*****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:**  | October 9, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | 2021 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Announcement |

At our October 20 meeting, I look forward to announcing the 2021 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and introducing the individual to the Board. Each year, the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year program honors a Massachusetts teacher who exemplifies excellent teaching in the Commonwealth. Beyond celebrating the individual, the program looks at the complex work that is involved in educating all students and reiterates the importance of the teacher as the single most important school-based factor in improving student outcomes.

This year, 120 educators were nominated for this honor. Thirty of those completed applications, and 12 became semifinalists. From there, we selected four finalists who were screened by a panel of eight individuals: Our four most recent Massachusetts teachers of the year and four DESE staff members. It is an honor to be selected a semifinalist or finalist, and we are grateful for the applicants’ flexibility as the process unfolded over a longer than usual timeframe and through video conferencing instead of in person.

In a strong field of finalists, our 2021 Teacher of the Year was the unanimous choice of our screening panel. I know you will enjoy meeting our new Teacher of the Year.