*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | December 6, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the December 17, 2019 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 onTuesday, December 17, 2019, at Mount Wachusett Community College, Main Building, 444 Green St., Gardner, MA 01440. We will begin by **meeting jointly with the Board of Higher Education, from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.** (coffee will be available at 9:00 a.m.) and then convene our **regular meeting starting at 12:00 p.m. and adjourning by 3:00 p.m.** If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Helene Bettencourt at (781) 338-3120.

**OVERVIEW**

Our joint meeting with the Board of Higher Education will include discussion of early college programs, teacher diversity initiatives, and evidence-based policymaking. Those materials are provided separately.

Following the joint meeting, we will convene the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education at 12:00 noon. The business agenda for the regular meeting leads off with two matters relating to the Competency Determination (CD), the state high school graduation standard: preliminary results from a Brown University study, and a vote to amend our regulations to extend the interim CD passing standard for one additional year to the class of 2023. In another regulatory matter, I recommend that the Board vote to solicit public comment on a proposed amendment to the Educator Licensure Regulations, to create a path for piloting alternative assessments for licensure that will promote equitable access for qualified educators to earn an educator license. We will discuss the new Student Opportunity Act, which was signed into law on November 26 and provides great opportunities as well as significant new responsibilities. The final business item is a vote to accept the surrender of a charter by City on a Hill Charter Public School New Bedford; I will also update the Board on the two City on a Hill Charter Public Schools located in Boston.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

1. **Milken Award winner**

On December 4, I joined Greg Gallagher from the Milken Family Foundation to surprise Margaret Hersey, an English teacher at Springfield Honors Academy, with a $25,000 Milken Educators Award. In addition to her work inside the classroom, Ms. Hersey is the academy’s teacher leader for curriculum and runs the academy’s Adventure Club. The academy is at the High School of Commerce, which is part of the Springfield Empowerment Zone.

**Comments from the Secretary**

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

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Competency Determination**
2. **Brown University Study – Discussion**
3. **Competency Determination Regulations (Extend Interim Passing Standard for Class of 2023) – Discussion and Vote**

We will review two topics relating to the Competency Determination (CD), the state high school graduation standard. First, we will discuss preliminary results from a study that Brown University is conducting. Second, I recommend that the Board vote to adopt an amendment to the regulations that govern the CD, to extend the interim passing standard for one additional year to the class of 2023. We solicited public comment on the proposed amendment this fall and received no comments. Brown University Professor John Papay, Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner Michol Stapel, and Lucy Wall of our legal staff will join us for the discussion on December 17.

1. **Proposed Amendment to Educator Licensure Regulations (Pilot Alternative Assessment for Licensure) – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

I am presenting to the Board a proposed amendment to 603 CMR 7.00, the Educator Licensure Regulations, for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. The proposed amendment would create opportunities to pilot and learn from alternative assessments for licensure that will promote equitable access for qualified educators to earn an educator license. With the Board’s approval, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) will solicit comment on the proposed amendment, with the goal of bringing it back to the Board for a final vote in March 2020. The materials under Tab 2 provide detailed information. Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske and Meagan Comb, Director for Educator Effectiveness, will be at the meeting to respond to your questions.

1. **Student Opportunity Act: Update and Next Steps – Discussion**

On November 26, Governor Baker signed into law the Student Opportunity Act. This landmark legislation is based on the recommendations of the 2015 Foundation Budget Review Commission. When fully implemented over the next seven years, it will provide a significant infusion of new funds to our public schools. The law gives us the opportunity to make real progress in closing persistent achievement gaps and ensuring that all of our students have an opportunity to succeed. I look forward to discussing the new law and anticipated next steps with the Board on December 17.

1. **Charter Schools**
2. **Surrender of Charter for City on a Hill Charter Public School New Bedford – Discussion and Vote**
3. **Update on City on a Hill Charter Public Schools: Dudley Square and Circuit Street – Discussion**

On November 25, the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School New Bedford (CoaH NB) voted to surrender its charter, effective June 30, 2020. The school has been unable to attract enrollment sufficient to maintain financial viability. I recommend that the Board vote to accept the surrender of the charter granted to CoaH NB. The memorandum under Tab 4 provides a history of CoaH NB, next steps for CoaH NB’s closure, and an update related to the two City on a Hill Charter Public Schools located in Boston. Senior Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang and Alison Bagg, Director, will be at the meeting to answer your questions.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **State Education Budget Transmittal Letter from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Enclosed is my memorandum to Secretary Peyser transmitting the Board’s FY2021 state education budget priorities, per the Board’s vote at our November meeting.

1. **Report on Grants Approved by the Commissioner**

Under Tab 6 is information on grants that I have approved since the last meeting, under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

1. **Chronically Underperforming Schools Quarter 2 Reports**

Enclosed is the second of four FY2020 quarterly progress updates to the Board on the four chronically underperforming schools. The School Empowerment Network provided the narrative for this update, based on classroom observations that group led over the past two months.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you at Mount Wachusett Community College on December 17.