need to do a certain volume of evaluations. But if the evaluators are looking at things that aren't strictly those that you find in filing cabinets and on ledgers, things that are indicative of the quality of school cultures and the extent to which that plays into why schools are high-performing schools, we'll end up with a body of information that we didn't have before and one that might be quite revealing.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think the most powerful research I see on anything is that which balances that quantifiable stuff with qualitative anecdotal, reliable research as well. No one will want to read it if there's no good qualitative data in it.

MR. KIRTMAN: So this is an area to gather a lot more information, maybe use current data in a different way, or perhaps to gather that information so it could be a big area for discussion.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think parent involvement is important.

MR. KIRTMAN: That's part of this, a huge part of this. The next thing we have is Comprehensive Programs. This is the idea of a comprehensive program. Is that the same thing, is that different?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think they are likely to be very similar.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I think they are one and the same.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let me offer just a couple of anecdotal, qualitative --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We often talk about, and everybody loves to talk about it because it's easy to hide behind, Why don't we figure out what they are doing there and replicate it? Everybody says that in education all the time. The truth of the matter is for eons we have had schools that perform well, we have schools that surprise us, kids that surprise us. So there's something wrong with replication, and that is to assume that it's going to happen.

We really need to look at that aspect, as we get more and more data to say this works and that works. For example, you get a great person who comes into a school district and decides to run an Odyssey of the Mind program. All of a sudden there's this booming program where they are winning the regional, going on to the nationals. All these kids are involved in these tremendous activities. The Odyssey of the Mind person leaves and the program dies. Or you say to the four neighboring communities, Why don't you start an Odyssey of the Mind program? There's a lot of that going on.

Rhoda and I had the pleasure of going to the Mass. Hospital School. These are our most challenged youngsters physically and mentally. They run an annual play in which many of the kids are on stage in their wheelchairs. That was in response to the faculty's question to the director about what they were going to do about Ed Reform, back in 1993. He said, "I'm going to think about performing arts." They thought he was crazy. They didn't have the facilities, the ramps. The director raised money. They run a couple hundred dollars' worth of lights, they have the best equipment. They get donations from everybody. The medical staff have said the kids are doing better physically because of being turned on in the play, let alone how they are doing emotionally. Many of them don't last through the year, but it's a phenomenal example of how this qualitative stuff can really be linked in with the quantitative. I don't know how to break through this issue as we proceed. We have an opportunity we've never had before. We're going to be collecting an awful lot of data. We're going to be evaluating schools and districts. We're going to be using certain rubrics that we fought over last month. We are going to have all this, but what are we going to do to see to it that it translates into everybody moving up? And that's the problem. Because we seem to hunker down into our own little community and it doesn't penetrate.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think you're also pointing to the importance of developing leadership.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's right.

MR. KIRTMAN: If the program itself doesn't do it, you have to have the leadership. That's why these areas all overlap.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I would have to say that I don't think we can replicate. I think that that's a problem. I think that we can study best practices and have a good understanding of our own organizational culture, and take a look, at large, at the frameworks of projects and programs.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Steal good ideas.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Take a look at what might be, what we might be able to grow in our culture. I don't think replication is something we do well because we don't recognize the difference between this place and this place. We don't make necessary adjustments to recognize and honor our differences and culture. Very often we fail to recognize what we are doing well ourselves. Perhaps we don't need to replicate so much as we need to do more of what we are already doing well. I'd almost like us to find another word. Throw that one out.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm not sure exactly what the word would be, but I think you're right. These things don't happen well if you pick something up and drop it on point B and it is either not accepted by the people who it's been dropped on or the circumstances are different.

MR. LaFLAMME: In David's example, if you talk about an Odyssey of the Mind program and how that can change school culture, organizational culture. Maybe what we are really trying to replicate is that organizational culture and what inputs we are using to get to that point isn't necessarily as important. There are a host of ways that it can happen, and replicating inputs is probably the difficult part. But replicating the host of cultural things that goes with it is probably what we are really after, however we go about doing that.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm not sure that I want to change a culture in one place in order to bring in a program that has been successful here to place B. You've got to change your culture in order for this to happen. It's not going to happen. But if we are looking to say, you know, this is a program that has been successful in this school --

MR. LaFLAMME: Exactly.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What is it in school B that needs to happen in order for the culture in school B to accept and make this program its own? What changes need to happen to it? How do we engage with folks within the culture of school B? Without going on and on about this, I think the word is an unfortunate one, because I think it draws tight boundaries rather than expands.

MR. KIRTMAN: It's almost like coming from the school networking out for what they need to learn as opposed to taking something from outside and giving it to them. So it is this process.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. If you talk about replication, what you're missing is the flow back to the original source that also helps them improve what they were doing that you picked up and ran with in the first place.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Right on that line, that's a place where the Board --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Systems loops. I love it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The Department needs to start thinking about what research we can do. I'm thinking of the High Schools at Work program, or even the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

process, or a number of other attempts whereby you really begin with a self analysis. You begin with trying to identify who you are. High Schools at Work doesn't come in and say, "Here's a program that works."

Our vocational schools have adopted, most of them are southern schools, a program developed down south by Bell Atlantic. What we have done is to go in and ask what the vocational school is doing and how we can do things that are different to enhance that process? So I think the Department and the Board have a role in promoting those changing processes that require some introspection. Hopefully, we can lay on some statistics, data, and outputs as well. We have to think about how we help schools and districts cause that change. We have this reservoir of numbers, we have these other things, and we can at least try to make it available.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I do think, though, there are some non-programmatic characteristics of effective schools, so it is not whether it's Odyssey of the Mind or whether it's the Modern Red Schoolhouse design. I think there are some things that are more structural than that that make it possible for whatever the programmatic reform is to be successful.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's like High Schools at Work or NEASC. They sit down and ask what a school is about and what should it be about. That causes a whole series, hopefully, of analysis about the way they are organized, the way the facilities are organized, the way they organize schools, classes, et cetera.

MR. KIRTMAN: Let's keep moving. We are almost done with this section. We had bilingual, special ed. Do we need to say anything more? We said we may not get through all of this today.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just on the SPED piece, I this think is something that needs further study. I don't think the state, and I'm not even sure districts, compiles data on educational objectives achieved by special ed. students. So that's an issue. It's not only a data issue, it's probably also a programmatic issue as well. We do have data of some kind, and we have more and more of it now as a result of MCAS testing on English proficiency, on LEP students, and how long it takes them to acquire that level of proficiency. We have info on when students have moved out of a TB program into a regular classroom, but we don't know whether those students actually have proficiency in English. So we are developing data now, but I think, if I'm not mistaken, some data starting this year will be available on that. But we may need to do some work on that.

MR. KIRTMAN: I saw your reaction to the special ed issue, Pat.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What I thought I heard you say is we don't have data. My reaction was- Wow! We don't have data about achievement. Which sort of gets to my whole point about appreciative inquiry and what are we doing here.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That cuts across a couple of areas. One is a focus on eligibility. We better define eligibility and how more efficient we can make the whole IEP system, not just the meeting, but measuring some goals.

MR. KIRTMAN: The other area we have is closing the achievement gap. Is that data you have? That's data you should have.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: We have MCAS data.

DR. SCHAEFER: What we have is data.

MR. KIRTMAN: We are all set, you have the data for that. The only other one is dropout rate which you have, higher ed. rate information.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: No, but Jim raises a very good point on dropout rate. I'm in the middle of reading a book on dropout rate in Texas, and this whole idea which I can't get anybody to resolve, which is: What is

the rubric you use and how do you use it? Texas claims that this was a reporting issue, not an actual problem. So we've got to be very consistent on what that definition is.

MR. KIRTMAN: Anything more on the higher ed. piece? Do you have what you need on that?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Just to underline the point, of course, we had this discussion six months ago or a year ago about dropout rates, about how very unreliable our data is, so that's another area we probably could use some work.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: In terms of data collection?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In terms of the quality of the data.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm very curious about what we know about dropout rates.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: After our experience in Lawrence, not much.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes.

MR. KIRTMAN: Higher ed. then? We are okay on higher ed.?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Students state their intention on things. Do we know if they've actually been admitted and gone? What do we know?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Well, again --

MS. HESS: Do we know if they graduate from college if they go.

DR. SCHAEFER: Doesn't the state system track them after the first year or something?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Hopefully our system will now be able to.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: But will that continue for the state higher ed. system?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Oh, through college?

DR. SCHAEFER: Right.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I don't think even the state higher ed. system knows. They may know who the Massachusetts residents are but they don't know which ones graduated from Massachusetts high schools. They may not. But I don't think they report the data that way and that's obviously only a relatively small percentage of the total.

DR. SCHAEFER: So we need better data on actually how many are really going on as opposed to just state an intention. And then how many do graduate. There was work done on the remediation piece, remember?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes, at the higher ed. level, but that was to strictly track kids coming from high schools who needed remedial work.

DR. SCHAEFER: Well, we should still be tracking that.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We are doing that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: As a practical matter, you could only get at this through surveying because students scatter.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: There are high schools that do five- and ten-year follow-up studies. Some do a pretty good job with it.

MR. KIRTMAN: We can move to the next one, right?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: By the way, they have done some of this work in Boston. The Dean at Northeastern University did some survey of high school graduates.

MR. KIRTMAN: We're going to move. Do you have energy? Ready to go to the next one? Shift from student achievement? We're going to move to Accountability for Results, and the first area is Measuring Performance and Improvement, and we want to start with the Vision 2003, I think.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There may be something to say at the top level here about accountability. I'm thinking of measuring, not a vision, so --

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: That's all right, be concrete, go ahead.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We'll pop a vision on top of it.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If you're assuming that we are doing school and district evaluations on a fairly consistent basis, there should be a measure about percentage of schools and districts in some kind of recognition or exemplary category. We explicitly have this for schools. I'm not sure we have such categories for districts. But the notion that through the evaluation system we are able to roughly categorize schools and districts. Obviously, over time, we have more and more schools in the higher end categories, it seems to me that's a way of getting at it. You don't want to create the measures so that the evaluations also come out as great schools, so we drive the measure out. But I do think we are going to have data. We're going to have some general kind of evaluation categories to put on schools and districts, and that will be a basis for determining whether or not, in fact, the accountability system is driving results in schools and districts.

MR. KIRTMAN: You want to pop on the vision connected to that?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: That's a good question. So is one of your points that when we talk about Accountability for Results, we've got to not just focus on the negative, but look at the positive? Instead of always talking about accountability, I think the larger issue for 2003 is improvement. That's what the issue is about. It's about overall improvement across the board. It gets back to the issue we were talking about with students. We have to change that landscape for schools and districts as well by 2003. I think Jim's right. We often get into this and people say, "Underperforming? Gee, this school didn't do as well as it should. What about the cohort?" I think we have to start thinking about the success stories as well. We have some right now.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: For example, percent of schools meeting improvement objectives.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Take the kids at the schools that we sent letters to, the kids that are now eligible for certificate of mastery. That's had a phenomenal public relations effect. Not that we did it for that reason, but it's remarkable. We just don't take the time to think about this as a building process. We need to celebrate success, too.

MR. KIRTMAN: Is the vision you're saying for Accountability and Results, the actual vision, improvement as opposed to accountability for results, and accountability for results is part of that process?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: If there is accountability, then there is improvement. One hopes.

MR. KIRTMAN: Yes, but is the top endpoint that you're looking for the accountability piece or is it the improvement? And if it's the improvement, is accountability the way to get there or is it --

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The idea behind it is that that system will drive change and improvement within the districts and in the classroom which will lead to better student results. So the focus on accountability, on the accountability side, is the progress of improvement of schools and districts, and I think that's the appropriate measure. Now, having said that, I think there probably are some measures where we are trying to measure whether the Department is actually implementing the system that we've said we want to produce. So, for example, we will be doing evaluations. Dave wants to do 70 districts or 60 districts next year. Can we do that many? That sort of thing. How many districts are we actually evaluating?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And should we have done that many after all that?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's why I'm a little leery about pushing that one. But there may be some, for lack of a better word, implementation measurements we ought to be able to think about as well. Because we don't have an accountability system yet. We have the framework for one. And keeping track of the data if the accountability system isn't in place is not meaningless, but not to the point.

MR. KIRTMAN: So if we start and say that it is about the process of improvement or the progress, are there other overall measurements around improvement that you would look at first? And then where are the other ones around the system that you're trying to put on for accountability? Would it be fair to look at it that way? Because you're used to doing it the other way around.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right.

MR. KIRTMAN: Your first one, your first data does get to improvement.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The percent of schools meeting their improvement objectives, closing the gap between urban and suburban districts, or low-income districts and higher-income, it's that sort of thing, which is parallel to the student gap issue. Perhaps it's the percent of schools in some recognition or exemplary category. In terms of the process, I think there may be something around the number of schools or percent of schools and districts evaluated by the Department.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Can you say a little more about that?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: If we evaluated two schools in one district each year, we wouldn't have much of an accountability system. If we evaluated 350 districts per year, we probably wouldn't have much of an accountability system either.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: So what's the balance.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: What's the balance. I might argue that we need to ramp up to 60. I don't know. I think we probably need to establish some kind of goal and measure for progress.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What would be an acceptable number in terms of the variety of school districts we have, given the different numbers of schools and districts. What's an acceptable number so we have a baseline? Then, how do we ramp up from there so that we get to a place where we've got a pretty good balance and we're getting good data?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This would be a mid-course correction because we've decided that in order to be effective with a district, and we've got to balance now with the school, you've got to get back there within five years. That's the hope. Taking Jim's point three and two, I don't know that we could do 30, either, which would be ten years. So that's the question. We're going at it. We'll see what the budget looks like. But this is a decision I have to bring to the Board within six months. It will be based on what we now know having done at least eight of the most challenging schools.

DR. SCHAEFER: I think we need to see how long it takes them to make a decision.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: And how many people do we need and how many people can you reasonably train? If you have enough trained people that you're that comfortable with, then the process works. So we'll know, I think we'll know by January.

MR. KIRTMAN: Let me raise another point on achievement. This may be off base, but let me know. If you're really talking about improvement and you're saying you need to have your accountability system in measurable goals, should there at some level be improvement data for everyone? There are some measurements around improvement for everyone, not the amount that you can get to, because you're getting to the ones based on the accountability side, really.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: And you're getting it for the ones that are not doing so well.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Percentage of schools meeting the improvement objective. All schools have improvement objectives even though we don't evaluate all schools.

DR. SCHAEFER: This is overall. Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Now, take the implementation one step further. We do evaluations and we may discover underperformance. And there are actually two pieces of this. One is that for schools, there's this review panel that will say, "We have looked at the data, we've interviewed some people, and we declare this underperforming. We recommend to the Commissioner that the school be declared underperforming." There's supposed to be an inspection that follows, a more in-depth on-site evaluation. So the theory is, a hundred percent of those underperforming schools are inspected. Well, that's something we probably ought to be tracking, and how long it takes to actually get the inspection done.

I have a feeling that maybe as a data item we will say that these many schools are underperforming but it took us six months to get in there and actually do the inspection. And then once that's done, there's supposed to be an improvement plan coming out of the school that the Board is ultimately supposed to approve. How many of the schools that we declare underperforming will have improvement plans? Because declaring schools underperforming and not doing the improvement plan is not very helpful. So that's another piece of the implementation that we need to track.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Under Jim's leadership is this shift, I would say, possible shift if you had your way, to look more at school reform and school-by-school reform rather than district reform. That's something we have to think about, because the law talks about school and district accountability. The law talks about underperforming districts just as well. So we need a fact-finding team. That's a decision the Board and I are going to have to make. Where are we going to put our eggs? How many baskets are we going to carry around?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I'm increasingly feeling that it may not be easy to separate the baskets. So if we get an underperforming school, that probably says something about the quality of the district.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: There are going to be district issues that inevitably come up when we talk about the school improvement plan, so it may be hard.

MR. KIRTMAN: So for now you're talking about both.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In terms of the process, the last couple things are related to the school part of the inspection, in particular. It's a little more ambiguous how you get to the underperforming designation for the district.

DR. SCHAEFER: Jim, if you're talking about a sizable district, I'm not sure that if there are some schools that are doing poorly --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: You're going to get a range.

DR. SCHAEFER: -- that you can say that the district itself is doing something incorrectly.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Again, this is speculating. When we start peeling the onion on some of these schools, we are going to find some issues relating to district management that we are not going to be able to ignore. We may not.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We also have to look at the issue of what is the role of the Board and the Department. We don't run schools.

MR. KIRTMAN: That's why when we get to the Board policy, based on this, what role do you feel is appropriate?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Well, what's doable.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: What's right to do.

MR. KIRTMAN: Other areas about performance and improvement? Anything else around that one? Let's go to the next one.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think we can do a better job looking at individual programs, probably through the grant-making process. To try to look more at outcomes and track performance.

MR. KIRTMAN: Tighten that process.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think the challenge there is beyond the grants, too. We talk a lot. It's easy for us in Malden to say, "You have to do all this." As a Department, we need the Board's help. We need to think about what is it that we are doing and how we can bring it together for the sake of the district and the schools. Grants are obviously one, then there's other programs such as assistance programs, professional development programs.

MR. KIRTMAN: The second piece of this, and then we'll go back to the data part, is Developing Effective Intervention Strategies. How does one measure, what's the vision measurements for intervention strategies?

DR. SCHAEFER: Measuring how many students who have been part of those programs actually show some level of improvement.

MR. LaFLAMME: Good call.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: As an aside, I talked about this, I'm not sure if I did so at a Board meetings, but part of the original \$20 million remediation grant program was \$2 million for tutoring. The Department did collect information about students in terms of, in particular, 4th graders who had failed the Iowa in 3rd grade. We were able to collect data of 3rd grade Iowa performance compared to 4th grade MCAS performance on reading, and it basically showed the program had been fairly ineffectual, at least statistically speaking. Some students did better, some did worse, most did the same. While the instruments are comparable, you clearly got some information from that data that you don't typically get from evaluations that are done or that may not be done on other programs. But I think that was very useful to really understand whether, having just spent this money, it had any effectiveness.

DR. SCHAEFER: You're saying it did not.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: It did not.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Initially. I don't know if we have to wait over time.

DR. SCHAEFER: Is that program continuing, the tutoring?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I think that was actually in the language of the law, wasn't it?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: No. I'm not sure it's being done anymore. In part it's not being done because the 3rd grade/4th grade thing went away that year.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Also, it's more part of a plan that we are looking for individuals. I'd have to check on that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: My point is that it was that kind of data which was built into the program up front which was very useful in terms of evaluating its effectiveness.

MR. KIRTMAN: What else do you look at to think about a vision for intervention strategy? Which is a little confusing in itself.

MR. LaFLAMME: Logically you have comparability between improvements. That's sort of the corollary to that. But, program by program, is there movement? And then in a larger sense, where have we seen the most movement, what are the common themes between those programs, in what ways are they replicable?

DR. SCHAEFER: Again, it comes to how far are we able to narrow it down.

MR. KIRTMAN: Right. Does the gap narrow as a measurement? Jim raised the issue about time. There is a whole issue about how long these intervention strategies have to go on. Or should they be shorter over time? Does that have anything to do with it?

DR. SCHAEFER: I think we have to figure out how to evaluate the various strategies that are being used.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: The truth of the matter is that systems change, which is what we're talking about, moves slowly across two to five years. We know that as we start collecting data, things are changing. I can assume we're going to make mid-course corrections. The thing that's nagging for me is not knowing what our success stories are. We have been so beleaguered by all of the negative feedback about changes, especially as we up the ante, that we may not have had time to take a deep breath and pay attention to what's working. And I believe there is enough working that if we paid attention to it, it might help us answer some of our own questions. I don't know if that makes any sense, but it sure is working for me right now. So I will enjoy it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: It is interesting at this point in time because, as we've talked about in the last year, the Board has and the Department has implemented a lot of change. Districts and schools feel like they are drinking from fire hoses. What are they going to do with us next? After we collect all this data, after we do this and that, what are some of the interventions? The Board doesn't get credit for some of them. I think establishing the certificate of mastery was something that was very effective. Tomorrow's Teachers is another example. We will talk about the math testing tomorrow. The Iowa test was an intervention of some sort. But I agree with Pat. I don't know whether this can be talked about right now, Jim, or whether we are ready to. We know that the system says that you declare them underperforming and you go through all that stuff that you can. Now, we have got a system where you can recommend, for exemplary schools, to track at the other end.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Is this Developing Effective Intervention Strategies really directly related to the right-hand side or the bottom half of this? Because we, in theory, ought to be doing the stuff that the research is showing works in schools. But it's also something which we are going to be confronted with sooner than we think.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Training for principals, replacing teachers, et cetera.

MR. LaFLAMME: I think for some trends we also have to talk not only about what's working but what's working where. You have to talk about demographics and about socioeconomic class and whatever. Programs can be

replicable, but are they more replicable in comparable schools, more programs that work better in some areas than others? That has to be a part of it.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: The results of takeovers that have occurred throughout the country are very interesting. It's a very mixed bag. You would say that's the ultimate intervention. You heard about the ones in New Jersey where there was all this financial upheaval, et cetera. That's a natural thing; that's going to help. It's not easy. There's a lot of other stuff. Some certainly have worked well but others haven't.

MR. KIRTMAN: I'm wondering, is there a measurement that talks about sustaining the changes in improvement?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: What a concept, sustainability.

MR. KIRTMAN: You can get improvement with great interventions that may cause you some of the aftereffects. I don't know.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: This is a lot to think about, because sustainability is an issue. When I look at consistency, it may not be of the need to worry about this district in this urban area as opposed to this district in this suburban area, but who is delivering the intervention? Is everybody getting the same information? Do the folks delivering the intervention understand the audience that they are delivering it to? Is there an attempt, and this is about equity, to engage people in a participatory, democratic process, to assume competence on their part?

So often we have great interventions and we think that we are delivering them across the board, but there's something about the way those folks deliver the intervention that you see a difference from one place to the next. Therein often lies the failure of the intervention to take hold of the folks being worked on, if you will, to rise to ownership. While I'm interested in the demographic differences, I'm also interested in what the interaction is like. And that's a little harder to get to. But I think that not to raise the question is to miss one of the reasons, sometimes, that interventions fail.

MR. KIRTMAN: Anything more on that one? There's a lot to think about. Let's go back, if we can, try it again like we did last time. What data do you have that you can use to get at some of this information?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: There's something I'm struggling with. It's been my experience that most entities, organizations, deal with a series of carrots and sticks, so forth. So this intervention is an interesting issue for me because if we get too far ahead of the field, so to speak, we can be in a little bit of trouble.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right, we've lost them.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We are trying to be careful when we do the school accountability. We used urban people as part of our teams, for example. But I think that's something we need to talk about as a Board and a Department. We are charged with the responsibility to establish these standards. We have been doing a lot of things. In my judgment, we have put a lot of meat on the bones in recertification and school district accountability, to name a few. What's not only our intervention, what's our role? How do we keep it going? Do we think we win it all by kicking everybody every day in the behind and saying, "Just do it?" It doesn't work that way. Will they just say, "We'll sit back and let you do it." We have to craft our take at that.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Under the law we essentially have a responsibility for the exceptions-- places where it's clearly not working. We are obligated to do something on behalf of the students and the parents and the other stakeholders in the school. But I think we better use that authority judiciously and narrowly. Otherwise, exactly what you're saying would happen. And we'd also go way beyond the capacity to do anything well. I mean, it's not at all clear based on the track record in other states, even when you do it narrowly, that you can be successful at it. But we are looking at cases where it couldn't get a whole lot worse. That is not saying a whole lot for what we may be capable of doing. But if we aren't focused on the exceptions, and we're trying to tell everybody what they ought to be doing, we're going to go way beyond our competence and I think alienate the field.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Back to your point. I think also, even though the law is not as clear on it, we need to look at the positive exceptions.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Absolutely. The recognition part we have just been saying has gotten very little attention.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: And because of the evaluation systems we are putting in place, we are actually in a position to recognize people for success and be serious about it.

MR. KIRTMAN: So if we went back, if you found the beginning of this section, what type of data do you have and need?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I think a lot of this is similar to Student Achievement. There will be a lot of data. I don't think there exists, at least not consistently, not in sufficient quantity, some kind of outcome measures around individual programs.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Right.

MR. KIRTMAN: Back to programs again. Basically you're saying for this whole area, the data you have will give you the information, except for the programmatic piece, which is the only real gap, sorting it differently, apparently.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: That's right.

MR. KIRTMAN: Does that make sense of that whole section?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It does.

MR. KIRTMAN: We can move to the right side?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Let's end it here. I think we have done well to get through the left side.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: You and I were --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: This is a natural break.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Can we talk about next steps?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes, rather than start --

MR. KIRTMAN: Yes, because this is a whole piece in itself.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: This is something near and dear to my heart, and it seems the more time we take to have conversation about what we are doing, the better we'll understand each other.

DR. SCHAEFER: Before we go to that, can I say something? In this next area, Recruiting Talented Professionals, I think some of that is going to come out of the Joint Commission.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Absolutely.

DR. SCHAEFER: The part on Recruiting Talented Professionals.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes.

DR. SCHAEFER: Maybe when that comes out, we can look at incorporating that into our scheme.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe if we just quickly went down these four items, we can't have a full discussion, but we can point out some issues.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We can connect systems.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: In terms of Recruiting Talented Professionals, there is some data the Joint Commission will come out with. One of the main recommendations of the Joint Commission is there's not enough data, and Dave is working on this, around creating this data warehouse on teachers. And the reality is that we know almost nothing about the teaching force in the aggregate. We just need to do a much better job understanding who the teachers are, what their credentials are, their qualifications are, when did they come in, how long have they been teaching. And then, the other half of this, which we don't really have a handle on, is understanding what the staffing needs are in the districts. We know this anecdotally, but we don't have the data that we probably ought to have at the state level to help inform the kind of incentives that we give to new teachers. For example, where do we put emphasis and where don't we. Under Recruiting Talented Professionals there's a big data job. The Department is on its way but that needs to be --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Interestingly enough, it's not as bad as I thought. We are not so far behind anybody else. The other states are just as bad in math for that kind of data. And, of course, the staffing needs, we'll see how the early retirement bill affects this, either the Governor's or the legislature's. But I think that will be interesting.

MR. KIRTMAN: You want to get just a quick comment on the Restructuring for Effective School Management?

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I have two ideas, although they may be a little lower level. One is, and this is in the data collection area here, but I think it would be very useful to do an annual survey, probably of superintendents, maybe principals. We would try to identify, from their perspective, what the most burdensome mandates are. To get some feedback from the customer, the victims as the case may be, of what the most burdensome regulations or mandates are. And then try to get some work to reduce the burden. I think it's important to figure out how to structure the thing so, for instance, you could measure how many hours it costs you. It would be a way to actually track reduction or improvement over time. That would be worth doing in my mind.

The other thing relates specifically to this notion of trying to get more resources in the school's hands or expand the school-based management authority. And one area has to do with the flow of state funds and even the flow of state grant funds, somehow tracking what percentage of that actually goes directly to schools as opposed to districts. I think that would be interesting.

MR. KIRTMAN: Do you do some of that now?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: So many of our grants, even by statute, are district-driven and then the district decides.

MR. KIRTMAN: Some of them have percentages sometimes. They could ask that 75 percent has to go to schools.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Sure.

DR. SCHAEFER: Could I jump to Replicating Models? Is there a team at the Department that looks at that, that collects data on --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: We had one prior to even the federal government establishing their comprehensive reform monies. So we began by having a whole series of people talking about school reform around middle schools. We had a grant, Work Project Zero, we had Accelerated Schools, et cetera. It was run out of the

Department, but we slowly but surely have given that up as running it ourselves and encouraging schools to adopt that model that makes sense for them.

DR. SCHAEFER: So the schools have all this information.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: In fact, the federal government provides some summary of what they consider to be the models that have worked throughout the country for schools to adopt. Of course, most of the money, most of it went to urban areas, you know, poorer schools, the federal grant.

DR. SCHAEFER: So what is it that we are looking at under that area.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Is this the replicating?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Pat's favorite word.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: This is related to the research component, but In terms of talking about the implementation aspect of this, if we were able to start identifying schools and the, "models" that they use to achieve high performance, that might be something. If we suddenly had a library of high-performing schools and a description of the school design -

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We are talking about case studies. If we have a template that simplifies the whole notion of using the case study to collect data that people can look at and make sense out of, then I'm very fond of that notion. I'm sure lots of schools would be too. They'd be interested in the collateral material that supports the case study. People take in data in different ways. If we could get rid of replicating and just say models. Best studies, best practices.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Let's work on that.

DR. SCHAEFER: Library of best practices.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Wonderful. Thank you. All right.

MR. KIRTMAN: I do want to say, the only other piece before we do Next Steps is Developing Leadership.

DR. SCHAEFER: That's the critical piece.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes, it is.

DR. SCHAEFER: We could have all the libraries we want, but --

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: A national study just came out with findings on a series of standards about professional development, about leadership characteristics. This is, as you know, a huge problem.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Maybe this is a lead-in to some of the other items lower on the list here. You have a green sheet in your packets with a list of proposed Board forums. They are designed to educate us and stimulate some discussion. The second one is about Effective Schools and Effective Leaders. Part of that discussion should not only be a discussion about what a good leader looks like, but how we, at the state level, measure the quality of leadership in the field.

MR. KIRTMAN: Then set policies.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Right.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: There's a third one.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Good point. We have talked a lot about doing more research, more data collection. And we did put some money in our own 2001 budget for establishing a real research Department of Academic Affairs. Even if we get it, which we may not, that will only be a start for the kind of things we're talking about here. We need to be thinking in terms of developing a research budget in our next budget submission. I would argue also for imbedding research in programs that are financed as a regular line item in the budget.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Absolutely. Also, what research is being done in schools.

DR. SCHAEFER: I'm not sure there's a need for a lot of research. How can we make some of these leaders available to districts around the state?

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: I don't think you were just talking about leadership.

DR. SCHAEFER: I was talking about everything.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: But I'm with Roberta.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: In addition to whatever is in the budget, and it was a specific amount in House One, we do have other grants where we have administrative discretion, at least right now, Schools 2000, for example. That's a place we can tap, as long as it becomes a priority of this Department and this Board. I don't want to use the excuse that I didn't put it in the budget. Sandra Stotsky is also seeking private funding for research.

DR. SCHAEFER: One of the things that should be evaluated is early childhood, what works and what doesn't. We are putting a lot of money into that. But on the leadership thing, I'm wondering whether there's some way of having some of these people who are currently effective leaders in their schools made available to districts around the state, or for people to be able to come and see those schools in operation. Some way of being able to look at a model leader. Because I don't believe it's something that you can teach. It's something you copy.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: As you know from your work on the Joint Commission, ultimately we are talking about effective teachers. In trying to attract people into that profession, you eventually get around to comprehensive management including conditions. We are having difficulty getting people to even come into the field, or wanting to become principals or superintendents. This is a major area of concern; everyone knows it. It's something we have to take head-on.

MR. KIRTMAN: It's just 6:00. We have talked about several areas here. There's a lot more in depth discussion to come on that other side of the page.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: We could talk about this stuff until -- fill in the blank.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Until 6:00.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Until the cows come home.

COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Until we see the whites of their eyes.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Until Bunker Hill comes around again. I'm interested in another Monday evening meeting to flesh out some more of this, but I'm interested in parallel processes. I'm delighted to see these five forums, and I know they are just a beginning. I think that they will inform us as we try to get our hands around other things that we have yet to discuss in depth.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: You mean more forums in addition to these?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: No. I'm interested in getting started on at least what's on the paper.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: On the green paper?

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Yes. On the green sheet. We've gone from pink to green.

MR. KIRTMAN: So it can inform this process.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: I want us to get started on these as soon as possible.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: Good.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: As a practical matter, I think we are looking at September for the first of these.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: I'm traveling all summer, so that is all right with me.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: The only thing I'd ask is that Board members give us feedback on these topics. What I did is tie them to this document so I'm not going off the page. One of them is related to special education. But that comes out of the action we took early in the year on special ed. Regs. The others are directly tied to the planning documents.

MR. LaFLAMME: Kudos for the green sheet.

MS. CRUTCHFIELD: It's a great place to start.

CHAIRMAN PEYSER: Give me any feedback in the next week or so.

MR. KIRTMAN: One minute to six, back to you.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.