



Jeff Wulfson
Acting Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
From: Jeff Wulfson, Acting Commissioner

Date: March 16, 2018
Subject: Briefing for the March 26, 2018 Special Meeting and the March 27, 2018 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) will be on **Tuesday, March 27, 2018**, at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's offices at 75 Pleasant Street in Malden. The regular meeting will start at **8:30 a.m.** (coffee will be available at 8 a.m.) and adjourn by **1 p.m.** The Board will also hold a special meeting on **Monday, March 26, 2018, from 5:30-7:00 p.m.** at the Department's offices in Malden. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Helene Bettencourt at (781) 338-3120.

OVERVIEW

The topic for the Monday evening special meeting is competency-based and personalized learning. No votes will be taken at the special meeting. The business agenda for our regular meeting on Tuesday leads off with an update on the Lawrence Alliance for Education and the Holyoke Public Schools, followed by a discussion and possible vote on issues relating to school climate and safety. Several regulatory actions are on the agenda: initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment on proposed regulations relating to education of English learners; a final vote on amendments to the section of the special education regulations pertaining to students in foster care, to align with federal law; and discussion and a vote to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the regulations on accountability and assistance for schools and districts. Also on the business agenda are a charter school's request to appeal a decision of the commissioner, and a vote on recommended probationary conditions for a virtual school.

SPECIAL MEETING

Competency-Based and Personalized Learning – Discussion

At the Special Monday evening meeting, the Board will hear a panel presentation and engage in a dialogue with panel members and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) staff about personalized and competency-based learning. One goal of the meeting is to better understand personalized learning, competency-based learning, and their relevance to helping to close achievement, employability, and equity gaps in Massachusetts. Members of the panel will include teachers, principals, and students that will share their experiences with personalized learning. In addition, the Board will have the opportunity to discuss these topics with David O'Connor, Executive Director of The Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech Consortium (MAPLE), and David Ruff, Executive Director of The New England Consortium of Secondary Schools (NESSC), and hear brief overviews of their respective work in Massachusetts.

REGULAR MEETING

Comments from the Chair

Chair Sagan will report on current issues and activities.

Comments from the Commissioner

- 1. Leading the Nation celebration.** This year is the 25th anniversary of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, which increased and stabilized state aid to districts, established common learning expectations statewide, and made it easier to see where schools are doing well and where support might be needed. In honor of this anniversary year, the Department is coordinating the [Leading the Nation campaign](#), a celebration of public school student success in partnership with school districts across the state and more than a dozen education associations and organizations. Board members are cordially invited to the State House event scheduled for 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon on Thursday, April 5. In addition to the State House event, the celebration will include a week of local activities organized by school districts from May 7-11, as well as extensive social and traditional media outreach.
- 2. Update on students from Puerto Rico.** The Department has received confirmation of graduation requirements for displaced Puerto Rican high school juniors and seniors to substantially complete the Puerto Rico high school curriculum and earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma if they choose. School Districts received information on eligibility requirements as well as information on student enrollment reporting. In addition, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDOE) is developing a secure portal to provide a system to transfer transcripts between MA local districts and the PRDOE. At this time PRDOE is piloting the system with data management representatives from the Springfield and Worcester Public Schools.
- 3. Ways and Means hearing on FY2019 state education budget.** The Legislature's Ways and Means Committee will hold its hearing on the Governor's proposed education budget for FY2019 on Monday, March 19. Secretary Peyser and I will testify at the hearing. We will update the Board at the March 27 meeting.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Peyser will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

1. Level 5 Districts – Discussion

a. Lawrence Public Schools: Remarks from John Connolly, Chair of Lawrence Alliance for Education

On February 6, I announced the board members of the Lawrence Alliance for Education, the seven-member partnership board that will oversee the Lawrence Public Schools when Superintendent/Receiver Jeffrey C. Riley assumes his role as commissioner. The LAE will have the authorities granted to a receiver by state law, and with the commissioner's approval, it will appoint a superintendent to manage the district on a day-to-day basis and report to the LAE. The board itself will report to the commissioner and meet regularly in open session. At our meeting on March 27, the Board will hear from John Connolly, executive director of The 1647, Inc. in Boston, whom I have appointed to chair the Lawrence Alliance for Education.

b. Holyoke Public Schools: Progress Report by Supt./Receiver Steve Zrike

Dr. Stephen Zrike has been receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools since his appointment in June 2015. I have been pleased with Dr. Zrike's work on the district turnaround plan and his focus and commitment to the students and staff of the Holyoke Public Schools, and I have extended his employment contract through June 30, 2021. At our March 27 meeting, Dr. Zrike and Erin Linville, the district's Chief of Turnaround, will update the Board on Holyoke's academic progress, including an update on Morgan Full Service Community School, one of the four Level 5 schools.

2. School Climate and Safety – Discussion and Possible Vote

At our meeting last month, Chair Sagan commented on the tragic shooting at the high school in Florida and proposed a discussion on school safety, which we will do on March 27. The memo under Tab 2 summarizes Massachusetts laws relating to school safety and guns on school property, and describes trainings and website resources the Department has provided. At the March 27 meeting, a panel of school and emergency response personnel with expertise in emergency management planning in schools will present and respond to your questions. The Board will also consider member Ed Doherty's request to discuss and vote on a resolution opposing arming school teachers with guns as a strategy to prevent violence in schools.

3. English Learner Programs under the LOOK Act: Proposed Amendments to Regulations 603 CMR 4.00, 7.00, 14.00, 31.00, 44.00 – Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment

In December 2017 we briefed the Board on the new Language Opportunity for Our Kids (LOOK) Act, which was signed into law on November 22, 2017, as well as our pilot program to expand training for career vocational technical teachers who instruct English learners. This

month I am presenting to the Board, for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment, proposed regulations to implement the LOOK Act and to improve the instruction of English learners in career vocational technical programs. Details are included in the memo and attachments under Tab 3. With the Board's approval, we will solicit public comment on the proposed regulatory amendments and bring them back to the Board for final adoption in June 2018. Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske and other members of our staff will be at the meeting to answer your questions.

4. Amendments to Special Education Regulations, 603 CMR 28.10, to Align with ESSA Foster Care Provisions – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Final Regulation

In November 2017 the Board voted to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the Massachusetts special education regulations – specifically, 603 CMR 28.10 – pertaining to the assignment of school district responsibility for students with disabilities who are in foster care. The proposed amendments are intended to clarify programmatic and financial responsibility for the special education services of students in foster care and align our regulations with new provisions in federal law concerning students in foster care. The Department received comments on the proposed regulations, and we have made some adjustments; see the memo under Tab 4 for details. I recommend that the Board adopt the regulations as presented, with an effective date of July 1, 2018. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston; Teri Williams Valentine, Director of Special Education Planning and Policy; and Legal Counsel Josh Varon will be at the meeting on March 27 to answer your questions.

5. Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Accountability and Assistance for School Districts and Schools, 603 CMR 2.00 – Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment

I recommend that the Board vote to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to 603 CMR 2.00, the Regulations on Accountability and Assistance for School Districts and Schools. As we discussed at the December 2017 and January 2018 meetings of the Board, the proposed amendments are needed to implement the redesigned accountability system that the U.S. Department of Education approved as part of the Massachusetts state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Your materials include a memo summarizing the proposed amendments and a redlined version of the regulations. With the Board's approval, the Department will solicit public comment on the proposed amendments, review the comments and determine whether further changes are needed, and then bring the amendments back to the Board in June 2018 for final adoption. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston and Associate Commissioner Robert Curtin will be at the meeting on March 27 to answer your questions.

Charter Schools and Commonwealth Virtual Schools:

6. Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School's Request to Appeal Commissioner's Decision – Discussion and Possible Vote

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, a Commonwealth charter school located in Hadley, has requested that the Board review the decision I made in January 2018 not to support the school's August 2017 request to expand its enrollment. The memo under Tab 6 provides details. Representatives of the school will be at the March 27 meeting to provide brief remarks to

the Board regarding their appeal. Staff from the Department's Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign will be present to answer your questions.

7. Recommended Probationary Conditions for Greenfield Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School – Discussion and Vote

In February 2016, the Board renewed the certificate of the Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) for a three-year period from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2019. The Board also extended the school's probationary status and directed it to meet specified terms of probation. Based on an accountability review of GCVS that the Department conducted in December 2017, including the school's status in complying with the conditions placed on its certificate, I am recommending that the Board vote this month to extend GCVS's probation and impose a new set of conditions on the school's certificate for the remainder of the term, through June 30, 2019. Details are set forth in the memo under Tab 7.