



Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner

# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
**From:** Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner  
**Date:** September 13, 2021  
**Subject:** Briefing for the September 21, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on **Tuesday, September 21, 2021**, at the John W. McCormack Building, Ashburton Cafe Conference Room, 1 Ashburton Place, Plaza Level Boston, MA 02108 (tentative location). The meeting will start at **9:30 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m.** The Board will meet in person, following the Commonwealth's current health and safety guidelines, and the meeting will be live-streamed. Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements; please email or call them if you have any questions.

## OVERVIEW

Our business agenda leads off with the Board's annual election of the vice-chair, followed by an update on school reopening and actions the Department has taken and is taking to support schools, students, and families with in-person learning. We will review the statewide student assessment (MCAS) report. I will update the Board on the Competency Determination Advisory Committee and the Board will take a final vote on the regulatory modification extending the interim CD standard through the class of 2025. The Board's Committee on the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation, chaired by Vice-Chair James Morton, will present its recommendation on Commissioner's salary to the Board for a vote. Our business agenda concludes with an update on education budget matters.

## REGULAR MEETING

### Statements from the Public

### Comments from the Chair

Chair Craven will report on current issues and activities.

### Comments from the Commissioner

I am delighted to introduce Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson, who joined the Department on September 2. Ms. Robinson has the unique ability to visualize educational attainment through her experience as a college administrator, instructor, K-12 parent, policy maker, and district leader. Among other accomplishments, she served as the Dean of Student Affairs at Cambridge College since 2011 and also served as an appointed member of the Boston School Committee for one term. Ms. Robinson joins our newly constituted DESE leadership cabinet:

- Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell
- Chief School Officer Komal Bhasin
- Chief of Staff Leldamy Correa
- Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability Rob Curtin
- Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston
- Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson
- General Counsel Rhoda Schneider

### **Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Peyser will report on current issues and activities.

### **Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the June 22, 2021 Regular Meeting and the August 24, 2021 Special Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

#### **1. Election of Board Vice-Chair – Discussion and Vote**

Under the Board's by-laws, the September meeting is the annual meeting of the Board, at which the Board elects its vice-chair. Chair Craven will call for nominations from members and then conduct the election. The vice-chair presides over meetings when the chair is not available. Details on the process are under Tab 1.

#### **2. Update on School Reopening and Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**

I will update the Board on the reopening of schools across the Commonwealth for in-person learning in this new school year and review the Department's recent and ongoing actions to provide support.

#### **3. Statewide Student Assessment (MCAS) Report – Discussion**

I will present high-level results from the spring 2021 MCAS tests in English language arts, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

#### **4. Competency Determination:**

- a. **Update on Competency Determination Advisory Committee – Discussion**
- b. **Amendment to Competency Determination Regulations, 603 CMR 30.00 (Extending Interim Standard Through Class of 2025) – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Final Regulation**

I will update the Board on the Competency Determination Advisory Committee and also recommend the adoption of amendments to the Competency Determination Regulations. The Board voted in June to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments, which would extend the interim passing standard for the Competency Determination through the class of 2025 for English language arts, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering. The Department received no public comment regarding the proposed change. I recommend that the Board vote at the September 21 meeting to adopt the amendments.

**5. Committee Report on Commissioner’s Salary – Discussion and Vote**

Vice-Chair Morton, who chairs the Commissioner’s Performance Review Committee, will present the committee’s recommendation to the Board.

**6. Education Budget Update – Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will update the Board on the latest information we have about federal and state funding for K-12 education in the Commonwealth.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**7. Report on Grants and Charter School Matters Approved by the Commissioner**

Enclosed is information on grants and charter school matters I have approved since the June meeting under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

**8. Annual Reports from 2020-2021 Advisory Councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Enclosed are the 2020-2021 annual reports from the Board’s statutory advisory councils. The councils advise the Commissioner and Board on matters relating to K-12 education in the Commonwealth and offer programmatic recommendations. Each report summarizes the council’s work in the past year and presents the council’s recommendations on various issues. The reports and recommendations are those of the councils and not of the Department. We thank the council members for their time, efforts, and constructive feedback.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on September 21.