

**Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Assessment Committee Meeting
DESE, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA
April 25, 2016 3:35 p.m.-4:30 p.m.**

Members of the Committee Present:

Dr. Roland Fryer, Committee Chair

Mr. Paul Sagan, Board Chair

Secretary of Education James Peyser (designee Tom Moreau)

Mr. Donald Willyard

Mr. Paul Toner (Board of Higher Education Representative)

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Committee Member Absent: Dr. Penny Noyce

Other Board Members Present: Michael Moriarty

The Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the March 22, 2016 Assessment Committee Meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson welcomed committee members and introduced staff members involved in the assessment development.

Associate Commissioner Michol Stapel said English language arts (ELA) testing wrapped up before the spring break. She said computer-based PARCC testing runs through June, with districts choosing their own testing windows. She said PARCC paper-based testing ends in the beginning of May. Ms. Stapel said the assessment office held virtual office hours where staff presented and superintendents and test coordinators were able to ask questions. Four hundred people participated. Mr. Wulfson said there were PARCC testing issues in New Jersey that shut down testing for a day; those issues did not occur in Massachusetts. He said there have been pockets of areas where test refusal has been an issue, but it's limited and sporadic. Mr. Wulfson said both he and the Commissioner sent letters to New Bedford regarding testing requirements when issues arose.

Rob O'Donnell, of the Office of Planning and Research, said the request for proposals was posted on March 14 and bids are due to the Department on May 6. He said the Department has been fielding questions from the bidders and preparing for the review panel, which includes Department staff, K-12 educators/administrators, and higher education. Mr. O'Donnell said the review will occur in June and a vendor will be selected in August or September. In response to Mr. Toner's question, Mr. Wulfson said panel members will be published after the review so they do not feel pressured during the process. In response to Mr. Moreau's question, Mr. Wulfson confirmed that some panel members have technology experience.

Mr. Wulfson said committee members have received the working group recommendations. He said the Department will synthesize all recommendations, make its own recommendations based upon feedback, and solicit further comments from the field. Ms. Stapel said the Department began recruitment for its test development workgroup and all tests have separate committees to review items and passages. In response to Mr. Fryer's question, Ms. Stapel said the bias committee reviews items against demographic data and makes decisions as appropriate.

Mr. Wulfson said the Department's Next Generation Assessment website up and running and is updated regularly. He said the Department is offering to attend and present at professional association conferences.

Jake Foster, the Department's STEM Director, said the ELA and mathematics standards review panels are reviewing the initial comments from the survey tool. He said 1,400 people have logged into the survey and 300-400 have provided robust comments. He said they plan to come back to the Board with full comments in the early fall. Mr. Wulfson noted that the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents issued a position paper supporting the 2010 curriculum standards. David Buchanan, the Department's Director of History and Social Science, said the history/social science framework review is currently in its initial stages of outreach to form review panels. He said the panel review will begin this fall and a survey will be developed, much like the ELA and mathematics survey.

Mr. Wulfson said the Department is using rough numbers to communicate potential cost for a new assessment with the Legislature during the state budget development. He said without bids the Department does not have solid budget projections. He said the ballot question to repeal the curriculum standards directs the Department to release all test items each year, which would add additional costs. In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Mr. Wulfson said the ballot question would rescind the Board's adoption of the 2010 curriculum frameworks, revert Massachusetts back to the 2008 standards, and re-start the review process along with other specific details. Mr. Fryer suggested that the Department develop a one-pager on the assessment development and a newsletter.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.