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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Board Documents - March 2009

Special Meeting Agenda

Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Monday, March 23, 2009, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Item for Discussion:

1. Charter School Policy - **Discussion**

Regular Meeting Agenda

Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Tuesday, March 24, 2009, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

[Briefing](#)

Comments from the Chair

Comments from the Commissioner

Comments from the Secretary

Statements from the Public

Routine Business:

Items for Discussion and Action:

1. Update on [State Education Budget](#) and Federal Stimulus Funding for Education   - **Discussion**
2. [Measuring Student Progress in Massachusetts: Development of the Growth Model](#) - **Discussion**
3. Charter School Policy - Recap of Special Meeting and Continuing Discussion
4. [Progress Report on Mathematics Curriculum Framework Revision Process](#) - **Discussion**
5. [Proposed Revisions to Graduation Rate Standard for FY09 AYP Determinations](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
6. [Charter Amendment Requests from MATCH Charter Public School](#) - **Discussion and Vote**

Other Items for Information:

7. Education-Related News Clippings
8. [College Readiness: Massachusetts Compiles the Data](#) 
9. [Dropout Prevention and Recovery Initiatives](#)
10. Report on Grants and Charter School Extended Loan Terms Approved by Commissioner
11. Directions to the Meeting

last updated: March 17, 2009



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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Briefing for the March 23, 2009 Special Meeting and the March 24, 2009 Regular Meeting

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's offices at 75 Pleasant Street in Malden. The meeting will start at **8:30 a.m.** (coffee will be available at 8) and will adjourn by 1 p.m. The Board also will hold a special meeting at the Department's offices in Malden starting at 6 p.m. on Monday evening, March 23, to discuss charter school policy. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Beverley O'Riordan at (781) 338-3118.

Overview

Our special meeting on Monday evening will focus on charter school policy. The agenda for our regular meeting on Tuesday includes an update on the state education budget and federal stimulus funding for education, a presentation on our development of a growth model for measuring and reporting on student progress, a progress report on the mathematics curriculum framework revision process, discussion and vote on the graduation rate standard for FY09 AYP determinations, and a discussion and vote on a charter amendment.

Special Meeting

At the Board's November 2008 meeting, we presented an overview of the charter school review and renewal process. The Board took action on several individual charter school matters at the December, January, and February meetings. Members expressed interest in stepping away from the school-by-school decisions and having a broader policy discussion about charter schools. That is the purpose of the special meeting on March 23rd. We have gathered suggestions from members and organized them into topical areas. Your materials include background information such as the Massachusetts charter school statute and regulations, accountability standards, factual information, and

answers to frequently asked questions.

At the special meeting, Secretary Reville will present an overview of various options for school structure. Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson and Charter Schools Director Mary Street will describe the Department's procedures and contrast the requirements and approaches used in other states. We look forward to an interesting and productive discussion with the Board that will help guide our policy decisions in the future.

Regular Meeting

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta will report on current issues and activities, including her appointment of members to the Proficiency Gap Committee and her charge to the committee.

Comments from the Commissioner

1. **Fall River Public Schools.** In January 2009, Fall River Mayor Robert Correia agreed that the Fall River school district was in critical need of an evaluation by our Department in light of the recent transition of school leadership. The mayor shared my belief that a comprehensive external review of district practices could yield findings and recommendations that would benefit the students and schools of Fall River. The review team spent several days in Fall River gathering information, observing classroom instruction, and conducting extensive interviews. I have sent Board members an electronic copy of the Fall River District Evaluation Report prepared by the Office of School and District Accountability, which we sent to the district leadership and mayor earlier this month. The report paints a picture of a district with persistent, serious and systemic problems, although we have seen some promising signs of forward momentum. We have asked the Fall River School Committee to submit a recovery plan, and have asked the district to work closely with a monitor whom we will assign to the community to oversee its progress. We will assess the district's progress against its plan and determine if additional interventions are needed.
2. **Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework Review.** The Department is soliciting applications to serve on the *Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework* review panel and is inviting educators and others to respond to a [survey of the current framework](#). The survey asks for feedback on the current framework with respect to the standards; inquiry and design skills; organization and use of the framework; and resources listed in it. The deadline for survey responses is April 17, 2009.

For the [review panel](#) , we are seeking representation from science and technology/engineering educators, faculty, and school leaders serving all grade levels as well as ELL and special education specialists and community representatives. The review panel will consider whether and how to revise the framework to reflect current policy, research on science education and learning, and achievement in science and technology/engineering needed for college and careers. Applications must be submitted by Friday, March 27, 2009. Applicants selected for appointment to the panel will be notified mid-April 2009. If Board members would like to suggest candidates for the review panel, please contact Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus or me.

3. **David Haselkorn.** I am pleased to announce that David Haselkorn will be starting later this month as our Associate Commissioner for Educator Policy, overseeing the policy, licensure, and educator preparation

responsibilities. David's hire brings us closer to realizing the reorganization that I announced last fall and continues our commitment to educator quality as a key priority.

David has a rich and varied background that is focused on educator policy and quality. He is finishing an assignment as Senior Fellow and Director of Policy Studies at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. David served previously as President of Recruiting New Teachers and as Vice President for Strategic and Policy Initiatives at Lesley University. He has worked as a policy advisor to David Rockefeller, Jr. and as a research associate with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. David has served with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In addition, he has authored a number of policy studies and other publications.

I look forward to the experience, energy, and intellectual vitality that David will bring to the Department. I will introduce him to the Board so that you can join me in welcoming him.

Comments from the Secretary

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

Items for Discussion and Action

1. Update on State Education Budget and Federal Stimulus Funding for Education - Discussion

I have enclosed a copy of the testimony I presented at the March 9th Ways and Means Committee hearing on the FY2010 state budget for education. Also enclosed is a PowerPoint overview of the federal economic stimulus legislation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). I will update the Board on our budget planning, including the latest information we have on the ARRA. Secretary Reville will brief the Board on the education budget perspective from the Governor's office.

2. Measuring Student Progress in Massachusetts: Development of the Growth Model - Discussion

I am pleased to be able to report on the Department's development of a growth model for measuring student progress. It is based on a new metric that we are planning to use beginning in the fall of 2009 to report the extent to which student performance, as measured by MCAS, has changed over time. This is an important complement to the year-by-year test scores, since it takes into account each student's prior achievement when calculating progress. At our March 24th meeting, Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus will explain the derivation of the metric; illustrate how it can be used in reports for individual students, schools, and districts; and describe how we intend to pilot the metric this spring in several districts.

3. Charter School Policy - Recap of Special Meeting and Continuing Discussion

Chair Banta and I will recap the discussion and anticipated next steps from our special meeting.

4. Progress Report on Mathematics Curriculum Framework Revision Process - Discussion

This month we are presenting a report on our progress in updating the 2000 Mathematics Curriculum Framework. The framework revision panel recently completed Phase I of their work, which was to identify areas for revision. In Phase II, Department staff, panel members, and additional experts will use the progress report to produce the first draft of a revised framework. I plan to present the first draft to the Board for comments in the fall of 2009, and then disseminate it to content experts for external review and benchmarking. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus and I look forward to discussing the progress report with you.

5. Proposed Revisions to Graduation Rate Standard for FY09 AYP Determinations -Discussion and Vote

At the Board's February 24th meeting, we had an initial discussion of changes I am recommending to the graduation rate standards to be used in our determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for FY09, in order to comply with federal requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act. We refined the proposal based on that discussion. I recommend that the Board vote on the graduation rate standard this month so that we can submit it to the U.S. Department of Education for approval.

6. Charter Amendment Request from MATCH Charter Public School - Discussion and Vote

MATCH Charter Public School, located in Boston, has requested an increase in its maximum enrollment, to be phased in over the next few years. I recommend that the Board approve the school's request to increase maximum enrollment by 40 additional seats. Details are included in the materials under Tab 6.

Other Items for Information

7. Education-Related News Clippings

Enclosed are several recent articles about education.

8. "College Readiness: Massachusetts Compiles the Data"

Carrie Conaway, our director of planning, research, and evaluation, wrote an article on the school-to-college database for the Spring 2009 issue of *Communities and Banking*, a publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Carrie's article provides an excellent overview of this collaborative effort between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education. A copy is enclosed under Tab 8. The article is available online at  http://www.bos.frb.org/commdev/c&b/2009/spring/Carrie_Conaway_college_readiness.pdf.

9. Dropout Prevention and Recovery Initiatives

As a companion to the agenda item on the graduation rate standard for Adequate Yearly Progress determinations under the No Child Left Behind Act, I am providing the Board with documents describing

some of the Department's activities regarding dropout prevention and recovery.

10. Report on Grants and Charter School Extended Loan Terms Approved by Commissioner

Under Tab 10 is a report on grants that I have approved, per the Board's vote in October 2008 to delegate grant approvals to the commissioner. This authorization allows us to make decisions and inform grant applicants on a timely basis. The Board also delegated authority to me to approve extended loan terms for charter schools, a routine administrative matter. I have not approved any such loan terms since my last report.

11. Directions to the Meeting

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you at our offices in Malden on March 23rd and 24th.

last updated: March 17, 2009

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ABCs of ARRA

(American Recovery and Reinvestment Act)

Goals of ARRA



- *Stimulate* economy in short term
- *Invest* to ensure the health of the economy in the long term

Nationally, for Education

ARRA =

\$100,000,000,000

(\$100 Billion over two years)

Massachusetts, for Education

ARRA =

\$1,302,000,000 +

(over two years)

Breakdown of ARRA Education Funds for Massachusetts

- Early Education and Care
 - Child Care \$24.0 M
 - Children and Family Services \$10.1 M
- Elementary and Secondary
 - Title I \$163.4 M
 - Title II D (Ed Tech) \$10.5 M
 - IDEA \$280.5 M
- ESE and Department of Higher Education
 - Stabilization \$813.3 M*

*Total allocation is \$994.4 M, 18.2% is for public safety and other services which may include school building modernization, renovation and repair.

ARRA Competitive Grants

- Teacher Incentive Funds \$200 M
 - Performance-based compensation
- Longitudinal Data Systems \$250 M
- State Incentive Grants \$5 B
 - “Race to the top”
- Innovation Fund \$650 M
 - Achievement awards for teachers, schools, and districts

Other Education-Related Funds

- School Construction Bonds
- Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
- Pell and Work Study Grants
- Higher Education Teacher Quality Enhancement Program

Principles of ARRA for Education

- Spend funds *quickly* to *save* and *create* jobs
- Improve student achievement through reforms
 - Standards and assessments (Curriculum & Instruction)*
 - PK-College Data Systems (Accountability Redesign)*
 - Teacher Effectiveness (Educator Development)*
 - Student Support Services (Supports for Students)*
- Avoid the “funding cliff”
 - Invest in ways that do not result in unsustainable commitments after the funding expires
- Ensure transparency, reporting, and accountability

* Board’s and Commissioner’s Goals



According to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, \$44 billion in Recovery Act funding will be available to states in the next 30 to 45 days. This is to help avert hundreds of thousands of estimated teacher layoffs while driving crucial education improvements and results for students.

Schedule for Distribution of Funds

- **Title I and IDEA**
 - 50% to be released to SEAs by the end of this month without requiring new state applications
 - Remainder of Title I, IDEA funds to be made available during period July 1 to September 30 2009.
- **Stabilization Funds**
 - The application for these funds will be made available to Governors by the end of this month. 67% of funding to Governors within 2 weeks after receipt of an approvable application. Remainder this fall.
- **Title IID and Title I School Improvement Grants**
 - Fall 2009, conditioned on guidelines to be provided in the future
- **Competitive Grants in the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010**

ARRA Accountability Requirements

- For all funds, SEAs must separately account for, and report on, how ARRA funds were spent *and* the results of the expenditures.
- Districts receiving Title I funds must report a school-by-school listing of PPEs from state and local sources.
- For Stabilization Funds, governors will have to report the number of jobs created or saved, estimated tax increases that were averted, and the state's progress against the application assurances.
- USDE has indicated they will require quarterly collections of data, all of which will be posted on the government website.

Next Steps for Massachusetts

- ESE and EOE are working together to review and disseminate rules and guidance from USED
- Expect to provide districts with their individual allotments by the end of the month
- Determining process for accessing the money and how the dollars can be spent
- Already met with union and association leadership; plan to meet with superintendents March 30



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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Testimony on the FY10 Elementary and Secondary Education Budget Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means

March 9, 2009

Vice-chairman Kulik, Senator Downing, members of the Joint Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Fiscal Year 2010 Budget. For the record, my name is Mitchell Chester, and I am the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

I am nearing my one-year anniversary here in the Commonwealth, and can see why Massachusetts is the envy of the nation. Our students are engaged, our parents are involved, and our teachers and administrators are working together to move their schools into the 21st century through innovative teaching and learning strategies.

Fiscally, we are in the midst of the most difficult economic crisis of our lifetime. Recognizing the state and nation's grim fiscal forecast, I remain convinced that there is no better way to spend our limited dollars than on programs to specifically address the needs of our students. It is our responsibility to ensure that each of the Commonwealth's nearly one million students - regardless of race, ethnicity or zip code - has access to and receives the tools and support they need to graduate from high school, and be successful in college, career and beyond.

The investment in education that the General Court has made over the past 15 years has yielded great dividends. The proof is in the results: Our students lead the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and on the SAT exams. In September we announced continued progress on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exams, particularly in Mathematics; and in December we announced that our state outscored most of the world on the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS).

With the overall goal of ensuring that all students receive an education that prepares them for success after high school in the 21st Century, I have worked with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and my staff to set several goals for our work this year and next:

- **Curriculum and Instruction:** As part of a reorganization of the Department we have created a new Center for Curriculum and Instruction, which includes the Offices of Humanities, History and Social Science; Mathematics, Science, Technology & Engineering, Literacy, English Language Acquisition, and Instructional

Technology. We are reviewing and updating the curriculum frameworks in English Language Arts, and Mathematics and are scheduled to begin Science next. In addition, the Center will provide teachers and administrators with access to curriculum resources and models of best practice.

- **Educator Quality:** Without question, the key to good instruction is having top notch educators in the classroom and enthusiastic and engaged administrators running our schools and districts. I thank you for the support you have given the Department in the past for professional development, particularly in math and science; as evidenced by this year's TIMSS results, this support is making a difference.

Going forward we plan to create a professional development delivery system to provide educators with tools to identify their professional growth needs and offer regionally based opportunities for teachers to enhance their content knowledge and instructional practice. Your continued support will allow us to continue this important work, which will benefit not only our teachers, but our students, and ultimately the economy of Massachusetts.

- **Turnaround of Low Performing Schools and Districts:** Last summer the Legislature placed the work of the former EQA into the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. To meet the requirements of the law, we now have two centers: the Center for School and District Accountability and the Center for Targeted Assistance. We are working to restructure the way we identify, support and help turn around our lowest performing schools and districts.
- **Student Support Services:** We are committed to ensuring that the non-academic supports for students - social, emotional, health - are deliberate and aligned with the academic program. By working with other state agencies that support children and families, we are implementing a number of initiatives that are designed to ensure the coherence of the services so that students are accessible for learning.

This work will undoubtedly benefit from President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which will provide many of our local school districts with a significant infusion of additional money over the next two years. Much of this funding will flow through the existing Title I and IDEA formulas, with smaller amounts available for a number of other programs, including technology, and McKinney-Vento.

We expect to receive final allocation amounts and regulatory guidance from the US Department of Education shortly. As soon as we have that information, we will notify districts of the amount they can expect to receive and the procedures for accessing and spending those funds.

We recognize that a portion of these federal dollars will be used by local districts to maintain existing services and avoid excessive layoffs. At the same time, because these funds will only be available for two years, it is important that they be used for strategic investments to provide long-term benefits that can be sustained once the stimulus funds expire, such as increased capacity, cost savings, and improved services.

I am grateful to Governor Patrick and Secretary Reville for working to shield K-12 education as much as possible from the difficult 9C cuts that were made to the FY09 budget this year. I am also grateful to the Governor for managing to hold Chapter 70 harmless in the midst of this difficult budget cycle. This effort to shield our schools from the budget axe did not go unnoticed.

The Governor's House I budget, while austere, maintains critical programs and services. By consolidating line items in House I, Governor Patrick has provided the Department with the opportunity to determine where we most need to direct our limited resources. This is an important distinction to past budgets, and I would encourage you to support this method, at least until the economy improves and we have more flexibility with our spending.

Thank you again for your time today, and I will be pleased to respond to your questions.

last updated: March 3, 2009

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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Measuring Student Progress in Massachusetts - Development of the Growth Model

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

I am writing to update you on the Department's development of a growth model. The model makes use of an important new metric we are planning to use beginning in the fall of 2009 to report the extent to which student performance, as measured by MCAS, has changed over time. This metric is an important complement to the year-by-year test scores, since it takes into account each student's prior achievement when calculating progress. At our March 24th meeting, Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus will explain the derivation of the metric; illustrate how it can be used in reports for individual students, schools, and districts; and describe how we intend to pilot the metric this spring in several districts.

Since 2003, when we began testing all students in grades 3-8 and high school in reading and mathematics on an annual basis, we have intended to develop a metric to report change in student performance over time to complement existing MCAS reports of student performance. Analyzing and reporting student growth can enable better decision-making on many levels. Such a metric can, for example, be used to:

- improve curriculum and instruction;
- make sound instructional decisions for individual students;
- inform school and district accountability decisions;
- guide the Department's assistance efforts to districts and schools; and
- conduct program evaluations.

We evaluated several different ways of calculating student progress (see appendix), but all fell short of our needs until this past fall, when we became aware of an innovative, new approach developed by Dr. Damian Betebenner at the National Center for Assessment in Dover, NH. His method is to measure students' progress relative to other students with a similar test score history. This new metric, called a *student growth percentile*, has already been

implemented in the state of Colorado and with the Arizona Charter Schools Association.

With the student growth percentile metric, we can answer the questions such as:

1. What is the typical change in test scores that occurs between any two grades for students with similar prior test scores?
2. For a given student, how does his/her growth compare to students with similar prior test scores? Is it similar to, greater than, or less than typical growth?
3. Which schools demonstrate better than (or less than) typical growth for their students compared to schools with similar overall achievement (e.g., two schools might have similar percentages of students performing at the proficient/advanced levels, but one school shows higher growth from the previous year than the other)?

This information on individual students is useful for teachers and parents who want to know whether their students are progressing. When aggregated to the subgroup, school, or district level, these data can also indicate the progress made with groups of students and the impact of various programs and interventions. For example, we will be able to highlight particularly effective interventions by identifying low performing schools that consistently demonstrate high growth and then share these effective practices with other schools and districts.

Moreover, we can also use a student's growth history to generate projections of how likely that student is to reach proficiency (or any other performance benchmark) within one year, two years, or more. This could be helpful to schools in working with individual students and to our ability to focus our accountability and assistance work on the districts with high numbers of students who not only are not yet proficient but who, in addition, are not on a trajectory for proficiency.

This initiative merits further discussion. Most important, we need to determine how best to ground percentiles-a relative measure-within our standards-based system, so that we maintain high expectations for both the performance and growth for all students. This will require establishing a measure of *adequate* growth to complement the measures of *relative* growth we have already developed. This might be growth sufficient to reach proficiency or, for students already at proficiency, growth at a pace to indicate that the student will continue to perform proficiently or higher. We also need to consider whether and how we might propose to incorporate growth into our district accountability system or in determinations of Adequate Yearly Progress. We will seek the Board's input as we move forward in these areas.

In the meantime, the Department is planning to roll out student growth data on a pilot basis with a small group of districts this spring. This will prepare us to release student-level growth calculations for all students, schools, and districts using data from the spring 2009 MCAS testing cycle. The districts participating in the pilot will help with developing reports and interpretive materials as well as with understanding the variety of ways in which the field may find the data useful. We anticipate reporting a range of reports and supports, including:

- student rosters for districts and schools showing growth for each student previously or currently educated;
- aggregated school and district measures of the median growth of their students and subgroups;
- visual displays arraying growth against performance;
- analyses that highlight which schools and districts are achieving particularly high growth, especially among those with relatively low performance levels;
- reports for parents on their children's growth;

- training materials and sessions to help people understand how to use the growth data; and
- training for using the Data Warehouse to access growth data.

I will provide updates to the Board over the coming months with proposals for how to handle the policy questions that arise as we learn more about what the model tells us about student performance in Massachusetts. We look forward to discussing this proposed model and its implications with you.

  [Measuring Growth in Student Performance on MCAS](#)

last updated: March 27, 2009

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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Progress Report on the Work of the *Mathematics Curriculum Framework* Revision Panel

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed. D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with a progress report on our efforts to revise the 2000 *Mathematics Curriculum Framework*. The *Mathematics Curriculum Framework* Revision Panel recently completed Phase I of their work, which was to identify areas for revision. Their recommendations are described in the attached document titled *Progress Report*. Also attached are three appendices: Appendix A, which describes the structure of the current *Mathematics Curriculum Framework*; Appendix B, which summarizes the contents of the various meetings conducted by the Revision Panel this past year; and Appendix C, which provides a list of Revision Panel members. I look forward to discussing the Progress Report with you at this month's meeting.

During the spring of 2008, the Department circulated a public comment survey to solicit opinions about the usefulness of the *Mathematics Curriculum Framework* and *2004 Supplement* to inform the work of the panel. Results from the survey indicated that teachers, higher education faculty, administrators, students, national experts, and members of professional associations recognized the strengths of the *Framework and Supplement*. Survey results also included recommendations for improving the framework, such as the inclusion of a wide range of sample problems of varying complexity, the reduction of the number of standards at certain grade levels, and the organization of standards by "big ideas" or "key topics" in addition to the existing strands.

Based upon intensive study and discussions, the revision panel concurs with the results of the public survey and recommends the development of a single framework with grade level standards that will demonstrate the connectivity of pre-K-12 mathematics topics across the five strands. Other recommendations from the panel include revising the pre-K -7 standards to prepare students for Algebra I by grade 8 and creating standards for two new high school courses to increase college and career readiness.

In Phase II, Department staff, panel members, and additional experts will use this progress report to guide the

development of the first draft of a revised framework. I plan to present the first draft to the Board for comments in the fall 2009, and then disseminate it to content experts for external review and benchmarking. As we proceed with revision of the framework, we will follow developments in the federal stimulus State Incentive Grant program, which will give preference to states that are willing to collaborate in validating that their standards represent college and career readiness and are internationally competitive. Based on the national discussion, we may incorporate additional development/validation strategies into the revision process.

Jeffrey Nellhaus, Deputy Commissioner; Barbara Libby, Director of Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering; and Sharyn Sweeney, Mathematics Specialist will be at the March meeting to answer your questions.

[Progress Report](#) (Link Removed)

  [Appendices A, B, C](#)

last updated: March 18, 2009

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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Recommended Graduation Rate Standard for 2009 AYP Determinations

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

At our February 2009 meeting, I recommended that the Board establish the following graduation rate standard for the 2009 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations to be applied in the aggregate and to all student subgroups meeting the minimum group size requirements:

- a four-year graduation rate of 65 percent for the 2008 cohort, or
- a two percentage point increase in the four-year graduation rate from the 2007 cohort to the 2008 cohort.

Based on the Board's discussion at our February meeting, I asked our staff to examine options for including a five-year graduation rate as a component of the 2009 AYP determinations. As a result, I am submitting an amended proposal for your consideration:

- a four-year graduation rate of 65 percent applied to the 2008 graduation cohort, or
- a five-year graduation rate of 70 percent applied to the 2007 graduation cohort, or
- a two percentage point increase in the four-year graduation rate from the 2007 cohort to 2008 cohort.

The U.S Department of Education (USED) did not approve our request to include a five-year graduation rate component in the 2008 AYP determinations and indicated that they expected Massachusetts to provide a "more challenging" graduation rate standard in future years. Given the nature of the calculation, I believe a five percentage point increase in both the four and five-year rates meets this standard. We will again request that the USED recognize the importance of the five-year graduation rate in addition to the strict four-year rate and approve all three elements of our proposed standard.

I have attached a **display of potential AYP impact data**   for your review at the end of this memorandum.

Based on 2008 AYP data, my original recommendation would have resulted in three additional schools not making AYP and factoring in a five-year graduation rate component would have reduced that number to one school. Please note that these impact data are estimates. Actual 2009 AYP results will be dependent on 2009 MCAS participation and performance data.

As a reminder, I have included some of the factors that went into making my original recommendation.

- We apply the graduation rate standard to each student subgroup, in order to support our efforts to hold districts and schools accountable for all of the children in their care. While the statewide average graduation rate for students in the aggregate was just over 81% in 2008, average rates for our student subgroups ranged from a high of 87% for White and Asian students, to 68% for African-American/Black students, 65% for low-income students, 64% for special education students, 58% for Hispanic students, and 56% percent for students with limited English proficiency. Sixty-five percent is a realistic short-term target for our lowest performing schools.
- By including an option for demonstrating improvement, a school or district with a student subgroup rate below the 65 percent standard has a realistic opportunity to meet its AYP goal for the current year. I am very concerned by the low graduation rates for certain student subgroups, and believe it is essential that we credit, within our school accountability system, schools' efforts to improve their ability to engage students through graduation.
- Because the graduation rate calculation takes into account students who drop out over a four-year period, even the most effective remedial efforts will take some time to be fully reflected in the rate.
- Beginning next year with the class of 2009 cohort, we plan to amend our graduation rate cohort definition to include students who were enrolled in grade 8 in a district but who did not subsequently enroll in grade 9 or for whom there is no verifiable evidence that the student transferred to a private school or out-of-state school. This change in cohort definition will identify these students as non-graduates, and we anticipate a one-time downward impact on the four- and five-year graduation rates next year as a consequence of this reporting change.

In February, I sent you copies of our recently released graduation rate report, which includes data on both the four-year rate for the 2008 cohort and the five-year rate for the 2007 cohort. This report is also available on our website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/>

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Matthew Pakos, the Department's Director of School Improvement Grant Programs, at 781-338-3507; Robert Curtin, our Director of Data Analysis and Reporting, at 781-338-3582; or me.

last updated: March 13, 2009

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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Charter Schools - Approval of Charter Amendment for MATCH Charter Public School

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, [603 CMR 1.11\(1\)](#), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) must approve major changes in the material terms of a school's charter, including increases in a school's maximum enrollment. MATCH Charter Public School, located in Boston, requests an increase in its maximum enrollment. If granted, the amendment request would be phased in over the course of the next few years.

As required by 603 CMR 1.11(5) for requests that seek an increase in maximum enrollment, comment was solicited from the Boston Public Schools superintendent. No comment was received in response to this solicitation.

In summer 2007, the MATCH Charter Public School (MATCH) board of trustees requested approval of a charter amendment to change the school's maximum enrollment from 220 to 500 students, at the same time changing the school's grade span to include a middle school. The Board voted to grant the school's request to implement a middle school program, but due to limitations on the availability of seats under the 9% net school spending (NSS) cap specified in G.L. c. 71, § 89(i), the school's maximum enrollment was limited to 460 students. In July 2008, the school submitted a new request to increase its maximum enrollment from 460 to 500 students, but I did not bring this request to the Board because revised 9% NSS cap projections continued to indicate that there were not enough seats remaining in Boston to grant this request.

The Department recently conducted another analysis of seats remaining in Boston under the 9% NSS cap, taking into consideration the Board's recent decision to revoke the charter of Uphams Corner Charter School. This new analysis utilizes conservative fiscal assumptions and projects that approximately 164 seats in total are available in Boston. The Department routinely reserves approximately 25% of available seats to allow for fluctuations in net school spending. There are currently enough seats available in Boston to consider granting this request.

This fall, MATCH opened its new 6th grade program with 89 students. Because seats are available under the NSS cap, I recommend that the Board approve the MATCH Charter Public School's request to increase maximum enrollment by 40 additional seats.

MATCH Charter Public School AYP Data Summary

2008	NCLB Accountability Status	Performance Rating	Improvement Rating
English Language Arts	No Status	Very High	Met NCLB Goal
Mathematics	No Status	Very High	Met NCLB Goal

Adequate Yearly Progress History											NCLB Accountability Status
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
ELA	Aggregate	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	
MATH	Aggregate	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Department has reviewed this request and it appears reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. I recommend that the Board approve the amendment of MATCH Charter Public School as has been described in this memorandum.

If you have any questions regarding these amendments or require additional information, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781 338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781 338-3200; or me.

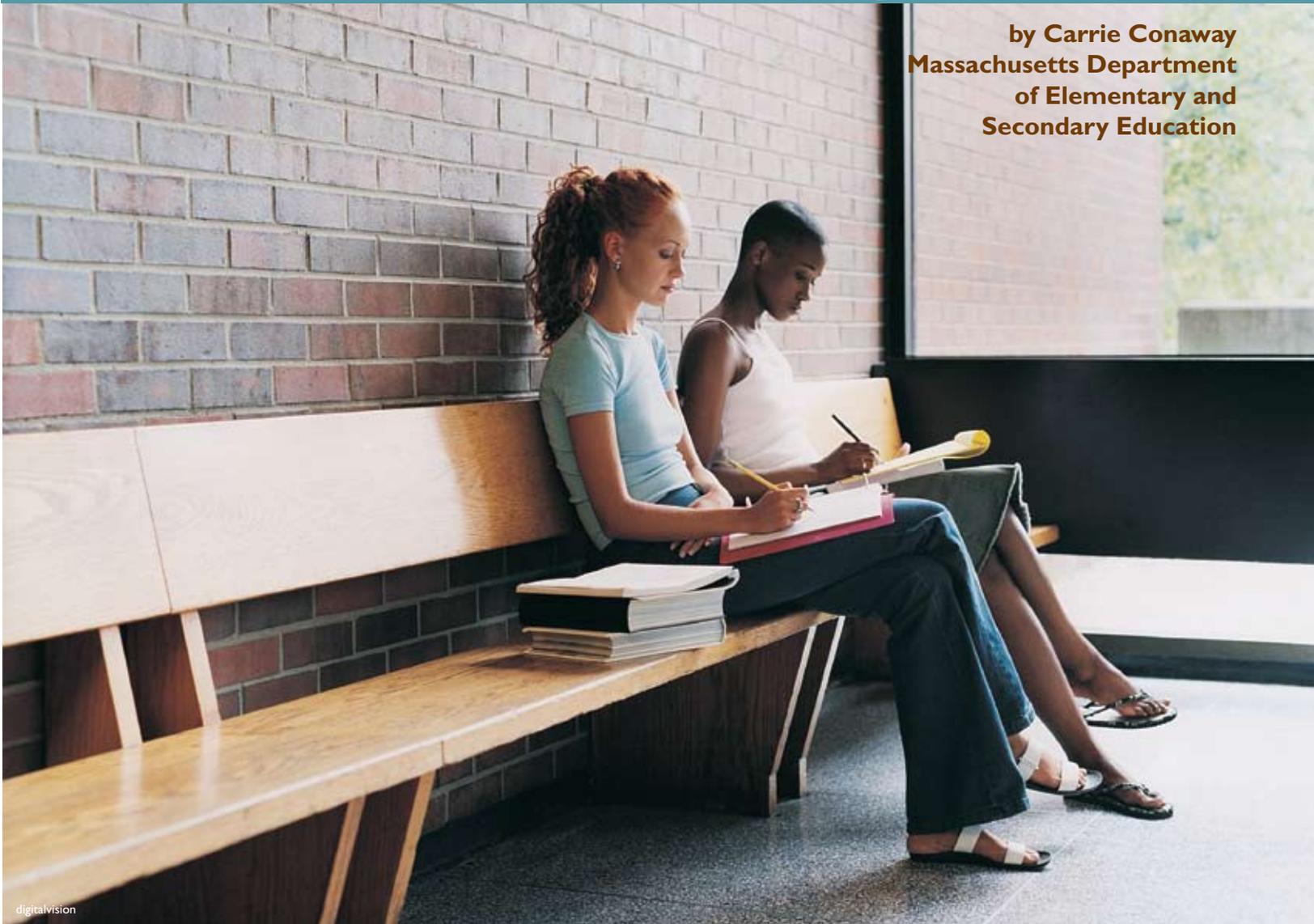
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College Readiness:

Massachusetts Compiles the Data

by Carrie Conaway
Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and
Secondary Education



Until recently, the world of K-12 policy rarely intersected with the world of higher education policy. Schools developed standards, curricula, and instructional practices without considering how they might relate to expectations in a college environment, and postsecondary institutions structured their programs and coursework without thinking about how to help students bridge the transition from high school competence to college success. As a result, many students enrolled in college only to find that they needed to take substantial remedial coursework before they could begin to earn college credits, or that they had mastered high school material but were not prepared to meet higher expectations in college. Too frequently, they would grow discouraged and simply drop out.



digitalvision

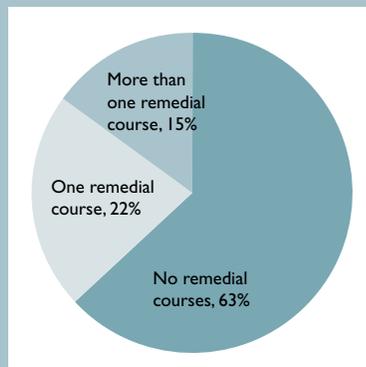
After years of observing this sobering pattern, high schools and colleges increasingly agree that they share responsibility for ensuring that students leave the K-12 system prepared to be successful in college. However,

they often lack information on the nature and magnitude of the problem, particularly how it affects the students actually enrolled in their institutions.

To that end, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education have collaborated to develop a school-to-college database that collects information on Massachusetts public high school graduates who enroll in Massachusetts public post-secondary institutions—both two-year and four-year colleges. The database has already demonstrated that it is a powerful tool for policymaking and for helping students to make the leap from high school to college.

First-Semester Remedial Enrollment

Massachusetts Public High School Graduates at Massachusetts Public Colleges, Class of 2005



The High School Class of 2005

The first report from the database answered a critical question, one that Massachusetts had never been able to answer before: How many Massachusetts public high school graduates enroll in Massachusetts public colleges?

As it turns out, about 19,500 public high school graduates—33 percent of the

graduating class—enrolled in a Massachusetts public college in the fall after their high school graduation. A few hundred more enrolled after taking some time off, but the lion's share of those who enrolled in college within five years of high school graduation do so immediately after high school. Of those 19,500 students, approximately 5,900 enrolled at a University of Massachusetts campus; 4,900 at a state college; and 8,700 at a community college. All but 2 percent of state university and state college students enrolled as full-time degree-seeking candidates; at community colleges, the rate was 80 percent.

The most powerful statistics in the report, however, are on remediation rates. (See "First-Semester Remedial Enrollment.") Students were placed into remedial courses if they score poorly on a placement exam when they arrived on campus; some also elected to enroll in them voluntarily. The report showed that 37 percent of the class of 2005 who went on to public colleges in Massachusetts enrolled in at least one remedial subject during their first semester in college; 15 percent enrolled in at least two. This means that more than one-third of Massachusetts public high school graduates arrived at the state's public colleges and universities not ready to take college-credit-bearing coursework in at least one subject area.

Remediation rates were substantially higher for community college enrollees, at 65 percent. But the problem is not confined to two-year schools: 22 percent of state college enrollees and 8 percent of state university enrollees took at least one remedial subject in their first semester, too. Mathematics was the most problematic subject; 29 percent of public high school graduates took a remedial course in mathematics, versus 15 percent in writing and 11 percent in reading. Importantly, students who had achieved proficiency on the grade 10 MCAS tests were far less likely to require remediation than those who had scored at Needs Improvement, suggesting that attaining proficiency in high school is an important step toward college readiness.

Access and Success

Another key policy concern in Massachusetts is whether traditionally disadvantaged students, such as those from low-income families or with limited English proficiency, experience equal access to and success in college.

The demographic characteristics of the state's public college enrollees who had attended public high schools were nearly identical to the state's public high school graduating class as a whole. Differences emerged, however, in remediation and reenrollment rates. For instance, nearly 60 percent of African Americans and Hispanics, and more than half of low-income students, who graduated from Massachusetts public high schools enrolled in at least one remedial course in their first semester, as compared with 37 percent of the total cohort. Similarly, while 81 percent of public high school graduates overall reenrolled for a second year, only 71 percent of low-income students did. (See "Remediation and Reenrollment Rates.")

This suggests that high schools are doing well in setting an expectation of college for their graduates but it raises concerns about whether these students have access to a high school curriculum that prepares them adequately to succeed once they arrive on campus.

Digging Deeper

After establishing the statewide patterns of college enrollment and readiness, the state next issued reports to each of 296 Massachusetts high schools that sent 10 or more of their graduates on to Massachusetts post-secondary institutions in fall 2005. These reports offered superintendents and principals their first opportunity to observe the patterns of college enrollment and success for their own schools' students and should serve as a benchmark against which to compare future performance and outcomes.

The reports revealed a wide range of outcomes by high school. For instance, 44 high schools sent fewer than 20 percent of their graduates on to public higher education, while 20 sent 50 percent or more. Similarly, though the average remediation rate was 37 percent statewide, one-fifth of high schools saw 50 percent or more of their graduates taking at least one remedial course in their first semester.

The public colleges also have found uses for the database, requesting reports to improve their understanding of the student bodies from which they draw enrollees. For example, the database allowed them for the first time to know what share of their entering students had taken at least one Advanced Placement course in high school. Previously, they had known only who had taken the AP tests but not how many had been exposed to college-level work without

Remediation and Reenrollment Rates, High School Class of 2005

Group (status in high school)	Percent enrolled in at least one remedial course, first semester in college	Percent reenrolled for a second year in fall 2006
Overall	37	81
African American	59	74
Asian or Pacific Islander	33	83
Hispanic	58	69
White	34	82
Low income	52	71
Special education	63	74
Limited English proficiency	50	80

actually taking the test. The database also allowed the colleges to learn how many of their enrolling students had been placed in special education programs in high school, as well as which high schools send a large share of their graduates to the college and thus might be potential partners for college readiness programs.

Next Steps

Massachusetts education policymakers are already using the information from the database to drive change throughout the educational system. The governor featured the remediation rate in his education policy agenda as a call to action and a key benchmark against which K-12 system performance can be measured. The findings have also spurred the state to define a recommended high school program of studies for college readiness and to invest more heavily in programs that, for example, expose high school students to college-level work through Advanced Placement and encourage simultaneous enrollment in college courses while still in high school.

Education policymakers in Massachusetts are already using the information from the database to drive change throughout the educational system.

Schools and districts are putting the findings to work at the local level as well. Representatives from the state educational agencies are working with schools and districts to help them understand their reports and translate the results into school programs and activities. And districts are developing more partnerships with local public colleges and universities to ease the transition from high school to college. For example, the Berkshire Compact—a Berkshire County partnership uniting local public schools, public colleges, and businesses—enables every sixth grader to visit a local college and gives high school students increased opportunities to enroll in college courses free of charge.

Even with all this activity, Massachusetts has only begun to tap the potential of the School-to-College database. The state expects to continue to issue reports to high schools and colleges each year as well as to expand the information available in the database so that it can answer more-sophisticated questions about college preparation and success for Massachusetts public high school graduates. Fall 2009, for instance, will be the first opportunity to learn how many students from the high school class of 2005 graduated on time from four-year schools. With information like that in hand, the database will continue to contribute important information to the educational policy debate in Massachusetts for years to come.

Carrie Conaway is director of planning, research, and evaluation at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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The Massachusetts Board of Education

Information on Dropout Prevention and Recovery Activities

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: March 13, 2009

As a companion to the agenda item on the graduation rate standard for Adequate Yearly Progress determinations under the No Child Left Behind Act, I am providing the Board with documents describing some of the Department's activities regarding dropout prevention and recovery:

- Dropout Prevention and Recovery Workgroup - Summary of the Department's Initiative with the Urban Superintendents Network
- America's Promise Alliance Dropout Prevention Initiative - Recent Activities
- Alternative Education Grant Evaluation Summary, FY 2007
- Recent History of Alternative Education in Massachusetts, updated March 2009
- *Gateway to College* brochure
- Early Indicator Index - December 2008 working draft
- Rennie Center Report Summary - *Meeting the Challenge: Promising Practices for Reducing the Dropout Rate in Massachusetts Schools and Districts*
- Chapter 315 of the Acts of 2008, establishing a Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission

The Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission created by the 2008 law is chaired by Secretary Reville, and I am a member of the commission. Its purpose is to survey dropout prevention and recovery best practices and programs nationwide and to evaluate dropout prevention and recovery programs currently in use. Secretary Reville and I will report to you on the commission's work at a future Board meeting.

We are committed to strengthening the capacity of schools to engage all students in learning so that they meet high standards of performance and graduate from high school well prepared for the future. Our initiatives on dropout prevention and recovery, alternative education, and related topics, under the leadership of Associate Commissioner

John Bynoe and in collaboration with school and community partners, are a vital part of our work. If you have questions about any of these matters, please contact me.

last updated: March 13, 2009

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