*****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:** | April 17, 2020 – Updated April 24, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the April 28, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Meeting by Remote Participation) |

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on **Tuesday, April 28, 2020**. Members will be participating remotely, in light of the ongoing pandemic and Governor Baker’s emergency [order](https://41g41s33vxdd2vc05w415s1e-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OpenMtgLaw_ExecOrder_Mar32020.pdf) of March 12, 2020, modifying the Open Meeting Law. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **11:00 a.m.** Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements for our virtual meeting; please email or call them if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

Our agenda will lead off with an update on the actions the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is taking to support schools, students, and families during the current state of emergency. Other items on the agenda for discussion include an update on education budget matters and initial review of proposed amendments to the regulations on education collaboratives.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Commissioner**

**Comments from the Secretary**

**Approval of the Minutes of the March 31, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Update on COVID-19 Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**

The public health emergency continues to dominate our lives and our work. The Department is continuing to work energetically with the Administration, the Legislature, and education stakeholders to support schools, students, and families through this crisis. Under Tab 1 are some of the guidance documents and resources that we have produced and disseminated widely in the past several weeks. At our meeting on April 28, I will review key actions the Department has taken, update you on new information, and answer your questions. Other members of our senior leadership team will join the discussion.

1. **Proposed Modifications to the Competency Determination Requirement for Current High School Seniors During the COVID-19 Emergency – Discussion and Vote**

Legislation recently enacted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allows the Board, upon my recommendation, to modify or waive the requirements of the competency determination (CD) for high school graduation in order to address disruptions caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 or the state of emergency. I am recommending that the Board discuss and vote on April 28 to authorize a temporary emergency process by which high school seniors and other actively enrolled students who were on track to graduate in the 2019-2020 school year can earn the CD through successful completion of a relevant high school course. This is not intended to be a permanent pathway to earning a CD, but rather a temporary measure needed in response to the extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic. The memo under Tab 2 provides details.

1. **Update on Education Budget Matters – Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will brief the Board on the latest information we have relating to federal and state funding for K-12 education.

1. **Education Collaboratives: Overview and Proposed Amendments to Regulations, 603 CMR 50.00 – Discussion and Vote**

The Department will present an overview on education collaboratives and changes resulting from the 2019 amendments to the state law. Last month, the Board voted to delegate to the Commissioner the decision-making around two provisions of the amended statute, relating to the organization and leadership of collaborative regions around the state. This month, I am asking the Board to send out for public comment proposed amendments to our regulations on education collaboratives, to conform to the amended statute. With the Board’s approval, we will invite public comment and plan to bring the regulations back to the Board in June for a final vote. Members of the Department staff will be available at our meeting to answer your questions.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

I am presenting information on grants and charter schools matters that I have approved since February, under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

1. **Chronically Underperforming Schools Quarter 3 Reports**

Enclosed is the third-quarter FY2020 progress update to the Board on the chronically underperforming schools.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you – virtually – on April 28.