

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Education**

**March 28, 2006
9:09 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

**Department of Education
350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts**

Members of the Board of Education Present:

James A. Peyser, Chairman, Milton

Ann Reale, Vice-Chair, Commissioner of Early Education and Care

Christopher Anderson, Westford

Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain

Judith Gill, Chancellor, Board of Higher Education, by Patricia Plummer, designee

Roberta Schaefer, Worcester

Abigail Thernstrom, Lexington

Henry M. Thomas, III, Springfield

Jonathan Urbach, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Falmouth

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

Chairman James A. Peyser called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Peyser opened the meeting by reporting that he has appointed a committee of the Board to consider options regarding raising the passing standard for earning a competency determination. Board members Patricia Plummer, Roberta Schaefer, Henry Thomas, and Jonathan Urbach will work with the Chairman and Commissioner to bring options for consideration back to the Board in April or May.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Driscoll updated the Board on his recent visit with a delegation from the Council of Chief State School Officers and others to study educational programs in India. He also announced that Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus has been named to a national committee to review assessment growth models.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the February 28, 2006 regular meeting, as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

1. Proposed Amendments to Vocational Technical Education Regulations

The Board discussed proposed amendments to the Vocational Technical Education Regulations (603 CMR 4.00). Jeffrey Wheeler and David Wheeler from the Department of Education presented an overview of the proposed amendments, which make two significant changes. First, the proposed amendments establish standards for students to earn the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency. Second, the proposed amendments set rigorous standards for programs of study and methods of instruction, by referencing Vocational Technical Education Frameworks in 43 occupational areas. The Department developed the frameworks in collaboration with representatives of business, industry and labor; educators; and other experts in each occupational field.

Commissioner Driscoll said, "I predict this initiative will prove to be a national model. Vocational education in Massachusetts will be driving the push to proficiency required of all students. This was a phenomenal team effort among vocational educators, representatives of industry, businesses and apprenticeships, and community college faculty. It shows what can happen when everyone focuses on the needs of students and the setting of high expectations." The Commissioner recommended that the Board send out the proposed regulations and frameworks for public comment. After the Department reviews the comments and makes revisions to the documents as needed, the regulations will be brought back to the Board for a final vote in June.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, §§ 1B, 1D and 1F and chapter 74, § 2, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the

proposed amendments to the Vocational Technical Education Regulations, 603 CMR 4.00, as presented by the Commissioner.

Further, that the Board of Education authorize the Commissioner also to solicit public comment on the draft Vocational Technical Education Frameworks in 43 occupational areas, with the understanding that the Commissioner will publish the final frameworks as a companion document to the final Vocational Technical Education Regulations and will update the frameworks periodically as needed to reflect industry standards.

The vote was unanimous.

2. Teacher Training

At the request of Board member Chris Anderson, the Board had a discussion on the issue of teacher training. The Board heard a presentation by a panel of educational and business leaders: Steve Foster, Superintendent, Westford Public Schools; Tom Payzant, Superintendent, Boston Public Schools; Ray Stata, Chairman, Analog Devices and Chairman, Center for Quality of Management; and Jack Wilson, President, University of Massachusetts. Mr. Anderson said it is critically important to increase the quality and quantity of mathematics and science teachers, and the Board and the Department should work with others to take action.

Following the panel presentation, Chairman Peyser, Chris Anderson, and Commissioner Driscoll stated that they will develop a timeline and process for engaging teachers and administrators, higher education representatives, business leaders and other interested parties in a dialogue that will lead to specific proposals for improving teacher preparation, recruitment, induction, and professional development. The Commissioner will bring policy recommendations to the Board within the next six months.

3. Charter Schools

The Board discussed the charter renewals for the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School (West Tisbury) and Prospect Hill Academy Charter School (Somerville). In February, the Board had an initial discussion on these charter renewals. At that meeting the Board voted to waive the provision in the charter school regulations that requires notice of the Board's decision on a charter renewal to be sent to the school no later than March 1, in order to enable the Board to follow the usual practice under the bylaws of allowing a month for consideration of proposed renewals before voting on them.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grant a renewal of a public school charter to the following school for the five-year period from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2011, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Commonwealth Charter School (regional):

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School

Location: Cambridge and Somerville

Districts in Region: Cambridge and Somerville

Number of students: 1,200

Grade levels: K through 12

Said charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grant a renewal of a public school charter to the following school for the five-year period from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2011, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Commonwealth Charter School (regional):

Martha's Vineyard Charter Public School

Location: West Tisbury

Districts in Region: Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, Up-Island Regional (Aquinnah, Chilmark, West Tisbury)

Number of students: 180

Grade levels: K through 12

Said charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was unanimous.

4. Improvement Plan from New Leadership Horace Mann Charter School

The Board discussed the revised plan for improving student performance from the New Leadership Horace Mann Charter School that was declared underperforming in the 2004-2005 school review cycle. Chairman Peyser said the Board is encouraged by the response from the school. After the plan is refined further, the Board will take action on the plan at a future meeting.

5. Approval of Grants

The Board discussed \$1,200,298 in grants for the following programs: 2006 Content Institutes (professional development for educators relating to the curriculum frameworks): Federal - \$796,019; Academic Support Services - Work and Learning Programs: State - \$350,000; Dropout Prevention and Alternative Education: State - \$54,279.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

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

The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the meeting adjourn at 12:00 noon, subject to the call of the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education
and Secretary of the Board