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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RACE TO THE TOP
GRANT REVIEW

Phase 1 and Tier 2 State Presentation
The State of Massachusetts

8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Holiday Inn
550 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 SECRETARY REVILLE: Good afternoon,
3 ladies and gentleman. We are the Race to the
4 Top team from Massachusetts. I'm Paul Reville,
5 Secretary of Education.

6 I'd like to begin by reading a letter
7 from our Governor, Deval Patrick:

8 "Dear Friends, I'm sorry that I am
9 unable to join you to express personally my
10 commitment to, and enthusiasm for, our Race to
11 the Top application.

12 "Secretary Reville, Commissioner
13 Chester, Superintendent Johnson and their
14 colleagues are the best possible team to present
15 our proposal and have my unequivocal support.
16 But I so wanted to be there myself to express my
17 personal stake in this mission.

18 "Education is transformational. I know
19 that not as a rhetorical point, but as a matter
20 of life experience.

21 "In one generation, I have been
22 transported by the engine of education from a

1 life of poverty on the south side of Chicago
2 through success and private industry to the
3 Governor's Office.

4 "I have had the life-altering
5 experience of being touched by the fire of
6 inspired teachers who sparked in me a deep
7 desire for learning and instilled in me a belief
8 that I was capable of achieving.

9 "Teachers enabled me to imagine what's
10 possible and reach for it. I want every student
11 in the Commonwealth to have that blessing and we
12 work every day to make decisions that empower
13 educators and students to achieve that goal.

14 "We are very proud of our national
15 leadership and outstanding achievement in the
16 past nearly two decades of education reform, but
17 we're not content to rest on our laurels.

18 "While our students, on average, lead
19 the nation and score among the best in the
20 world, it is still the case that too often a
21 student's socioeconomic status is the best
22 predictor of educational attainment. That has

1 to stop now.

2 "Our proposal is based on our
3 experience and strength here in Massachusetts
4 and targets achievement gaps. I am deeply and
5 urgently committed to implementing the action
6 strategies that you will hear about in more
7 detail today.

8 "I am convinced that these proposed
9 actions, coupled with our record of educational
10 success and our potent new reform law, will
11 ensure that every student in every community in
12 the Commonwealth has access to an excellent
13 education.

14 "Education has been central to our work
15 since I first took office. One of my first
16 actions as Governor was to begin to overhaul the
17 way education is delivered by building a unified
18 system from pre-kindergarten through college.

19 "My team then began work on the most
20 significant education legislation since 1993,
21 which I proudly signed on Martin Luther King
22 Day, just two months ago.

1 "This legislation provides the state
2 and superintendents with a flexibility, power
3 and tools they need to change schools, faculty
4 and curricula while offering extraordinary
5 professional supports for teachers and health
6 and human service supports for students.

7 "At the same time our new bill smartly
8 lists a cap on charter schools and
9 simultaneously creates a new breed of innovation
10 schools to promote change and opportunity all
11 across the Commonwealth. The team will be happy
12 to provide you more detail on these measures
13 during the meeting.

14 "Our education vision built on the
15 foundation of our decade and a half of success
16 couples with the power of our new achievement
17 gap legislation. I believe this will all be
18 significantly enhanced and accelerated by the
19 strategies incorporated in our Race to the Top
20 application.

21 "It all fits together and spells
22 success for students that we, frankly, have

1 least well served.

2 "As Governor of Massachusetts, I will
3 continue to do everything in my power to ensure
4 that we successfully implement and sustain the
5 initiatives and strategies in our vision and
6 application.

7 "I will hold our education leaders and
8 myself accountable for using Race to the Top
9 funds responsibly and wisely so that we achieved
10 the goals we outlined in our proposal.

11 "I firmly believe that we have a bold
12 and innovative Race to the Top proposal, one
13 that will catalyze our ongoing efforts to
14 eradicate the achievement gap in Massachusetts
15 and help us realize our aspirations not only
16 for our students, but for our democracy and our
17 economy.

18 "Your investments and our vision and
19 pioneering strategies will benefit our
20 colleagues around the country, as well as the
21 citizens of Massachusetts. We believe we are
22 poised and well-positioned to lead the next phase

1 of education reform, the quest to close
2 achievement gaps and to deliver on the promise
3 of a high-quality public education for all. I
4 hope you will help us.

5 "Thank you for your consideration,
6 sincerely, Deval L. Patrick, Governor of the
7 Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

8 Now, let me introduce our panel. First
9 of all, for myself, I've spent nearly four
10 decades in Massachusetts as a professional, as a
11 teacher, a principal in the non-profit and
12 advocacy sector at the university graduate
13 school of education level, and especially as a
14 policymaker in a variety of roles where I've had
15 the honor to be present and playing a leadership
16 role in two generations of education reform.

17 I am joined by Mitchell Chester, our
18 chief state school officer. He has been our
19 Commissioner for Education for the past two
20 years and has a distinguished background as a
21 teacher, as a leader at the district level, was
22 a senior staff member in the City of

1 Philadelphia, the Connecticut Department of
2 Education and, most recently, in his post as the
3 Deputy Chief in Ohio, which he had before coming
4 to Massachusetts.

5 We're also joined and honored to have
6 Carol Johnson, Superintendent of the Boston
7 Public Schools, with us. Carol is in her third
8 year there and, as you all know, has a national
9 reputation as a leading superintendent in the
10 nation. She's Chair of the Council of Great
11 City Schools. She was Superintendent in
12 Minneapolis and in Memphis just prior to joining
13 us in Boston.

14 Next to Carol is Karla Baehr, who is
15 our Deputy Commissioner. She, too, is a former
16 district superintendent in a wide variety of
17 districts as diverse as Wellesley, an affluent
18 suburb, and most recently before she came to the
19 Commissioner's Office, she worked in Lowell, one
20 of our most challenging urban areas. She is a
21 leading -- recognized as a leading
22 superintendent -- former superintendent in

1 Massachusetts.

2 And finally, to my right, Jeffrey
3 Nellhaus, who's our Deputy Commissioner, who is
4 the architect of our MCAS system and our current
5 system of assessment and accountability and is
6 nationally recognized for that work. So that's
7 our team.

8 Now, I'd like to share with you, if I
9 may, a brief opening statement on my behalf and
10 then we'll turn it over to the rest of the
11 panel.

12 I want to echo the Governor's gratitude
13 to you for recognizing the potential in our
14 application and selecting Massachusetts as a
15 finalist in this competition. We're deeply
16 appreciative of this opportunity to describe how
17 we will use support from the Race to the Top
18 funds to take our public schools to new heights
19 while simultaneously closing persistent
20 achievement gaps.

21 The history of school reform over the
22 last two decades shows that Massachusetts is

1 uniquely positioned to deliver on the promises
2 of our application.

3 In the 1990s, I led the Massachusetts
4 Business Alliance for Education in shaping the
5 first chapter of education reform and served on
6 the State Board of Education to implement these
7 initial game-changing reforms.

8 We came together as a Commonwealth
9 across the education, business and community
10 sectors because we recognize that students
11 arriving in the workplace with high school
12 diplomas lack the knowledge and the skills they
13 needed to build successful lives outside of high
14 school.

15 We were doing a great disservice to
16 these students by allowing them to graduate
17 without properly preparing them for the rigor of
18 college and careers.

19 We responded by working with our
20 legislature to pass the Massachusetts Education
21 Reform Act of 1993 which expanded state support
22 for public education in exchange for rigorous

1 standards and accountability.

2 Through these efforts, Massachusetts
3 has vaulted from the middle of the pack among
4 states in educational achievement to the top
5 tier of high achievers both nationally and
6 internationally.

7 Now, 20 years later, I'm back as
8 Secretary of Education and a member of the Board
9 of Education as we again face a challenge of
10 similar magnitude.

11 Despite our progress, we have not been
12 successful in dramatically reducing achievement
13 gaps between white and Asian students and their
14 African-American, Latino, low income, disabled
15 and English language learning peers.

16 Closing these gaps once and for all is
17 a moral imperative and we stand ready to do it
18 now.

19 We believed in 1993 and we believe now
20 that high expectations and high achievement must
21 be the norm for all students and "all" means
22 all.

1 The Governor reminds us that
2 notwithstanding our world class educational
3 performance over the past decade and a half,
4 doing well is not good enough. This means that
5 we need to unflinchingly look at the data, learn
6 the lessons and formulate a set of courageous
7 new strategies to guarantee that we realize our
8 original goal: All students have proficiency,
9 all students prepared for success.

10 The data tells us, for example, that
11 despite our gains overall, our high averages,
12 too many of our students are still trapped in
13 underperforming schools that limit their life
14 chances and consign them to bleak futures.

15 It is obvious that we need to
16 dramatically improve our strategies for turning
17 around our lowest-performing schools.

18 We need to rescue these children and,
19 therefore, this is one of the central themes of
20 our education action plan and the Race to the
21 Top proposal.

22 Just as we need to scale up our

1 successful strategies, we need to learn the
2 lessons of where we have fallen short. In
3 hindsight, we see that we underestimated the
4 support, the additional expertise, the
5 professional development that teachers need to
6 educate not just some, but all, each and every
7 one of our students with the kind of high
8 standard that has heretofore been reserved for
9 an elite few.

10 We also know that we need to do a
11 better job of building strong leaders at both
12 the school and district level, instructional
13 leaders who know what it takes to inspire and
14 support their staff members, build positive
15 cultures and effectively manage their
16 organizations.

17 We did not supply enough curricular
18 instructional support in the first phase of
19 -education reform. Our Race to the Top
20 strategies will do that.

21 Likewise, looking at the still close
22 correlation between socioeconomic status and

1 educational achievement and attainment, we can
2 see that we underestimated the impact of poverty
3 and social capital on students' educational
4 outcomes.

5 Similarly, we underestimated the
6 support school districts and school leaders need
7 from the state in transforming low performing
8 schools in a way that lasts.

9 In short, we've learned valuable
10 lessons about the limitations of the first
11 generation of education reform in Massachusetts
12 and these lessons now chart the path for where
13 we must go in our second stage of reform.

14 I'm being direct with you about our
15 shortcomings because I want to make it clear
16 that Massachusetts is not complacent about our
17 successes. The first generation of education
18 reform in Massachusetts took us a long way, but
19 not far enough. We can do better; we will do
20 better.

21 We've already taken major steps down
22 that road. In January, Governor Patrick and our

1 legislature approved a sweeping new education
2 law aimed at closing achievement gaps in
3 Massachusetts. The new law is the blueprint for
4 our next generation of reforms and will
5 facilitate the achievement of many components of
6 our Race to the Top plan.

7 The achievement gap lifts charter
8 school caps to expand charter schools in our
9 lowest-performing districts using only proven
10 providers who will focus on the students with
11 the greatest achievement gaps.

12 The new law provides new rules, tools
13 and supports for superintendents in the state to
14 intervene in our lowest-performing schools by
15 crafting powerful turnaround plans that focus on
16 the needs of students and families and casts
17 away rules and policies that inhibit progress.

18 It also creates a new type of public
19 school, innovation schools that allow school
20 districts to replicate the best features of
21 charter schools within the traditional district
22 structure.

1

2 This major school reform legislation
3 was constructed with the input of classroom
4 teachers, school and district administrators,
5 community partners and business leaders, but
6 because it challenged some intrinsic interest
7 and practices, its passage was not easy.

8 In the end, however, our legislature
9 and nearly every corner of our educational
10 community supported it because when it comes to
11 bold action on education, Massachusetts has
12 always chosen to move forward.

13 The new law illustrates our tradition
14 of working with our education sector to
15 construct reform in a collaborative way while
16 also pushing the envelope to promote innovation.

17 Our Race to the Top application
18 reflects an unswerving commitment to the highest
19 standards, a set of challenging strategies and,
20 simultaneously, a commitment to partnership and
21 implementation. We seek to do reform with the
22 field, not to the field.

1 Always willing to stand on principle, as we
2 have done with our MCAS and graduation
3 standards, we try to avoid top-down prescriptive
4 mandates in favor of a policy and practice
5 development process that honors professional
6 expertise and local context.

7 Promoting collaboration, while also
8 demanding results and embracing innovation, this
9 is the guiding philosophy of our Race to the Top
10 application.

11 As I stated earlier, our paramount goal
12 is to close the achievement gaps in
13 Massachusetts once and for all. In doing so, we
14 will vault Massachusetts from its status as the
15 leader in educational achievement among the
16 states to the leader in educational achievement
17 in the world.

18 Commissioner Chester and his team will
19 further explain the details of our Race to the
20 Top plan.

21 Superintendent Johnson is here to
22 provide insight on what the plan means from a

1 local perspective.

2

3 I want to leave you with one key point.

4 Over the last 17 years we have learned what

5 works. We know what more we need to do and

6 we're ready and able to do it.

7 In my role as Secretary of Education, I

8 pledge to make this work by top priority. I

9 will enlist our Department of Early Education

10 and Care, the Department of Higher Education and

11 the University of Massachusetts in this work.

12 They have much to contribute with their

13 expertise, resources and coordination.

14 Similarly, I will continue to work

15 closely with my cabinet colleagues to further

16 support our efforts to address the non-academic

17 needs of our students.

18 Our executive offices of Health and

19 Human Services and Labor and Workforce

20 Development, for example, have already eagerly

21 begun partnering on this work.

22 I will continue to work with our

1 colleagues in the legislature to ensure their
2 continued understanding and support for this
3 work.

4 Finally, the Governor and I will
5 continue to reach out to all of our constituency
6 groups to challenge them to join with us in
7 making the tough decisions necessary to move
8 full speed ahead in executing this major assault
9 on achievement gaps.

10 Whether we are selected for a phase one
11 grant or not, Massachusetts is committed to
12 undertaking the work outlined in our plan, but
13 we hope to prove ourselves worthy of your
14 support.

15 We recruited 257 districts representing
16 86 percent of our low-income students as our
17 partners in this work. We just successfully
18 mounted the most significant legislative efforts
19 since the Education Reform Act of 1993 in order
20 to lay the groundwork for our full-scale
21 offensive to eliminate achievement gaps.

22 Our entire state government and

1 educational community has coalesced in support
2 of this mounting campaign. Massachusetts is
3 ready and eager to lead the next stage of
4 national school reform by implementing the
5 potent array of strategies we have designed to
6 boost student learning and close pernicious
7 achievement gaps in our Commonwealth.

8 My experience with school reform in
9 Massachusetts tells me that now is the time.
10 Our assets are well aligned. We have the
11 leaders, the strategy and the urgency to take a
12 major step forward. We need your help to make
13 this big stride.

14 We appreciate your consideration of our
15 application and we look forward to the rest of
16 our discussion.

17 And now, I'd like to turn it over to
18 Commissioner Chester to frame the context of
19 this proposal.

20 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Good afternoon.

21 As the Secretary said, we're justifiably I would argue proud
22 of our accomplishments, but also realistic about

1 the work that's left to do.

2 The chart on the screen illustrates the
3 overall outcomes of the last decade and a half,
4 in this case, using tenth grade -- the tenth
5 grade exit exam in mathematics, although if I
6 show you any grade or subject profile, you'd see
7 a similar trend over time.

8 The vertical axis identifies our scale
9 scores, "proficient" set at 240, "needs
10 improvement" at 220, "advanced" at 260.

11 A decade ago the typical score was
12 below proficient, but has gained steadily over
13 time where the current average score is
14 approaching advanced.

15 And as has been well documented in many
16 studies, the standards in our MCAS exams are as
17 strong as any state, stronger than most.

18 We have been aiming at college- and
19 career-ready standards and assessments and we
20 documented that standard of proficiency against
21 student success in college later on.

22 This slide has the aggregated results

1 for low-income black, Hispanic, students with
2 disabilities and limited English proficient
3 students. Each group has made progress. A
4 decade ago the average score for each group was
5 barely at the low end of needs improvement, the
6 second of our four categories.

7 Now, the typical score for low income,
8 for black students, for Hispanic students is at
9 or above the low end of proficiency. The slide
10 illustrates both our progress and our
11 challenges. Closing achievement gaps is our
12 imperative.

13 To be of maximum value to this effort,
14 to ensure that students graduate college and are
15 career ready, we have several core convictions
16 about the State Education Agency's role which
17 frame the proposal that's in front of you.

18 The first is that the basic standards,
19 base reform initiatives, set standards, measure
20 and report results hold people accountable.
21 It's necessary, but not adequate.

22 The State Education Agency must be

1 involved in the implementation of those
2 standards, must be attentive to human capital
3 strategies and must attend to the health, social
4 and emotional needs of students and their
5 families.

6 The second core conviction is that we
7 need to strike a balance in the SEA between our
8 legitimate compliance role and that of an
9 assistive, transformative role.

10 We will be successful as an SEA to the
11 extent that we add value to the work of our
12 districts in improving curriculum and
13 instruction.

14 The third idea is that many of the best
15 ideas and approaches through our most vexing
16 challenges are already being implemented,
17 implemented locally in schools and districts
18 around the state.

19 While we sometimes share those
20 practices, we don't sufficiently support the
21 scaling of them, and you'll see a lot of
22 attention to that in our proposal.

1 And then the final conviction that we
2 have about our role is that this work cannot be
3 done solely at the state level. To realize the
4 promise of school turnaround in districts that
5 need it the most, we must work closely with our
6 districts.

7 Our districts' capacity to support
8 continuous improvement and close achievement
9 gaps will be a central determinant of our
10 success.

11 Two years ago when I arrived in
12 Massachusetts, I worked with the State Board of
13 Elementary and Secondary Education to identify a
14 set of priorities. We settled on four areas
15 that would define our work going forward:
16 educator effectiveness, curriculum and
17 instruction, accountability and assistance,
18 supports for students and families.

19 When the Race to the Top assurances
20 were first announced a year later, the parallels
21 to the priorities set by my board immediately
22 struck me.

1 The close alignment between our state
2 priorities and Race to the Top assurances made
3 our work in developing our application much
4 easier, in part, because we had already begun
5 improving our efforts and building our own
6 capacity in each of these areas.

7 I'll share four quick examples. Under
8 the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus,
9 we had started the process of refining our own
10 English language, arts and mathematics
11 curriculum frameworks with an eye toward college
12 and career readiness.

13 We aligned our revision time line to
14 take advantage of the common core initiative of
15 CCSSO/Council of Chief State School Officers and
16 the National Governor's Association.

17 A second example, we created the Center
18 for Educator Policy and brought in new
19 leadership there.

20 Third example, under Deputy
21 Commissioner Baehr's leadership, we redesigned
22 our approach to accountability and assistance by

1 doing two things: first, merging what had been
2 separate operations for district and for school
3 accountability; and, second, by coordinating our
4 accountability and assistive initiatives.

5 And then the final example is that we
6 created a Center for Curriculum and Instruction
7 and charged that center with identifying,
8 developing, disseminating curriculum resources
9 supporting the scaling of effective practices,
10 bringing local officials together around common
11 problems of practice and focusing on better use
12 of data to identify what's working and what's
13 not.

14 My point here is that we're already
15 committed to the work of the four Race to the
16 Top assurance areas. We are reallocating
17 resources to support this work and we're
18 reorganizing our own department to improve our
19 capacity to deliver on the work.

20 The four anchor initiatives of our Race
21 to the Top proposal tie closely to our overall
22 theory of action. After four years, we will

1 have a new effectiveness-based system for
2 educator evaluation, compensation and HR
3 practices, a far stronger accountability system
4 for educator preparation programs and a
5 performance- and portfolio-based licensure
6 system.

7 Second, we will build a state-of-the-
8 art teaching and learning system combining
9 curriculum resources, assessment tools and
10 actionable data on students and make that system
11 available to all educators statewide.

12 Third, we will deepen our districts'
13 capacity to improve their lowest performing
14 schools by providing them with tools, resources
15 and access to partners that are proven to make a
16 difference and change in the trajectory of
17 student performance in our most challenging
18 schools.

19 And then fourth, our students will be
20 prepared for life after high school through
21 access to rigorous academic programs in middle
22 and high school, STEM-focused early college high

1 schools and changes to state policy and programs
2 to provide greater incentives for college and
3 career readiness.

4 Now, I want to be clear that while we
5 have reserved the seat at the table for our
6 superintendents, for our teacher union leaders
7 and for our school committee members, the reform
8 initiatives are non-negotiable.

9 This was a cause of great anxiety as we
10 prepared our application, particularly among
11 teacher union leaders.

12 In particular, the commitment to using
13 student achievement measures, including test
14 scores as a cornerstone of teacher evaluation,
15 career ladders and licensure, elicited much
16 debate among and between state, union and
17 management officials.

18 The fact that we achieved the sign-on
19 that we did, two-thirds of our districts
20 representing districts and charter schools
21 representing 72 percent of our total student
22 body and 86 percent of our students in poverty

1 bodes well for the success of what we have
2 proposed.

3 In a state with strong unions and local
4 control, we have statewide commitment to a
5 common agenda. We believe that by being clear
6 about the outcomes, but leaving room at the
7 design table for all the participants, we have
8 laid the groundwork to deliver on the results
9 we've identified in our proposal.

10 When we achieve our goals with Race to
11 the Top, it will have a remarkable impact in
12 Massachusetts. From the baseline that I showed
13 you earlier, this baseline of achievement, we
14 will hold ourselves accountable for increasing
15 achievement for all students while accelerating
16 the gains for those furthest behind.

17 As a result, at the end of the day we
18 will cut our achievement gap in half, the gap
19 between the lowest- and the highest performing
20 students within six years on the trajectory
21 we've set, will increase the four-year
22 graduation rate to 85 percent in 2014, and 90 percent

1 by 2016 from the current 81 percent.

2 And in concrete terms, that in
3 Massachusetts would result in three thousand
4 more high school graduates and two thousand more
5 graduates enrolling in college each year.

6 I'd like to turn to Superintendent
7 Johnson and ask her to make some opening
8 comments, and then I will close out our
9 introduction.

10 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: Good
11 afternoon. I'm honored to be here to be among
12 the voices from Massachusetts to represent
13 especially the 392 districts in the
14 Commonwealth.

15 Boston, in particular, is a city of
16 firsts: the first place of public education, the
17 first school in 1635, the first public schools
18 in the early 1800s, and home of the first public
19 school for the deaf in this nation.

20 We have a proud tradition of innovation
21 and high standards and that performance and
22 entrepreneur spirit is alive and well today and

1 best exemplified most recently in our
2 groundbreaking ed. reform bill recently signed
3 by Governor Patrick.

4 This legislation gives districts new
5 tools and added capacity to intervene with our
6 struggling schools, place our best leaders and
7 teachers where the need is greatest, create
8 incentives for change and establish new
9 innovative miles of partnerships for schooling.

10 We cannot possibly close our
11 achievement gaps with business as usual. We can
12 no longer defend schools or staff that we would
13 not choose for our own children or instruct our
14 most vulnerable learners.

15 We also cannot close these achievement
16 gaps without addressing the access gap that
17 exists between our poor students and the
18 enriching experience that middle income and
19 employed families routinely give their children.

20 We have learned important lessons that
21 position us well not only to race to the top,
22 but to reach the top for every learner.

1 Lessons learned, there are three:
2 Changing elements that are structural are not
3 enough. While creating smaller high schools and
4 adding time may be essential ingredients, they
5 alone will not be sufficient to automatically
6 increase literacy and math proficiency.

7 Effective preparation, supportive
8 induction and a focus on teaching and learning
9 in practice is essential. Leadership does
10 matter, but leadership teams matter more.

11 Boston Mayor Tom Menino, a 16-year
12 veteran in education, as a core centerpiece has
13 made it clear that our job does not end at high
14 school.

15 For the last seven years, Northeastern
16 University Center for Labor and Market
17 Statistics have tracked every single Boston
18 public school graduate enrolled in post-
19 secondary. While some 78 percent of our
20 graduates enter college, only 35 percent
21 complete. The Mayor has asked us to double
22 this.

1 Our work must be getting students
2 ready, getting students in and getting students
3 through college.

4 Our new education reform legislation
5 has allowed us the flexibility to begin the
6 process of intervening in our 12 lowest-
7 performing schools and removing all staff in
8 half of those schools.

9 The state's detailed analysis of growth
10 data gives us tools to better analyze and
11 monitor results and to identify our best-
12 performing schools and our best-performing
13 teachers.

14 And the state's leadership standards
15 provide the framework for a redesign of teacher
16 and principal evaluation and performance
17 reviews.

18 We are excited about this opportunity
19 to partner with the state as we work together on
20 these reforms and we are confident that
21 Massachusetts will once again be among the first
22 states you will select for Race to the Top:

1 high standards, strong data systems, legislation
2 that creates a flexibility to intervene and
3 collaboration to achieve college and career
4 success.

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Thank you,
6 Superintendent.

7 So I'll close with this. Why
8 Massachusetts? Why now?

9 So number one, we're already doing the
10 work. We've learned from lessons. We've
11 learned lessons from our previous work.

12 We have a unified leadership team which
13 I hope you'll have a concrete sense of today.
14 We have a strong history of effective
15 collaboration.

16 We will do reform with our educators,
17 not to them. We will have a statewide impact.
18 We're committed to better results. We are
19 ready.

20 Thank you for your time today and we'll
21 be pleased to respond to your questions.

22 REVIEWER #1: So thank you. I think we

1 have questions, of course, that we've prepared
2 and the we've selected the questions to kind of
3 probe areas that we're not as clear about and to
4 give you an opportunity. We're going to try to
5 make our questions really short and encourage
6 you to make your answers short, too, just like
7 this last 30 minutes flew by, the next hour will
8 fly by, too. So I'm just going to jump in.

9 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Sure.

10 REVIEWER #1: And, again, thank you.
11 Section D-5, providing effective support, you
12 talked about working with the field to identify
13 highest-priority knowledge and skills and to map
14 these specific programs and activities and
15 developing and piloting a professional system.

16 The part I want to get to is -- the
17 part I want to get to is you then go on to talk
18 about holding LEAs and providers accountable by
19 conducting surveys and publishing the results.

20 So this is just to get your mind clued
21 into the present proposal. So two questions:
22 The first one is why this method of

1 accountability, and the second one is can you
2 tell me where in your proposal the department --
3 where is the measure for accountability for the
4 department?

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Absolutely. And
6 I'm going to turn to Deputy Commissioner Baehr
7 in a second.

8 Our accountability is laid out at the
9 department level in terms of the goals that
10 we've set.

11 And we have committed to developing
12 within the agency an office whose responsibility
13 -- and they report directly to me -- whose
14 responsibility is the implementation of our
15 proposal both internally and externally,
16 coordination across the internal parts of our
17 department, offices of our department and
18 holding us internally accountable as sort of an
19 organizational development kind of capacity
20 giving us feedback on our progress against
21 goals, where we're succeeding, where we're not
22 and where we need to make adjustments.

1 So we are committed to implementing
2 that office -- that's already under way -- that
3 will keep giving us feedback and that will hold
4 us accountable internally for implementation
5 against plan and for intended results, because
6 you can implement and not have the intended
7 results.

8 So our commitment is to be facile and
9 be willing to reallocate resources internally
10 and understand where we're getting traction,
11 where we're not.

12 Now, on the professional development
13 piece specifically, I'm going to ask Deputy
14 Commissioner Baehr.

15 DEP. COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Thank you,
16 Mitch.

17 I think we're well aware that there are
18 -- there's a lot of money spent by districts and
19 by the state for professional development and
20 very little evaluation of its impact.

21 So one of the strategies in our
22 proposal is to use the National Staff

1 Development Council criteria for looking at
2 professional development to develop tools and
3 processes for evaluating the professional
4 development first that's offered through Race to
5 the Top, so to subject the professional
6 development that we are offering in terms of the
7 foundational professional development described
8 in our grant to that kind of evaluation, then
9 develop the -- test the tools out on ourselves,
10 on our own professional development in
11 collaboration and sharing the results with
12 districts, and then turning those tools into
13 tools that can and will be expected to be used
14 at the district level. So we'll integrate into
15 -- we're integrating into our district
16 standards.

17 We have a district review process.
18 It's a comprehensive process looking at all
19 facets of school district operation.

20 The law has us doing 40 district
21 reviews a year. Those district standards
22 include a whole section on human resource

1 development.

2 One of them has to do with professional
3 development. Within that is an indicator
4 related to effectively assessing the impact of
5 professional development on educator practice.

6 We'll be providing the tools. We'll be
7 describing that as a best practice so that
8 districts can self-assess against that.

9 And we expect that by the end of Race
10 to the Top, fully 80 percent of our districts will
11 have had experience using the evaluation tools
12 for professional development and they will also
13 know that they're embedded -- that their use or
14 use of something comparably rigorous is an
15 expectation in the district review process for
16 our district accountability process.

17 REVIEWER #1: When you say 80 percent
18 of the districts, you expect that 80 percent --
19 why that number?

20 DEP. COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Eighty
21 percent of the participating districts. I just
22 want to make sure that they're districts

1 participating in Race to the Top.

2 Because we have six regional district
3 and school and assistant centers now established
4 as of this fall, we have the capacity to reach
5 into districts that we haven't had before.

6 And because we expect many of the
7 districts to be accessing one or more of the
8 foundational professional development services
9 and programs that we offer, we are in a position
10 to require the use of tools to evaluate the
11 impact.

12 So districts will see the use, they'll
13 see its potential power for helping them know
14 how to allocate resources and to understand the
15 impact.

16 And because it will be a compelling
17 resource, and because ultimately they'll be
18 compelled to use something at least this good
19 when they're doing their own -- preparing for
20 their district review, we fully expect that this
21 will be -- 80 percent will actually be a low
22 percentage.

1 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: I know the
2 Secretary wants to make a comment. Just one
3 other point is that one of the outcomes of this
4 will be a preferred provider list, so we will
5 narrow those based on evidence who are
6 delivering PD that's making a difference.

7 SECRETARY REVILLE: Just quickly too
8 jump back to the departmental accountability
9 question, the Governor mentioned it in his
10 letter, and the Board of Elementary and
11 Secondary Education is also going to be holding
12 the Department accountable for its performance
13 here.

14 We have a report coming up on
15 proficiency gaps, for example, in the month of
16 April. We've been doing some work on dropouts
17 and setting some goals in that regard.

18 We would fully expect, were we to
19 receive this grant, to have a set of indicators
20 to which we'd periodically hold the Department
21 accountable.

22 REVIEWER #2: Could I just clarify one

1 thing. The district review process that you
2 referred to that's mandatory, is that in the new
3 legislation or is that from the 1993
4 legislation?

5 DEP. COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Actually,
6 neither. In the summer of 1998, new legislation
7 was passed that brought the full responsibility
8 for district reviews back to the Department
9 after a ten-year absence. So the Department re-
10 assumed that responsibility. It had
11 responsibility for school reviews in the past.
12 It adopted district reviews and took on that
13 role.

14 SECRETARY REVILLE: Just to correct the
15 date, 2008. It had -- that responsibility for
16 district review had been outside the Department
17 until 2008. It was brought back in.

18 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: That is correct.

19 REVIEWER #3: I have a couple of
20 questions about your preparation programs/plan.

21 In your proposal, you talk about
22 improving the effectiveness of the preparation

1 program through what you called the preparation
2 program report card.

3 Could you expand on that a little bit,
4 please?

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Deputy
6 Commissioner Baehr, I'm going to ask you to take
7 that.

8 DEP. COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Sure. We
9 have a -- you know from the application we have
10 a range of preparation programs.

11 Fully, 15 percent of our graduates --
12 of our newly licensed educators have been
13 prepared in alternative programs.

14 So we have a range of providers for
15 programs. We have district-based programs,
16 higher-ed. programs, association-sponsored
17 programs.

18 And we have now a program approval
19 process that is more superficial than we would
20 like and that is not built on the impact of the
21 graduates of the program on student learning.

22 So a central part of the report card,

1 not the only part, but a central part of the
2 report card will be the impact of the graduates
3 of the programs on student learning. And so we
4 are putting together now the capacity to do
5 that.

6 And you can see -- you saw on the grant
7 some of the various pieces that we're putting
8 together to be able to do that.

9 And we'll be working with the
10 preparation programs to develop all the indices
11 that will be used in that report card. We want
12 it to be a fair, transparent system that all the
13 preparation programs can aspire to meet the
14 standards.

15 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: If I could
16 just add to that, in Boston, we have the Boston
17 Teacher's Residency Program, which is approved by
18 the state. It is an alternative licensure
19 program.

20 We train about a hundred teachers a
21 year. We don't see it as the only strategy. We
22 also have Teach for America, but I think that

1 the point is we believe that there has to be
2 multiple strategies to build the teacher
3 workforce that we want to see and that, long-
4 term, will be able to particularly work, I
5 think, in our urban centers and in our
6 turnaround schools where we really need very
7 experienced and effective teachers to work with
8 our lowest-performing students.

9 The state has been very supportive of
10 that, and that the state also has a program to
11 support us in the preparation and training of
12 English -- teachers who serve our English
13 language learner population.

14 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Just there's
15 three hallmarks that are really driving our
16 approach on teacher preparation and revamping
17 the approval process.

18 One is stronger relationships between
19 institutions of higher ed. and local districts;
20 second is more practice-based programs; and the
21 third is learning the distinction between
22 preparation and induction and stronger linkages

1 between preparation and the first two or three
2 years on the job.

3

4 REVIEWER #3: All right. Let me
5 rephrase my question a little bit because, you
6 know, I appreciate the diversity of programs for
7 preparation.

8 I'm really looking at the value added
9 aspect and, you know, there are typically, I
10 don't know, two or three models out there of
11 value added that are being tried.

12 And I guess I needed to hear a little
13 bit more about that value added model.

14 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Oh, absolutely.
15 And Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus really has
16 spearheaded the development of what we're
17 referring to as a growth model. We can argue
18 about what's the right classification of the
19 model, but essentially we're looking at year-to-
20 year gains at the individual student level
21 through our testing system and the question that
22 we're asking -- and those gains can be rolled up

1 in any aggregation, to the teacher level, to a
2 subgroup level, to a grade school level, to a
3 district level, backwards to the preparation
4 institution of the teachers who had these
5 students, and the essential question that our
6 growth model is asking is compared to students
7 with similar prior achievement records,
8 achievement histories, what kind of gains are we
9 seeing for this particular student? Is it
10 typical of what we see, is it less than what
11 typically would see for a student with a similar
12 prior history, is it more than what we've seen?
13 And we report that out on a percentile basis.

14 REVIEWER #3: So what model -- I mean,
15 obviously, you're not just doing the scores --
16 raw scores. What's the model you're using to do
17 that?

18 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: So -- Deputy
19 Commissioner.

20 DEP. COMMISSIONER NELLHAUS: The model
21 that we adopted is a model, what they've been
22 doing in Colorado. It's called the School Growth

1 Percentile Growth Model and it's just what the
2 Commissioner described. It looks at students
3 via test scores and reports the percentile
4 growth they made compared to other students with
5 similar test score histories.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: If I could
7 just add to it, to give an example of the power
8 of it and how it's going to help us look back at
9 teacher preparation programs, in Lowell where I
10 was until two years ago superintendent, Lowell
11 is now looking at -- has one of the schools
12 that's been identified statewide as one of the
13 lowest-performing schools in the state. So it's
14 a school that is now one of our turnaround
15 schools.

16 The faculty there is confronting the
17 fact that a nearby school in the city with a
18 very similar demographic profile had student
19 growth -- an average student growth percentile
20 radically higher than their school. So the
21 confrontation with sort of the brutal facts of
22 impact on student learning is something that

1 they're all looking at and saying, "Okay, wait.
2 If that other school can do it, what do we need
3 to be doing differently that can yield the same
4 results?" So we're able to use this now to
5 identify some very strong performing schools in
6 the state. For example, we just identified 36
7 using two years of history from the growth
8 model. We identified 36 schools in the
9 Commonwealth that seemed to be having unusually
10 strong results with English language learners.
11 So they used the growth model and saw the other
12 measure. But the growth model was at the center
13 of it. So we've got 36 schools that seem
14 markedly different in outcomes for English
15 language learners. We're now sending teams into
16 the district and their schools -- those schools
17 to understand what are the district practices
18 that are contributing to that, what are the
19 school practices, which seem to be contributing
20 to that, we'll roll that up into an analysis
21 that will we then will be able to use as we
22 identify best practice, as we go and look at

1 other schools practices, et cetera. So the
2 potency --

3 REVIEWER #3: Who does that analysis?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: The
5 Department.

6 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: But I think
7 each individual school and district, because I'm
8 also looking at the growth data and I'm looking
9 at the schools that seem to have higher growth
10 data even though their overall scores aren't
11 great, and we're going into those to say what's
12 going on here, what have they done. So I think
13 that it works both at the state level and at the
14 school district level.

15 Another way that we've used it is this:
16 We have something called Acceleration Academy.
17 It's extra time either with spring break or
18 winter break where we give a really concentrated
19 set of work that helps students catch up.

20 And in terms of getting teachers to
21 participate, we had like 500 teachers apply for
22 70 positions. So we can go back and look at the

1 growth data and help us select the teachers from
2 the pool that promise the best growth for those
3 students.

4 So it helps us to really put our most
5 exemplary instructors with the students who
6 really need the help the most.

7 REVIEWER #2: In your opening remarks
8 you referred to giving everybody a place at the
9 design table.

10 And there's some language in your
11 proposal that suggests that you've got some
12 labor relations issues around some of your
13 reform proposals.

14 I suppose we're trying to understand
15 what sort of response you expect from your
16 workforce to the quite significant changes about
17 accountability and performance evaluation that
18 you're proposing to introduce.

19 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: And I'm going to
20 encourage the Superintendent also to maybe
21 anchor the response with the specifics of what
22 you're dealing with in Boston, but we've been

1 very explicit in our discussions with our
2 teacher unions and our superintendents and our
3 school committees, Reviewer #2, regarding the
4 expectation. So one expectation that's non-
5 negotiable is a revamped teacher evaluation
6 process and that process has to incorporate at a
7 minimum measures of student achievement
8 including the state test scores and growth in
9 those state test scores where they're available
10 -- and it can go beyond that. It doesn't have
11 to be limited to that as the measure of student
12 achievement -- evaluations of supervisors and
13 they have to be based on at least three
14 summative categories, evidence of content
15 knowledge, of professional skills, of ongoing
16 upgrading of one's skills, professional
17 development, those are the non-negotiables that
18 are required in that regard.

19 Superintendent.

20 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: Well, I think
21 that the Boston Teacher's Union that we work
22 with most closely is an affiliate of the

1 American Federation of Teachers.

2 I think for all of us it was gratifying
3 that Randi Weingarten did support the notion of
4 connecting teachers' evaluations with student
5 performance and we certainly are engaged in
6 conversation with our Teachers' Union.

7 We believe that we have to be in
8 partnership with the Teachers' Union to get the
9 kind of results that we want to see.

10 So just like the state sees us as a
11 partnership, I think we, as well, see it as a
12 partnership. We do think that the ed. reform
13 bill provides us some flexibilities in terms of
14 placing and incentivizing teachers to work in our
15 lowest-performing schools and we also believe
16 that we have a responsibility to make sure that
17 we put top leaders in those schools that want to
18 work collaboratively.

19 I think I said earlier leadership
20 matters, but leadership teams matter more and I
21 believe that what we are seeing in the work that
22 we're doing with our schools that are performing

1 best is that there's a collective efficacy among
2 the teachers and the leadership where the belief
3 system, the values, the hard work and the sort
4 of do whatever it takes attitude permeates the
5 entire school community. And I think we're
6 trying to work to develop those kinds of both
7 teacher and principal leaders.

8 We met with the Teachers' Union around
9 peer assistance review processes and we're
10 looking at models from around the country.

11 We've recently required of the National
12 Council of Teacher Quality Review which provided
13 very specific data back to us about how the
14 system works against the kind of quality
15 evaluation.

16 So it's not just the Teachers' Union
17 embedded in the bureaucracy itself and in the
18 system approaches we use. We work against
19 trying to achieve the goal sometimes ourselves.
20 So I believe that the system has to change, that
21 the conversation between teachers and school
22 leaders has to change and the district's office

1 has to see its role in facilitating that
2 conversation.

3 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Mr. Secretary.

4 SECRETARY REVILLE: Just a quick
5 comment.

6 I've spent a lot of time as a
7 commissioner at the state level working with the
8 state unions and other constituency
9 organizations.

10 And I think, you know, on the one hand,
11 we acknowledge that we've gotten fantastic
12 results and come out in the lead on so many
13 indicators in a highly unionized state.

14 At the same time, we're sort of
15 unflinching in our conviction that the old way
16 of doing things, that the existing system that
17 we have really doesn't fit the realities of the
18 21st century.

19 So we've got to change and we know
20 we've got to change in big ways to improve the
21 quality of instruction, to build a genuine
22 teaching profession, to build data systems that

1 support teachers, to take into account factors
2 outside of school that influence performance.
3 So we're very firm with our constituents about
4 the need to do the change.

5 We're clear that we don't view teachers
6 as the problem. That's not our theory of
7 action, that we've got a teacher competency
8 problem.

9 We've got instructional problems;
10 we've got performance problems; we've got
11 systems problems. And we need to work together
12 with them on that, but we're not at all relaxed
13 about the need to do it.

14 We've got a sense of urgency that this
15 needs to happen, so we'd rather do it with them,
16 but we're going to do it one way or another.

17 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Just one
18 additional piece.

19 You know, our teachers understand that
20 it's -- the typical approach to getting feedback
21 through the supervision and evaluation process
22 is not a strong one and just too many teachers

1 are not getting good feedback.

2 So we've -- you know, they've agreed to
3 enter into this work with us because they know
4 that we're headed in this direction and they'd
5 rather be at the table than not.

6 It also helps that we have some
7 existence proofs in the state. Superintendent
8 Johnson talked about how they're selecting
9 teachers for the acceleration program.

10 Springfield, Massachusetts, which is a
11 well-known example in the state, has used
12 evidence of individual teacher's effectiveness
13 with students as a selection method, as a way of
14 giving teachers opportunities to be part of
15 school improvement teams, to take on teacher
16 coaching responsibilities, so to do a better job
17 of using the evaluation system and evidence of
18 student growth as a way to identify those who
19 are really getting the job done and employing
20 them more strategically and intentionally in
21 helping others.

22 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: I would

1 acknowledge that we have challenges to face as
2 we look at issues of time, how time gets used,
3 and the need for our students to have more time,
4 as well as our teachers to have more time in an
5 environment where there's limited resources and
6 we have to, I think, have those discussions.

7 The new ed. reform legislation does
8 incorporate design teams and each school has to
9 have a design team and that design team also
10 includes teacher representation from the school,
11 union representation from the Teachers' Union
12 itself.

13 And so I think that it recognizes that
14 this has to be a collective effort as we move
15 forward.

16 But I do think -- and I say often --
17 the monopoly is over and so we have to encourage
18 and persuade the parent who lives across the
19 street from us to choose our school.

20 And we have to understand that if we
21 don't perform well and if we don't have results,
22 and I think the Teachers' Union shares this

1 thought, that we won't have the students that we
2 currently serve today.

3 REVIEWER #4: Good afternoon. So I
4 appreciate in the application the very sort of
5 central that you give to the need for
6 this to happen locally. The people that are going
7 to be implementing these systems are the ones
8 that, perhaps, develop it for this investment.

9 But I want to ask you to talk a little
10 bit more about the state's role in sort of
11 driving reform, rather than just facilitating
12 these conversations at the local level.

13 So specifically for me, it was great in
14 your opening comments to say that this stuff is
15 not negotiable because I walked away from the
16 application kind of having a question about
17 that.

18 And I want to know sort of what does
19 that mean for you when you're talking about
20 these difficult conversations where, you know,
21 we're all using the language now around multiple
22 measures of teacher effectiveness, but when we

1 actually get down to the nitty-gritty, there
2 will be some intractable situations.

3 And what's the state role when you get
4 to that point in time?

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Right. Well,
6 that point in time is now and, you know, there's
7 kind of two levels of this.

8 One is sort of the day-to-day
9 interaction that we have with our districts in
10 an ongoing way and then there's sort of the
11 legal framework, the statute that the Secretary
12 talked about up front and the regulations that
13 we're promulgating as we speak and the processes
14 that Superintendent Johnson is implementing as
15 we speak in Boston.

16 There's a lot of incentive for folks to
17 take on the transformational work that's needed.
18 We have a very hard-nosed achievement gap bill
19 that was just passed that gives the locals the
20 opportunity to get it right and they've got
21 three years to get it right, to do the school
22 turnaround that's needed.

1 The state's role in that process is to
2 be at the table for the design of the plan, to
3 help bring resources to bear, expertise, not
4 just dollars because it will be school
5 improvement dollars through a competitive
6 process, but also bring expertise to the table.

7 I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner
8 Baehr to talk about our whole turnaround
9 approach where we think we have a core role in
10 terms of finding those partners, building those
11 partners and making them available to our
12 districts.

13 But if the district at the local level
14 can't achieve a major change in those turnaround
15 schools in three years, then the state takes
16 over in terms of a receivership kind of role and
17 it's the state's responsibility to then turn
18 things around, implement a plan, bring in the
19 staffing that's needed, implement the changes
20 that are needed.

21 But let's talk about our role in terms
22 of the turnaround process.

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: So in the
2 turnaround, we're creating the level four school
3 because in our system we have five levels of
4 accountability, so this is level four.

5 So Superintendent Johnson and eight
6 other superintendents are the nine districts in
7 the level four network. And the level four
8 network is working with the state to identify
9 the design strategies that are going to be used.

10 We are focusing attention on 3 -- at
11 the start of the work on 3 of the 11 essential
12 conditions of school effectiveness that we put
13 in the application, one having to do with
14 effective use of data, so tier instruction and
15 data; the second having to do with expanded
16 learning opportunities for the students in the
17 schools, so their really effective use of
18 additional time. There are plenty of examples
19 of ineffective use of expanded time, so this is
20 focusing on really productive use of the time;
21 and the third is a systematic way of addressing
22 youngsters' health and behavior needs which is,

1 as Secretary Reville described, one of the
2 missing pieces form ed. reform one.

3 So we're working to identify strong
4 priority providers that can work with the
5 districts in this.

6 We're knitting together -- the state
7 role is to knit together those partners so that
8 they actually can speak the same language
9 because we know that for many of the schools,
10 the number of partners is not a problem. It's
11 the partners actually working together in a
12 strategic design and knowing what each other is
13 up to and really complimenting each other's
14 efforts is critical.

15 So we think there's a powerful state role to
16 bring the proven providers, the ones we know are
17 strong, bring them together so that they know
18 what each other is doing and then being very
19 rigorous in setting the standards for the design
20 plans of very effective use of partners.

21 And then we think -- we know that there
22 are district systems of support that are needed

1 to support accelerated improvement and to
2 sustain that improvement.

3 And all of our district review work
4 statewide over the last decade has pointed to
5 three key areas, so we're focusing at the state
6 level in developing for these districts and
7 others resources to tackle issues of governance
8 and leadership, which absolutely get in the way
9 of success at the school level, HR systems,
10 human resource development from soup to nuts,
11 from recruiting to inducting to improving or
12 removing, to rewarding; and the third, the issue
13 of -- the whole area of community and family
14 engagement.

15 And the schools work best in
16 communities where the parents in the community
17 demand excellence every day and know how to
18 access the resources for that.

19 DEP. COMMISSIONER NELLHAUS: This whole
20 function of being tough at the state level and
21 what we mean by reform extends not just to the
22 turnaround plans, but also to the plans that the

1 Commissioner will be approving from each of the
2 districts it receives through the formula
3 funding on this.

4 And we've set a high bar. When the
5 Commissioner talks about this work being right
6 now, just a little anecdote to illustrate that.

7 He and I were in visiting with
8 legislative leaders just during this past week
9 anticipating the time that will come when the
10 Commissioner is unwilling to approve a plan from
11 a particular district and they go to the
12 legislature to appeal, and trying to educate the
13 legislative leadership on why we don't want them
14 to become the Court of Appeals when we have to
15 make tough decisions on local plans.

16 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: I'm not sure
17 we're answering your question, but I want to add
18 one more piece because you sort of talked -- my
19 comments were on the regulatory responsibility.

20 But we're also very cognizant of where
21 we as a state agency have what I call a
22 comparative advantage over each district trying

1 to carry out the reform agenda that's outlined
2 in this proposal.

3 So on teacher evaluation, for example,
4 we need to bring expertise to the table,
5 resources to the table.

6 I've had conversations with state
7 leadership, both the AFT affiliate and NEA
8 affiliate, and those conversations have spilled
9 over to the nationals and whether or not we can
10 bring some of the efforts that are happening
11 nationally to the table to help districts think
12 through the expectations we have around
13 evaluation.

14 Likewise, around curriculum and
15 instruction, Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus is
16 working with our districts. We have, for
17 example, Boston and Springfield both have made
18 commitments to invest in interim assessment
19 projects with vendors and we have through the
20 Race to the Top application talked to those
21 districts about how can we pool the separate
22 district resources and bring to bear some of the

1 Race to the Top resources and do something that
2 no district on its own is going to able to do as
3 well as we could do collectively pooling
4 resources which are both fiscal and the kind of
5 expertise and design capability.

6 REVIEWER #1: And let me just say I
7 know how difficult it is to sort of answer
8 hypothetical questions about implementation,
9 especially when you're committed to letting the
10 LEAs and their partners figure out a lot of this
11 work, so I know that's a difficult thing to do.
12 Maybe --

13 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Okay, I'm sorry.
14 Go ahead.

15 REVIEWER #1: I was going to say one
16 other sort of extension of that line of
17 questioning for me is, you know, it seems to me
18 that a lot of the teacher and principal support
19 work is going to rely on these pilot districts
20 that you're going to work with and that you're
21 really counting on them and that work to sort of
22 develop best practices.

1 But I feel like there's a little bit of
2 detail lacking about how the state is going to
3 move that out to the rest of the districts that
4 are involved in the Race to the Top proposal and
5 sort of what your role is in making sure the
6 districts do adopt these systems once they're
7 developed.

8 I mean, hopefully, you know, we're
9 optimistic about that development and when you
10 get it out there.

11 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Right, fair
12 enough. I would ask Deputy Commissioner Baehr
13 in a second.

14 I do want to add to the kind of
15 accountability question that we were asked
16 earlier, how will we hold ourselves accountable
17 for the results.

18 That extends to how we'll intersect
19 with districts on accountability for
20 implementing these initiatives.

21 And we've outlined a case study
22 approach to -- a caseload approach to that, so

1 with our larger districts, there will be senior
2 staff members who are responsible as a point of
3 connection between the state agency and the
4 district who will be responsible for monitoring
5 the implementation of the Race to the Top
6 initiatives at the district level.

7 In smaller districts, it will be less
8 senior staff member who may have a portfolio of
9 districts. So we do plan to track the progress
10 of individual districts against this and their
11 progress in implementing and hold them
12 accountable for that and not just flow funds for
13 the sake of flowing funds, but needing to see
14 progress.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Well, in
16 the end, there will be regulations that
17 districts will need to ensure that their
18 evaluation systems measure up.

19 But rather than do the regulations now
20 before we know what those regulations should
21 really encompass, we're going to engage besides
22 the ten districts so that we get a lot of

1 action.

2 We're going to be working again using
3 our regional structure to bring together the
4 leadership teams, union and management, from the
5 districts in each region throughout the first
6 and second year of the Race to the Top plan so
7 that we can bring the research that we're
8 learning from the national efforts, the examples
9 that are beginning to develop in the pilot
10 districts pull examples of both best practices
11 and implementation challenges that districts
12 have seen already; and in order to seed their
13 conversations, in order to get the conversations
14 going, in order to move districts along in the
15 conversations so that they are really ready to
16 take advantage of the learning that's coming in
17 a more accelerated way from the pilots so that
18 when regulations are promulgated, they've help
19 shape them and they'd know what they require,
20 rather than treating them then as a compliance
21 exercise four year from now.

22 We're really trying to create the

1 environment in which people then look forward to
2 the opportunity to show how their work actually
3 can measure up.

4

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Let me add one
6 more thing to this, and Superintendent Johnson
7 may want to jump in.

8 You know, this was a piece again that I
9 alluded to in my opening comments was a major
10 point of discussion, of consternation
11 particularly for our teacher unions.

12 And as part of the process, we worked
13 with the state unions to outline what that four-
14 year series of work would be around the teacher
15 evaluation piece: design work in the first year,
16 some tryouts -- small-scale tryouts at the
17 district level in the second year. And in our
18 smaller districts that might be a regional
19 approach to the tryouts because we do have some
20 very small districts.

21 By the third year, it will be a full-
22 scale pilot with implementation expected in the

1 fourth year. We turn-keyed that series into an
2 actual document that got distributed to all of
3 the districts and all of the union leadership at
4 the district level throughout Massachusetts. It
5 was part of what they needed to understand was
6 the expectation for them before they were
7 willing to commit or not commit to the agenda.

8 Superintendent.

9 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: Well, I was
10 going to speak to maybe the larger question
11 about how one scales up or how one shares best
12 practices from these learnings and I think we as
13 an enterprise, not Massachusetts exclusively,
14 have had a difficult time in public education
15 thinking about the scale-up and I think of even
16 our work.

17 Right now because of our work with our
18 turnaround schools, when we looked at the
19 charter schools in Boston, they out-perform us
20 specifically in middle school mathematics.

21 And so we've been looking at the
22 schools. They have populations that look like

1 ours and trying to say to ourselves what is it
2 they are doing that we could be doing?

3 And one of the schools that we were
4 working with the state on with a turnaround,
5 we've gotten one of the charter schools that has
6 middle schools and they have really good math
7 scores to be a partner with us on our turnaround
8 strategy because we believe that there might be
9 lessons to learn and, clearly, there's evidence
10 that they have best practice.

11 We also belong to a Boston Consortium
12 Network which includes the Archdiocese of the
13 Charter Schools that joined with the inner district Metco
14 Program, as well as private independent schools.

15 And what we are doing is we're sharing
16 best practices across that team of people and
17 we're also visiting schools together. So we're
18 going into a charter school, we're going into a
19 catholic school, we're going into public schools
20 and looking to see what are the lessons that we
21 can learn, because it's not just about the
22 turnaround that we're trying to learn, but it's

1 about what is working in our system of schools
2 and how do we -- across the networks that the
3 state has set up, how do we share those
4 regardless of what the -- you know, the sort of
5 nomenclature of the school's designation.

6 Ultimately, we want to know how to
7 teach kids math, but we want kids to be able to
8 do eighth grade algebra. So I mean, how do you
9 learn from what other people are doing in a way
10 that helps you share the --

11 REVIEWER #3: And how does that get to
12 the classroom level?

13 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: How does it?
14 The initial conversations have been clearly with
15 the leaders, but we believe that at these
16 initial visits, teachers sit and talk to us, the
17 team of us that have been going, a cross-
18 functional team.

19 And so I think some of the learning is
20 around the sharing of what people see. But we
21 believe that we can do some joint professional
22 development with the state with some of the

1 networks.

2 One example that the state has, they
3 have a mathematics network and they help to
4 draft job descriptions for mathematics coaches
5 and those help us all to improve the kind of
6 whether literacy coach or math coach work that
7 is undertaken.

8 So I think that in some ways some of
9 this is uncharted water, particularly when
10 you're talking about working with charters and
11 public schools.

12 In some ways I think that this whole
13 notion of how one scales up has not been
14 successful. So, again, I think there's new ways
15 of thinking about the work that should help us
16 get results that we haven't gotten.

17 SECRETARY REVILLE: Also, as part of
18 this proposal, we've created at all levels of
19 education these regional readiness centers.

20 We've got six of them that bring
21 together early childhood educators, K-12
22 educators and higher educators convening around

1 subject areas, convening around particular
2 problems, like English language learners or
3 students with disabilities.

4 They're places for the articulation of
5 standards, they're places for the sharing of
6 best practices for professional development and
7 for dissemination.

8 The Department's school assistance
9 centers will line up with these regional
10 readiness centers that will be an important part
11 of a strategy to build teacher capacity and
12 scale up best practice.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: We're also
14 learning from the Race to the Top experience of
15 federal government holding out a rather large
16 potential pot of money and I think that the
17 Department of Education was very pleasantly
18 surprised at how many states raced to be in the
19 competition.

20 We have about 96 districts that have
21 one or more schools that are eligible to compete
22 for a portion of the school turnaround grant

1 dollars.

2 So we intend to open a competition
3 among those -- so it's not directly Race to the
4 Top, but it is because the transformation model
5 requires precisely some of the changes we've
6 been talking about. The transformation model
7 requires it.

8 We're going to have a larger
9 competition and I think there will be some
10 similar effects; that is, a number of districts
11 will organize to make proposals, many more than
12 there will be funds to grant, but that that
13 process of meeting a high standard for a strong
14 application generates will, knowledge and the
15 skill to undertake some of the very same changes
16 that you proposed in the grant with or without
17 the grant.

18 So we think that's another way to
19 compel knowledge of, interest in, and skill at
20 implementing some of these very challenging
21 pieces of changed practice including how to
22 develop a fair way to incorporate student

1 learning -- impact on student learning into the
2 evaluation system.

3 REVIEWER #4: I don't want to -- I feel
4 I'm monopolizing here, but I have just one last
5 question. You brought up sort of the union
6 piece again and I think you've actually done a
7 fairly adequate job of addressing that. But my
8 last question is, since you brought it up, I
9 mean, there was a decision made, obviously, to
10 put language into the model MOU about the
11 collective bargaining agreements, which is, I
12 think for me, was what raised the questions.

13 And then like I said, I think today in
14 your comments you've been pretty clear about how
15 you see this role.

16 But just going back to that moment in
17 time -- and I think that you should be commended
18 that you got a hundred percent support from your
19 unions, but that language is obviously, you
20 know, pretty strong and provides what could be
21 considered as a pretty big out on some of these
22 really tough issues.

1 And I was just wondering if you had any
2 comments about that.

3 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Well, you know,
4 I'd say a couple of things.

5
6 One is that -- and I'm not sure if
7 doing a fairly adequate job is the standard I
8 want to aspire to, but I remember being called a
9 savvy bureaucrat and I said, "Well, I should
10 probably take that as a compliment, rather than
11 just a bureaucrat."

12 What we said in that comment because --
13 what we said is nothing can be construed in
14 terms of the activities in a district and a
15 teacher's union locally is committing to take on
16 the development of new approaches can circumvent
17 state law and state requirements, including
18 regulations. So there's no a priori commitment
19 to implementing what hasn't been developed.

20 But what we also said was that this
21 process of developing these new evaluation
22 approaches that give more honest feedback to

1 teachers about whether they're moving student
2 achievement will give us the guidance in writing
3 regulations that will put the parameters around
4 the evaluation systems that have to be in place.
5 So that's the commitment that we made.

6 REVIEWER #2: Perhaps I could just move
7 you for a few minutes to the issue of teachers.

8 And you referred -- I think the
9 Superintendent referred to some alternative
10 pathways to preparation and particularly for
11 teachers.

12 But I'm interested in how you're going
13 about improving the supply of effective teachers
14 and leaders.

15 And you reference in your material, I
16 think, a request for a proposal. And we just
17 wanted to get a better understanding of your
18 thinking and what sort of priorities you have in
19 that area.

20 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: I'm going to
21 turn to Deputy Commissioner Baehr in a second,
22 but, you know, there's two basic approaches

1 outlined in our proposal.

2 One is a general improve the pipeline,
3 particularly in the high-need areas, and then
4 there's a second set of initiatives that are
5 proposed that are much more deliberately
6 targeted at our turnaround schools.

7 So I want you to address both of those.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Sure. So
9 we know that there are isolated pockets of
10 strong programs in Massachusetts. We know there
11 are some core ideas that have been tried out and
12 are yielding some seemingly strong results.
13 Boston Teacher Residency is an example.

14 When I left Lowell, I left 30 special
15 educators teaching in classrooms in Lowell who
16 had been paraprofessionals, who had -- through a
17 collaboration with the local community college
18 and the state college system had gone through a
19 practicum-based preparation program and were
20 filling a gaping hole in the district's needs.

21 And we know that that's replicated in
22 Worcester and some other places in the state.

1 We know there are some strong alternatives that
2 meet the criteria that we're trying to set up of
3 stronger connections with districts, stronger
4 practice-based, and we want to see the scaling
5 of those, as well as the -- into other parts of
6 the state because we have an equitable
7 distribution problem, as well.

8 So we know that they can't -- we need
9 to be able to scale those to other places and we
10 also need to invest in even stronger models.

11 So, again, this is using the Race to
12 Top strategy: put some dollars out there, some
13 high standards that describe the criteria that
14 we need the programs to do and let a range of
15 folks compete for it and then really highlight
16 those, the features, study them carefully and
17 then use the knowledge from those to feed back
18 into our program approval over the long haul, so
19 in terms of our sort of regular pipeline.

20 There's some other pieces. We've got
21 to do a better job of advertising and holding up
22 teaching as a profession worthy of the next

1 generation's commitment.

2 So there are some things we need to do
3 with public relations, with work at high schools
4 and at colleges of identifying teaching as a
5 really legitimate and strong proposal. It's
6 part of why you see an emphasis around working
7 conditions in our proposal.

8 In terms of the turnaround, it's a very
9 focused challenge around developing a cadre of
10 turnaround teacher and leaders and so we're
11 aiming to, by the end of four years, have around
12 450 teachers that we brought through a program.
13 So we designed the program, brought folks
14 through it, evaluated it, so we have a really
15 tested model.

16 But we then can scale at a more cost-
17 effective -- in a more cost-effective way when
18 the resources are diminished.

19 And the same thing with leaders where
20 we're looking both to do the turnaround for --
21 work with experienced leaders who have a set of
22 skills to learn the difference between what it

1 takes when you're doing a turnaround and then
2 backfill their positions so that we're not, you
3 know, in the Superintendent in Boston's case
4 taking 12 of her strongest principals from
5 elsewhere and moving them into these schools and
6 have no backfill for the schools that they've
7 departed from. Is that responsive to your --

8 REVIEWER #2: Yeah, surely.

9 JEFFREY NELLHAUS: One of the areas
10 has to do with our mid-career professionals that
11 want to come into teaching, our scientists, our
12 mathematicians who felt they had made their
13 contribution to that field, liked to teach.

14 They come into our schools, they can
15 get certified by passing our licensure test, but
16 they have very little training and support when
17 they come into schools and often they leave
18 after a year or two realizing what a tough job
19 it is.

20 So one thing we're going to do is to
21 help keep them there by developing strong
22 induction and support programs for those

1 individuals when they come into our schools.

2 So that's another way of increasing the
3 supply, if you will, by trying to mitigate the
4 number of people who come in and then leave.

5 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Just sort
6 of a general approach is having a better
7 understanding of our shortage area needs by
8 geographic area of the state and then knowing
9 that there's a set of strategies that have been
10 employed, but somewhat piecemeal in the state,
11 pre-collegiate, encouraging people to become
12 teachers, pathways for people in community
13 colleges, looking at paraprofessionals, teacher
14 aides particularly with second language
15 competency or special ed. assignments, career
16 changers and then scaling those initiatives that
17 address those areas' undergraduates who are in a
18 STEM field, STEM major who aren't thinking about
19 teaching and being much more intentional by
20 geographic area of scaling programs in those
21 various areas.

22 REVIEWER #2: I appreciate all three

1 responses, particularly the two references to
2 STEM, which is us.

3 But I'm also interested in the more
4 equitable distribution of effective teachers and
5 leaders. And you referenced a couple of times
6 in your earlier remarks about incentivizing
7 people to go on location.

8 Are you interested in or looking at
9 differential compensation, working conditions,
10 things like that, that might look at the more
11 equitable distribution of this very valuable
12 resource?

13 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: We most
14 definitely are. And, again, I'm going to turn
15 to Deputy Commissioner Baehr on this one.

16 DEP. COMMISSIONER BAEHR: Absolutely.
17 We know that that's essential. So we're working
18 with organizations such as Teach Plus.

19 We're working with community groups to
20 look at local banks able to provide some loan
21 forgiveness for some early home purchases under
22 a requirement they had for community development

1 that we think we can tie into our recruiting and
2 retaining effort, particularly in some of our
3 outlying cities that don't have the advantages
4 of Boston, of being the hub of so many
5 institutions of higher education.

6 So we're developing that strategy in
7 relation to particularly the turnaround teacher
8 work, absolutely.

9 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: So with our 12
10 schools that we identified as under-performing,
11 we really have worked very hard to choose the
12 best principals possible from our cadre of
13 principals, but we did have to move people.

14 We also believe that good teachers tend
15 to follow good leaders and so we perceived that
16 one major incentive for these high-quality
17 teachers to lead their school where they're
18 enjoying themselves is really based on the kind
19 of leadership we put in place.

20 But we also recognize that we are going
21 to be asking them for more time and so we are
22 asking people to commit to the kind of time that

1 it's really going to take.

2 We'll be working with the Teachers'
3 Union on compensation structure that is not
4 solely based on coming to the school, but on
5 results, because what we found is that in
6 schools where we just only created the front-end
7 incentive, people come, but then there's no
8 back-end incentive to reward them.

9 So in our turnaround strategy, a key
10 component is both for principal leaders, as well
11 as teachers. And Teach Plus, we're working with
12 them with two of our turnaround schools to bring
13 a cohort of teachers in; and the same thing with
14 Boston Teacher Residency, trying to bring a
15 cohort of teachers in the under-performing
16 schools so we can more carefully follow the
17 performance of students as it relates to the
18 preparation of those teachers, in particular.

19 SECRETARY REVILLE: One of the
20 key features of the legislation, one of the most
21 controversial features was to allow in the
22 turnaround situation at level four schools,

1 certainly level five schools, variances in the
2 teacher contract to allow for differentiating
3 compensation.

4 In the case, for example, one of the
5 cases that we contemplated, that we frequently
6 found high concentrations of novice teachers in
7 under-performing schools and if we needed to do
8 something at variance with the contract to
9 attract more experienced senior teachers to
10 teach in that environment, we wanted to be able
11 to offer those incentives and have encouraged
12 superintendents to think of the opportunity in
13 that way.

14 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: We also -- you
15 mentioned the working conditions and we believe
16 that's critical.

17 But leadership, I think, is part of it,
18 creating the conditions where teachers want to
19 be.

20 But we've also implemented a survey of
21 working conditions and climate in our schools
22 and with the cooperation and leadership of our

1 state unions and we're in the process of helping
2 schools, particularly our lowest performing
3 schools, look at that data and look at it in
4 ways that are actionable in terms of the
5 conditions for teachers.

6 The final piece that I would say to you
7 is that what I think is a pretty unique feature
8 of our -- the statute that was just passed is
9 that in these turnaround school situations, in
10 particular, there's also a very specific
11 requirement that the turnaround plan go beyond
12 just the school walls and address health and
13 human service needs of families in that catch
14 basin and has an obligation -- I'm the Secretary
15 of Education working with other secretariats in
16 the Commonwealth to bring services and resources
17 to bear in those areas.

18 In addition, we're dealing with an
19 elementary school to look at early childhood
20 pre-K services to those families, as well as
21 ensure that there's a full-day kindergarten
22 program there.

1 REVIEWER #3: I have a question about
2 sustainability and obviously a lot of attention
3 is on this award and a lot of high expectations
4 for implementing the kinds of reform that will
5 not only be modeled, but will be able to be
6 sustained.

7 And some of the ways that you would be
8 using the money are to build some structures and
9 support structures like the regional centers and
10 some of the support from the Department of
11 Education with some of the qualitative analyses
12 to help you get a better sense of what's working
13 and what's not working. Then four years from
14 now, or whenever, the money will go away.

15 Tell me how some of the reforms that
16 you hope to put in place in the next few years,
17 if you were awarded, will be able to be
18 sustained after the award.

19 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: I'm going to
20 turn to Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus in a
21 second, but, in general, we've tried to design
22 initiatives where the up-front costs are

1 development and institutionalization of both
2 policies and practices, as well as some concrete
3 infrastructures that will continue to pay
4 dividends afterwards.

5 DEP. COMMISSIONER NELLHAUS: Let me
6 give you a few examples. We're going to
7 actually build a number of technology platforms
8 which will exist beyond the terms of the grant.

9 So when it comes to a system to deliver
10 interim assessments, we're going to use this
11 grant to build that system and we're willing to
12 share that system with other states, by they
13 way.

14 We're also going to build a digital
15 library that will exist beyond the terms of the
16 grant.

17 So a lot of the investments that we're
18 making are to build content and to build
19 technology that will endure for the future.

20 And, you know, just in terms of the
21 interim assessment, because I've been here as
22 representing the assessments and -- standards

1 and assessments part of the proposal, just to
2 say that one thing we're going to be able to do
3 with this grant is leverage the hundreds of
4 released MCAS items that we've released -- items
5 that we released over the years to build that
6 interim assessment program.

7 So we're at a great advantage in that
8 we've built very, very high quality content for
9 an interim assessment system that I don't think
10 many states can match.

11 So there are a lot of ways we can build
12 on what we have to sustain it for the future.

13 SECRETARY NEVILLE: Just from the
14 standpoint of the executive and the legislature,
15 there has been a steadily increasing commitment
16 and understanding of budgetary challenges to
17 fund public education.

18 At the same time there's also a belief
19 that reform isn't necessarily always about
20 addition. Sometimes it's about subtraction.

21 And we've got some truth points in
22 here, some ways in which we sort of hope to

1 pilot and prove out more effective practices and
2 things that we're currently doing.

3 And part of the pressure that I think
4 will exist on the system will be due to stop
5 doing some things that aren't working in favor
6 of some things that we can show that do.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: I think the
8 strong emphasis in our proposal on evaluation
9 and assessment of results is going to lead to us
10 to be able to -- for example, in preparation
11 programs, we're going to be weeding out programs
12 that are not having strong results and we're
13 going to wind up with stronger programs that
14 both get better results and, therefore, we can
15 concentrate some resources on, instead of
16 resources being spread across a widely varying
17 quality programming.

18 The same thing with professional
19 development. We're going to probably -- we're
20 going to discover some things maybe that the
21 Department is not doing well enough in terms of
22 professional development, not getting the

1 results and we'll stop doing that.

2 That will yield resources that can be
3 brought to sustain some of the most promising
4 things that are developed at the district level
5 or at the state level.

6 So I think that this -- the focus on
7 evaluation of the Department's work and of the
8 professional development that's being done, the
9 evaluation of teaching and learning system, the
10 evaluation of programs are key to being able to
11 weed out.

12 And so there's going to be a
13 significant reallocation of resources, if we're
14 successful. If we're successful, there is going
15 to be a major reallocation of resources.

16 REVIEWER #3: That brings to mind a
17 question I had earlier that relates to this.

18 With your assessment systems, you know,
19 you sort of have a philosophy of, you know,
20 don't reinvent the wheel.

21 I mean, it looks like you have some
22 models out there that you plan to purchase and

1 implement locally.

2 And I'm trying to get a sense of, with
3 that comprehensive assessment system, how you
4 will be able to account for the growth models
5 that you're talking about and then interface it
6 with sort of that value added teacher education
7 model.

8 Have you sort of put those pieces
9 together yet?

10 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: Yes, absolutely.
11 So we're not talking about giving up the
12 summative of assessment that we administer,
13 which is the basis of the growth model. So that
14 remains. That's a core feature.

15 The interim assessments, we've
16 envisioned formative that are on the fly. We've
17 envisioned interim.

18 And we've talked about building those
19 and collecting the evidence that, in fact, they
20 are predictive, that they're predictive of
21 scores on the summative, that that's got to be
22 -- that has to be a critical feature.

1 But we would not use those results as
2 part of a calculus of the growth calculation.
3 The growth calculation would be a year-to-year
4 calculation.

5 And again, we can -- that will give us
6 the ability with the revamping of the teacher
7 databases, and thinking that it would with the
8 student databases, which we're in the process of
9 doing.

10 That will allow us to back map to the
11 teacher preparation institutions that the
12 teachers came from and, again, identify those
13 institutions whose graduates are getting much
14 better results with students, those that are
15 getting worse results, those that are getting
16 typical and begin to untangle.

17 Also, what are the features of the
18 institutions whose graduates are getting the
19 best results, and exiting those institutions
20 where results aren't good.

21 SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON: I just wanted
22 to add one little thought, though, to this

1 because I think it's also the database
2 predictive of student performance as being a
3 very useful piece of it, because if you can
4 predict which kids are going to be most likely
5 to either drop out or not be on track for
6 passing the test, you can intervene earlier.

7 And so I think this data piece and
8 whether it's with the early childhood and the
9 quality of early childhood programs or whether
10 it's at the high school level, the predictive
11 nature of assessments are really important.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAEHR: And there
13 are pieces in this, as well, that are sort of
14 this nuts and bolts stuff that's going to enable
15 us to do very powerful work in the future.

16 There's a thing I didn't even know what
17 it meant of the interoperability framework which
18 is going to turn a very static student
19 information system where we have collections
20 three times a year. It has a wide range of
21 student data.

22 Within a year, it's going to be tied --

1 it's all tied to the teacher, the education
2 database, it's tied to the licensure database,
3 the whole student database, all of that tied to
4 growth data and all of it in real-time data
5 collection.

6 So it's going to be a tool that's going
7 to be able to be used at the school and district
8 level all the time.

9 Right now, it's out-of-date after the
10 October 1st data collection for students and so
11 it's not the potent tool that it can be.

12 And so the results -- that's all going
13 to be left. It's not going cost a penny and
14 that alone, 80,000 educators in the Commonwealth
15 are going to have access to the most powerful
16 database of information about their kids'
17 learning, the kids' program.

18 It's going to be an extraordinary
19 resource for them and for us, from a policy
20 point of view, an evaluation point of view, most
21 importantly, a teacher and learning point of
22 view.

1 COMMISSIONER CHESTER: You know, if I
2 would be so bold as to kind of have to pick a
3 question that we were asked that's kind of a
4 core question and I think we sort of passed over
5 it. It was Reviewer #3, said, "How do you
6 ensure that all of this means change at the
7 classroom level across 70-80,000 teachers?"

8 That is the million dollar question or
9 in our case a 287 million dollar question. And
10 we think that -- you know, we think that giving
11 teachers more better honest feedback, the
12 evaluation process using the test results is a
13 major part of that, but it's not primarily about
14 finding the low performers and getting rid of
15 them because that alone, that's got to -- that
16 alone is not sufficient; right?

17 It's about supporting everybody to
18 improve and we've got a lot of emphasis in this
19 application on resources and bringing people
20 together around common problems and practice and
21 solutions that are getting traction.

22 It's about finding the teachers and the

