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| Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Logo | | |
|  | Advisory Councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: Annual Reports for 2021-2022 | |
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| October 2022 | |
| Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906  Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370  www.doe.mass.edu | |
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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

October 2022

Dear Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,

Enclosed please find the 2021-2022 Advisory Councils’ Annual Reports to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Advisory councils, established by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15, Section 1G, advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters pertinent to the implementation of education reform in the Commonwealth and offer programmatic recommendations.

There are currently 12 advisory councils: Adult Basic Education, Arts Education, Braille Literacy, Digital Learning, Educational Personnel, English Language Learners/Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Parent and Community Education and Involvement, Racial Imbalance, School and District Accountability and Assistance, Special Education, and Vocational Technical Education Advisory Council. This document compiles the reports from the eight advisory councils that submitted a report this year. In addition, the State Student Advisory Council, whose members are elected by other students rather than appointed, is an active and important advisory council to the Board. The Board received the report from the State Student Advisory Council in June 2022.

Each council’s annual report, submitted by the council chair, includes a summary of the work of the council, recommendations to the Commissioner and Board, council leadership and membership, and meetings held. The reports and their recommendations are those of the councils and not of the Department.

Thank you to the council members and liaisons for their time, efforts, and constructive feedback. If the Board is interested in greater detail on the activities and recommendations of any council, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

**Braille Literacy Advisory Council**

**2021– 2022 Annual Report**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrlAC) was established in 1997 by the Massachusetts Department of Education in compliance with provisions of the Braille Literacy Act of 1996. This nine-member council, appointed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, is responsible for developing policies, making recommendations on best practices, and providing technical assistance to parents, educators, administrators, and rehabilitation personnel on how to provide braille literacy services to students and adults who are blind in the Commonwealth.

**II. 2021-2022 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

The Braille Literacy Advisory Council held four virtual meetings during the school year 2021-22.

Topics discussed:

1. Feedback to DESE Student Assessment Services
2. Braille competency test for persons who are certified as a teacher of students with visual impairments

Business items conducted

1. Review of the BrlAC Charge
2. Vacancies
3. Updated the BrlAC list-serv
4. Braille Competency Test

The Praxis Braille Proficiency from Educational Testing Service (ETS) is a test to measure the requisite braille knowledge and skills that an entry-level teacher of visually impaired students (TVI) or an entry-level teacher of braille must possess. Topics covered on the test are UEB non-technical text and math in both UEB and Nemeth Code. The test taker must use both a traditional slate and stylus and a manual brailler for the transcription assignments. Test items measure knowledge in the areas of braille reading and writing.

The Council continued its review of the Braille Praxis exam from Educational Testing Service (ETS) at the October 5 meeting and drafted a proposal document. It included a background section, summary of work and proposed implementation of changes to the licensure process for Massachusetts Teacher of the Visually Impaired, a timeline for rollout and considerations for professional development in support of braille competency and instruction. The proposal document was finalized at the end of January and submitted.

Stakeholder representatives were invited to the April 6 meeting. Representatives from AMESVI and the Vision Studies Program at UMass Boston attended the presentation and participated in a question and answer session with the ETS representatives. The presentation included a thorough review of test items with a look at the question formats and scoring for reading in Nemeth code, UEB math, and UEB non-technical content. Example items for the production assignments with slate and stylus and braillewriter were also reviewed and discussed. Production assignments included content in UEB non-technical, UEB math and Nemeth Code. The group also had an opportunity to hear about the standard setting process for the test which took place in January 2015. A panel of twelve educators, working with a form of the test, made judgments about the expected performance of the “Just Qualified Candidate” or JQC to produce a passing score recommendation. Some questions raised during the presentation required further research and discussion. A subcommittee of Council members was assembled to compile and summarize the information.

**III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Braille Literacy Advisory Council recommended adoption of the Praxis Braille Proficiency test to meet the requirements detailed in the Massachusetts Braille Bill.

**IV. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:**

**Department Liaison:** Martha Daigle

**Chair:** Wendy Buckley

**Members of the 2021-2022 Council:**

Kim Charlson: Consumer Representative, Bay State Council of the Blind

Amy Ruell: Consumer Representative, National Federation of the Blind

Kate Crohan: Braille Reader, Perkins School for the Blind

Jackie Sheridan: Braille Producer, National Braille Press (ended October 2021)

Wendy Buckley: Educator, Perkins School for the Blind and UMass Boston Vision Studies

Katrina Traut Savino: Educator, Brockton Public Schools

The following individuals have been recommended as new members, have attended meetings, and await appointment confirmation/letters from DESE.

Amber Pearcy: Braille Producer, National Braille Press

Daisy Russell Kadlik, braille reader

Jessica Wetzel, parent

An additional role for parent representative remains unfilled

**Council Meeting Dates:**

All meetings were held via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person gatherings.

Meeting dates: October 5, 2021; January 11, 2022; March 8, 2022; June 7, 2022

**Digital Learning Advisory Council**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

**I. Introduction**

The 2013 virtual schools legislation ([Chapter 379 of the Acts of 2012, An Act Establishing Commonwealth Virtual Schools](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379)[[1]](#footnote-2)) created the Digital Learning Advisory Council (DLAC) to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner) on:

* The development of policies guiding virtual schools, supplemental online courses, education technology, and other matters related to virtual education.
* The identification of best practices to encourage online education to complement classroom instruction in district schools.
* The assessment of the appropriateness of the fee that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) may retain for the administration of the virtual school program.

The law specifies that the DLAC includes representatives from various statewide education organizations, districts and schools including virtual schools (i.e., teacher, administrator, parent), higher education, and non-profit and technology companies. The current DLAC includes a broad range of experts who meet these criteria.

**II. Work of the Council in 2021-22**

During the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the DLAC spent a significant amount of time and effort advising the Department and the Commissioner on how to best support school districts interested in delivering remote and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the 2021-22 school year, the DLAC underwent a shift in membership. During the winter, 3 of the 15 members’ terms expired, and two people stepped down. In January, the Department issued a call for candidates to fill five DLAC vacancies through the Commissioner’s Weekly Update. The composition of the council is outlined in the virtual schools legislation passed in 2013. The Department sought the following statutory members as outlined in the statute: a secondary school administrator and a representative of an institution of higher education that provides online K-12 education, as well as a representative from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Virtual High School (VHS).

No applications were received by the Department to replace the representative of a secondary school administrator. The Department will continue to look for a representative to fill that position. Furthermore, six DLAC members will complete their first terms in the fall of 2022, and we will recommend reappointments at that time.

The DLAC met four times during the 2021-22 school year. Members were engaged in sharing experiences from the field, surfacing issues, and problem solving. During the year the DLAC received updates from the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign and the Office of Education Technology about Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (CMVS), CMVS Accountability and Renewal, and Single District Virtual Schools (SDVS), and all things education technology related. The DLAC also received updates from the Berkshire Resources for Learning and Innovation, which began in the spring of 2020 as a consortium of Berkshire County school districts partnering to adopt a shared learning management system, with the goal to ensure equitable access to high-quality online/remote learning for students across the Berkshires. In addition, the DLAC members provided feedback to the Department regarding the Education Technology Planning and Systems Guide. Lastly, the DLAC discussed, brainstormed, and documented several issues and concerns about the long-term sustainability of equitable access to digital learning beyond 2021-22 in the following areas:

* Issues of diversity and inclusion
* Home connectivity and the work with the Education Superhighway
* Serving medically fragile students virtually
* Measuring the impact of technology and the COVID relief funds for technology
* Student data privacy issues
* The criticality of the newly minted Department’s Education Technology Team, for the purposes of forwarding this agenda
* Educational resources for K-12
* Learning Management System/Platform/Curriculum
* Accountability for virtual schools
* CMVS Performance Criteria
* Teacher evaluation process for CMVS
* Revision of CMVS regulations to include SDVS
* Online learning and education technology in rural schools
* Pedagogical quality of platforms and curriculum material for virtual schools
* Professional development, professional learning, staff
* MIAA sponsorship of sports and Commonwealth Virtual Schools

**III. Council Details**

**Department Administrator:** Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign

**Co-Chairs:** Angela T. Burke and Elizabeth Tripathi (term ended winter 2022)

**Members of the 2021-22 DLAC:**

* Amanda Huggon-Mauretti, parent of a student currently attending a virtual school in Massachusetts
* Amy Michalowski, Dean, The VHS Learning (term completed winter 2022)
* Andrea Wadsworth, Mt. Greylock Regional School District
* Angela T. Burke, Director of Professional Services, Collaborative for Educational Services
* Bill Silver, Director of Information Communication and Technology Services, Chelmsford Public Schools
* Daniel Murphy, Director of Education Policy and Programs, American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts (stepped down winter 2022)
* David O’Connor, Founding Executive Director, MAPLE Consortium
* Elizabeth Tripathi, Education Policy Specialist, Massachusetts Teachers Association (term completed winter 2022)
* Jared Perrine, Director of Technology, Narragansett Regional School District
* Keith Ford, Assistant Principal, Needham High School (stepped down winter 2022)
* Lynn McCormack, Software Engineer, Center for Applied Special Technology
* Patrick Larkin, Assistant Superintendent, Burlington Public Schools, (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents)
* Robert Reilly, School Committee Member, Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical
* Sarah Haavind, Senior Research Project Manager, The Concord Consortium
* Sarah Kyriazis, Manager of Instructional Technology and Digital Learning, Worcester Public Schools (term completed winter 2022)
* Ms. Stacy Young, Associate Dean of Instruction, VHS Learning (term commenced March 2022)
* Ms. Cindy Yetman, Vice President, American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts (term commenced March 2022)
* Dr. Ricardo Rosa, Director, Center for Education and Practice, Massachusetts Teachers Association (term commenced March 2022)
* Dr. Daniel Downs, Director of Digital Learning North Reading Public Schools and Adjunct Professor at Bunker Hill Community College and Northern Essex Community College – representative of an institution of higher education that provides online K-12 education (term commenced March 2022)
* Dr. Anna Nolin, Superintendent of Schools, Natick Public Schools – At-Large Position (term commenced March 2022)

**Council Meeting Dates:**

October 6, 2021; December 16, 2021; March 29, 2022; and June 28, 2022

**Educational Personnel Advisory Council**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

**I.** **INTRODUCTION**

The Educational Personnel Advisory Council (EPAC) advises the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on issues pertaining to all educational personnel and specifically on policy and programming pertaining to the educator workforce.

During 2021-2022, EPAC focused on the licensing, support and employment of emergency license holders; the Massachusetts Educator Workforce; and the educator preparation review process.

**II. 2021-2022 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

At each meeting, EPAC members provided updates on the work at their respective organizations. In addition, DESE provided a written update from the Licensure and Educator Effectiveness offices that was shared in advance of the meeting, followed by time allocated for questions and discussions. Based on a survey issued prior to the first meeting, EPAC members identified the following top five priority items: 1) Diversity workforce, 2) Recruiting and Hiring, 3) MTEL Test Updates and Alternative Assessment, 4) Induction & Mentoring, and 5) Partnerships between Educator Preparation Programs & PK-12 Districts. These topics were interwoven into the agendas for each of the four meetings.

The following were the focus areas at meetings in 2021-22:

* **The Emergency License –** EPAC members shared their thinking and feedback on how DESE could support emergency license holders in getting employed and advancing to a permanent license. This topic was a standing agenda item at each meeting, and we were able to discuss this topic from various points and perspectives, including sharing updates on what we were learning from the ELAR and EPIMS data. In addition, members made supportive recommendations on what newly emergency license holders need to move to the next stage of licensure and providing information to school leadership so that they can better support these emergency licensed educators. The following were some of the questions EPAC considered in their advisement to DESE:
  + Additional ideas to support emergency licensure holders; and resources for schools and districts that are hiring and retaining teachers
  + What is currently being done in support of emergency license holders, what additional supports are necessary?
  + Are they ready to take the MTEL, what additional preparation would be supportive?
  + Is there MTEL preparation that could be scaled in the summer?
  + How do we keep them invested in teaching?
* **The Educator Workforce** –
  + COVID-19 and the Composition of the MA Teacher Workforce - see policy brief [here](https://wheelockpolicycenter.org/effective-teachers/covid-19-and-ma-teacher-workforce/)
  + [Educator Data Dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNGQ2NmM5ZGItZjgyNS00ZjEyLWEyYmMtZDBkZGQxMWJiMTFlIiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9) - EPAC provided insight and advisement based on discussions about: 1) How do you envision working with this data to inform your work?; 2) What is missing from this dashboard?; and 3) Other considerations?
* **Educator Preparation Program Review** – EPAC received an update on where we are headed with the new review process for the next cycle of reviews. Included in the discussion was:
  + [Update on where we have been and where we are now](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/program-approval/) and where we are headed
  + Role for EPAC in 2022-23 – This will be the main area of focus for EPAC for the coming year.

In summary, the insights and good thinking from EPAC members helped shape the development of, support for, and resources associated with the following:

* Licensing, support, and employment of emergency license holders
* Release of the [Educator Data Dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNGQ2NmM5ZGItZjgyNS00ZjEyLWEyYmMtZDBkZGQxMWJiMTFlIiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)
* New Educator Preparation Program review process. As noted above, based on the context setting of the new review process for educator preparation programs, we will focus time at each meeting in 2022-23 to get members’ insight and feedback on this [new process](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/program-approval/).

**IV. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Liaison:** Elizabeth C. Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy

**Members of EPAC:**

| **Name** | **Title** | **Representing Organization** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ms. Desiree Ivey, 2021-2022 EPAC Chair | Executive Director, Shady Hill Teacher Training Center | Shady Hill School |
| Mr. John Antonucci | Superintendent, Duxbury Public Schools | Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents |
| Dr. Ray Lewis | Dean, Worcester State University | Standing Committee on Preparing Educators, Public University System |
| Ms. Carol Gregory | Executive Director | Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators |
| Dr. Cheryl Stanley | Past President | Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education |
| Mr. Daniel Murphy | Director of Ed. Policy & Programs | American Federation of Teachers, MA |
| Mr. Richard Pearson | Associate Executive Director | Massachusetts School Administrators Association |
| Ms. Elizabeth Shevlin Tripathi | Educational Policy Specialist | Massachusetts Teachers Association |
| Mr. Elijah Heckstall | Principal | Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School |
| Ms. Jill Flanders | Elementary Committee Member | Massachusetts School Administrators Association |
| Mr. Takeru Nagayoshi | 2020 MA Teacher of the Year | Panorama Education |
| Danielle Phillips | Managing Director of Paradigm Shift | Five College Consortium |
| Sam Offsey | Student, Student Advisory Council Member | Lexington High School |

**Council Meeting Dates:** November 9, 2021; February 10, 2022; April 14, 2022; and May 24, 2022

**English Language/Bilingual Education Advisory Council (ELBAC)**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

**INTRODUCTION.** This ELBAC committee was primarily appointed in spring 2018, with new members joining in the 2019-2021, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 School Years. For SY 2021-2022, the ELBAC has been tasked *with* ***“providing input and advice on family engagement and other DESE initiatives as they relate to racial equity for English and multilingual learners.”***

**Tasks associated with the charge:**

1. Provide advice and feedback related to the OLA parent guidance page
2. Organize and prepare for Parent & Family Convening in June 2022
3. Provide input on OLA ELE network sessions
4. Include student and parent voices to all ELBAC activities
5. **2022 WORK OF THE COUNCIL.** The ELBAC held three meetings, including a SLIFE educator panel, during which we examined the following education topics and conducted the following business items:
   1. ***Education Topics Examined***
      1. Rapid increase in immigrant and refugee students
      2. Supporting refugee, newcomer, and SLIFE students
      3. Additional topics requested by the Department
         1. EL Blueprint Resources
         2. Family Engagement
         3. ELE Network Sessions
         4. [Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F__https%3A%2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%2F%3Furl%3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Fwww.doe.mass.edu*2Fsfs*2Ffamily-engagement-framework.pdf*26data*3D04*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7C14090a605d1947152e0908d9fd534b03*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637819356455386056*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*26sdata*3DI*2F3NjL0cop2XEvC7Nm2QyPS8vmqoRfPTH8rVKZH*2BUX0*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSU!!CUhgQOZqV7M!2JOhqtQgZWGvxDrIernaM8IQy6BNcKDO5pe1yu_iPSjzuVZrW4zEEzTUJcQuERi3zU1uBw*24*26data*3D05*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7Cb1cdcf22a8be4f5366f408da26f530f8*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637865131803247583*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C*26sdata*3DSJmOMXqFHLxJGRgwL1sMDdR2Wm6XpxovIJFmIBbbb8k*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSoqKioqJSUqKioqKioqKioqKiolJSoqKiUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUl!!CUhgQOZqV7M!zNybslhPXfAcgHUVKwt9dQ8zwFgUiskwXMBT2gfr02xKttv1fU8WRweMTiIhVcsSZLF6YU8u*24*26data*3D05*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7C281b980e70e440b2292a08da29f6879d*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637868436131994384*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C*26sdata*3D9V6Ihb5sjn7hmSJBV1NYmhoGel5lM0dTMw3X9vTR7XM*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSoqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqJSUqKioqKioqKioqKioqKiolJSolJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSU) connecting MA Vision and Blueprint for EL Success
   2. ***Business Items Conducted***
      1. Receipt and review of Open Meeting Materials
      2. Review of ELBAC Charge
      3. Vacancies
6. **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS.** Based on our three meetings, the ELBAC makes the following recommendations:
   1. Provide more resources for working with refugee, newcomer, and SLIFE students
      1. Home Language Literacy and Numeracy- how do we test L1 skills?
      2. Provide resources for SLIFE students at different age/grade levels
      3. Need to address long-term goals of SLIFE such as employment opportunities and career readiness
      4. Need to consider overaged under-credited students in the system
      5. Need to consider COVID impacts on SLIFE students
      6. Need to consider additional home-family and socio-emotional stressors such as homelessness, child-care, parent re-unification, health
      7. Teacher preparation programs need to work in partnership with DESE in the development of new teachers in order to be better prepared to work with SLIFE and immigrant students
      8. SLIFE guidance from DESE, especially for lower incidence districts
      9. SEI did not include training for SLIFE, PD is needed now
      10. More supports for dually identified students (SLIFE/SWD)
      11. Get more input from the field on what resources are wanted/needed for working with SLIFE students and LTELs
   2. Provide more examples of “success”
      1. What does a successful co-taught or mainstream (non-self-contained) classroom with newcomers and SLIFE students look like?
      2. What are additional examples of districts using the EL Blueprint?
   3. More attention in general on how to support ELs, especially newcomers and SLIFE, in low incidence-districts
   4. Districts need more partnerships with IHEs
      1. Address teacher shortage
      2. Address contemporary education needs (i.e., working with SLIFE students)
   5. Strengthening family engagement capacity
7. **ADDITIONAL TOPICS REQUESTED BY DESE** 
   1. Feedback on EL Blueprint Resources
      1. Provide more examples of blueprint in action
   2. Feedback on Family Engagement
   3. Feedback on ELE Network Sessions
   4. Feedback on [Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F__https%3A%2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%2F%3Furl%3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fnam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com*2F*3Furl*3Dhttps*3A*2F*2Fwww.doe.mass.edu*2Fsfs*2Ffamily-engagement-framework.pdf*26data*3D04*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7C14090a605d1947152e0908d9fd534b03*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637819356455386056*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*26sdata*3DI*2F3NjL0cop2XEvC7Nm2QyPS8vmqoRfPTH8rVKZH*2BUX0*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSU!!CUhgQOZqV7M!2JOhqtQgZWGvxDrIernaM8IQy6BNcKDO5pe1yu_iPSjzuVZrW4zEEzTUJcQuERi3zU1uBw*24*26data*3D05*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7Cb1cdcf22a8be4f5366f408da26f530f8*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637865131803247583*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C*26sdata*3DSJmOMXqFHLxJGRgwL1sMDdR2Wm6XpxovIJFmIBbbb8k*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSoqKioqJSUqKioqKioqKioqKiolJSoqKiUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUl!!CUhgQOZqV7M!zNybslhPXfAcgHUVKwt9dQ8zwFgUiskwXMBT2gfr02xKttv1fU8WRweMTiIhVcsSZLF6YU8u*24*26data*3D05*7C01*7CChristine.Leider*40umb.edu*7C281b980e70e440b2292a08da29f6879d*7Cb97188711ee94425953c1ace1373eb38*7C0*7C1*7C637868436131994384*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C*26sdata*3D9V6Ihb5sjn7hmSJBV1NYmhoGel5lM0dTMw3X9vTR7XM*3D*26reserved*3D0__*3BJSUlJSUlJSUlJSoqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqKioqJSUqKioqKioqKioqKioqKiolJSolJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSU) connecting MA Vision and Blueprint for EL Success
8. **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**
   1. In response to the presentation that the OLA Director made at our second convening about the growing number of immigrant students (including refugees and newcomers, many of whom are SLIFE) the ELBAC invited three SLIFE educators at different levels (classroom teacher, coach, and principal) to speak on a panel to inform recommendations for working with SLIFE students. The panelists also recommended the following actions related to operations and services delivery:
      1. When making operational plans, districts should be mindful of immigrant student population growth after start of school year and build in a plan for the necessary staffing and scheduling that would come with growth.
      2. We need to consider how to support low-incidence districts - not all districts have the numbers to develop a newcomer program/academy - but the newcomer and SLIFE students in these districts still deserve quality instruction.
      3. Develop co-teaching systems with content and ESL specialists.
      4. ESL teachers are not reading specialists or numeracy experts. The difference between ESL, literacy, and numeracy needs to be clarified and districts/schools need to consider what type of literacy and numeracy services are needed and who will be responsible for delivering these services.
   2. Throughout all our discussions this year, the topic of ESL teacher shortage came up. All three guest panelists also discussed challenges around staffing. We recommend that addressing the teacher shortage be on the agenda/charge for the following year.
   3. ELBAC meeting attendance was challenging this year: many administrators who were on the council were unable to attend fully (if at all) due to having to fill in for teachers due to staffing shortages. There is also a heavier representation of administrators than from classroom teachers. We would like DESE to consider providing funding (e.g., stipends to schools or districts) for coverage so that ELBAC members can fully participate and attend convenings.
9. **PLANS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR.** Upon reviewing the charge for SY2021-22, the ELBAC would like to engage in the following tasks for SY 2022-23:
   1. Address the ESL Teacher shortage, including possibilities to support and promote our bilingual paraprofessionals and other bilingual/bicultural staff within our schools to take on teaching/leadership roles.
   2. Discuss how to address the fact that EL students are not achieving reclassification level and therefore not being exited from EL status, which is resulting in higher enrollment of ELs and Long-term ELs.
   3. Discuss the distinct needs for those working in low-, mid-, and high-incidence districts
   4. Create platforms for districts to share their practices (e.g., curriculum, communication, etc.) and allow other districts to learn from each other and implement best practices
   5. Add more teachers to the panel
   6. More panels that include student and parent voice as well as educator voices from low- and mid-incidence districts
10. **COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:**

Sibel Hughes

**Department Liaison**:

David Valade

**Chairpersons**:

**Christine Montecillo Leider**, Asst. Prof. Applied Linguistics and ESL Licensure Coordinator, UMass-Boston / Vice-Pres, MATSOL

**Antonina Parris-Yarbrough**, EL Specialist, Excel Academy Charter Schools

**Members of the 2021-2022 Advisory Council**:

**Monica Abdullah**, Special Education/Vocational Tech Educator, The Center School, Holyoke

**Anis Abdulle**, Chair of the Board of Directors, African Community and Economic Development

of New England (ACEDONE)

**Meg Burns**, Assoc. Prof. TESOL/Bilingual Education, Lesley University

**Winki Chan**, Director of Education and Family Engagement, The Welcome Project, Somerville

**Craig Consigli,** Asst. Superintendent, Milford Public Schools

**Jill Davan**, Parent, ELD Instructional Coach/Teacher Dual Immersion, Framingham School District

**Virginia Guglielmo-Brady,** EL Director and Curriculum Coordinator, Pittsfield Public Schools

**Kellie Jones**, Director of Bilingual Education, Brockton Public Schools

**Meghan Lampert**, Parent, English Learner Teacher

**Kerri Lamprey**, ESL Curriculum Coordinator, Burlington Public Schools

**Christine Montecillo Leider**, Asst. Prof. Applied Linguistics and ESL Licensure Coordinator, UMass-Boston / Vice-Pres, MATSOL

**Heidys Mendez**, Parent Liaison, Haverhill Public Schools, Chatham Elementary School

**Ahmed Noor**, Director of EL Community Outreach, Boston Public Schools

**Andrea Parker**, Parent, DEI Consultant, Federation for Children with Special Needs, Senior Statewide Family Engagement Specialist

**Antonina Parris**, Dean of Student Supports, Excel Academy Charter Schools

**Mary Jo Rendón**, Re-engagement Specialist, Waltham School District

**Dalida Rocha,** Political Coordinator SEIU

**Taran Tiwari**, Nepali Parent Liaison, Springfield Public Schools

**ELBAC Meeting Dates:** SY 2021-2022

October 20, 2021; February 16, 2022; May 16, 2022

All meetings were held remotely on Zoom.

**Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

**I. Introduction**

*“Diversity is a fact, equity is a choice, inclusion is an action, and belonging is an outcome.” (Arthur Chan)*

The state of Massachusetts remains an outlier in its hands-off approach to educating its advanced students. In particular, the Commonwealth’s high-potential Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other students of color, as well as low-income, rural, twice-exceptional (2e), and ELL student populations, are too often hampered by inequitable resources and opportunity, resulting in untapped and underdeveloped potential.

**II. Work of the Council**

The Council was given the following charge for 2021/2022:

*The charge for the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council for SY2021-2022 will be to provide DESE/BESE recommendations on how to address the excellence gap in Massachusetts to ensure all students with advanced learning needs receive the supports they need to thrive.*

*The Commissioner has named the Identification of Evidence-Based Programs that Support the Advanced Learning Needs of All Students and the Process of Identifying Students to Receive these Supports, with an emphasis on racial equity, as the two priorities to center the Council’s work in FY22.*

The specific needs addressed in this report include, but are not limited to:

* Countering systemic racism and implicit bias, which perpetuates racial disparity in academically advanced programs;
* Equitable academic access and learning opportunities for all students, regardless of socio-economic level, regionality, culture, or race;
* Unique learning needs, including social-emotional needs, of all Gifted and Talented (G&T) students capable of high achievement, including those with twice exceptionalities, and with an emphasis on students of color;
* Discovery and activation of high potential in students who are otherwise unseen or missing from opportunities to excel;
* Multiple pathways and culturally appropriate methods for identification of students capable of high achievement; and
* Regional inequities, as rural students, and particularly rural poor students, lack resources and opportunities that might propel them to higher achievement.

Traditional Gifted and Talented identification systems, which have resulted in disparity in representation based on race and income in many programs, must be challenged. Recent research has shown that while U.S. schools identified 3.3 million students as gifted, another 3.6 million should have been identified as well. The missed population of students was “disproportionately Black, Hispanic and Indigenous students.” [(Gentry et al.)](https://hechingerreport.org/up-to-3-6-million-students-should-be-labeled-gifted-but-arent/)

The Commonwealth has both an opportunity and a responsibility to offer programs that support and uncover emerging talent as well as provide specific programming for students who could be identified as gifted and talented. We recommend the Commonwealth and DESE do so with a sense of urgency. Currently, only 2.6% of schools in Massachusetts have G&T program options, which in itself represents a state-wide equity gap.

Primarily under previous DESE leadership, over the past decade, this Council produced numerous recommendations on how to address the state’s G&T students’ needs and how to close the equity gap. Still, follow-through at the state level has been inadequate. As a result, we make this year’s 2021/22 recommendations with a renewed sense of urgency.

Our strong recommendation is that DESE and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts build systems and learning environments that support and develop all students’ capabilities and potential. Implicit bias, traditional eligibility tests, and rigid models of academically advanced programming which exclude or miss eligible students must give way to expanded programs that are inclusive, supportive, and nurturing of talent development in all students.

Improving and ensuring equity will require a multi-faceted approach. We believe all of the Commonwealth’s students will benefit from these recommendations, particularly Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other students of color, as well as low-income, rural, 2e, and ELL populations of students.

**III. Council Recommendations**

The 2021/22 GTAC strongly recommends the following actions to address the equity gaps that exist for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other students of color, as well as low-income, rural, 2e, and ELL students.

*State-led Curriculum Recommendations:*

* Deep examination of the current curriculum for racial bias to ensure culturally appropriate content that supports relevance, creativity, and identity, to activate student engagement and discover talents, and to provide access to culturally relevant advanced content and resources;
* Project-based learning, which allows for advanced learning, authentic learning, and new content for all and promotes student ownership of and connection to learning;
* Transition to competency-based learning/progression, granting students the right to experience learning growth in their zone of proximal development, with appropriate and responsive cohort grouping and pacing.

*Teacher and Administrator Recommendations*:

* Cultural and racial diversification of educators to create an educator corps representative of the student body and school community to foster a greater sense of connection and belonging for students;
* Educator and administrator professional training in the field of G&T education, including training on racial and socio-economic inequity and implicit bias and the special social-emotional needs of this population and how they impact identification and participation in advanced classwork.

*Identification Recommendations:*

* Ample educational and enrichment opportunities (e.g., extended school day and out of school times, incl. pre-K) before selection into programming, serving to eliminate barriers to inclusion and decrease racial and low-socioeconomic disproportionality in advanced learning opportunities;
* Universal and frequent culturally appropriate screenings, which serve to help rather than exclude in the identification of candidates;
* Use of local norms in identification protocols which would improve numbers of potential participants and also improve equitable representation within student populations in advanced programs;
* Multiple pathways for inclusion including but not limited to universal screening, referrals (by teacher, parent, self, peers), qualitative and quantitative data, portfolios that are equitable and culturally responsive, and a fluid concept of giftedness that allows for diverse and evolving inclusion;
* Culturally relevant competency-based assessments (from Kindergarten on and ongoing) which then direct the appropriate pace of learning, including content area acceleration, grade level acceleration, and learning in students’ zone of proximal development;
* Frequent family engagement and support, including outreach and advocacy by school personnel to increase awareness and participation in advanced learning opportunities, especially in communities of color and lower socio-economics.

*Program Recommendations:*

* Evolving, inclusive and intentional development of talent pool which proportionally represents the racial, cultural, and economic diversity of the student population;
* Accountability: Ongoing program evaluation using valid tools and data review, which ensures representative student inclusion, aligns assessment outcomes with appropriate services and equitable opportunities, and measures student growth.

*DESE Action Recommendations:*

* Accountability on a district and state level for meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of high-ability students, with an emphasis on Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other students of color, as well as low-income, rural, 2e, and ELL populations of students, through district reporting and Educator Supervision and Evaluation;
* Promote and expand state-wide educator diversification initiatives;
* Pre-service, licensure and recertification: Require state-wide training and professional development for school administrators and teachers, and DESE staff in the field of G&T education and talent development, including training to combat racial and implicit bias and increase cultural sensitivity;
* Equitable regional funding must include transportation, access to technology, and material resources, especially in rural areas, to begin to address regional inequities and develop emerging talent;
* An Acceleration Policy that drives accountability and is universal throughout the state to bring this educational strategy to all districts, with outreach to families;
* State-wide early access and state-funded dual enrollment in college-level classes and advanced online learning opportunities to encourage access to higher education and help mitigate higher education debt for lower-income students;

If the goal is to effectively address racial disproportionality in gifted education, there must be accountability on the state level for the consistent administration of equitable services for G&T and academically advanced students across all districts.

The Council cannot recommend strongly enough requiring professional development and training for school administrators and teachers, and DESE staff not just in the field of Gifted and Talented education, but more specifically on how systemic bias, implicit bias, and cultural insensitivity impact the identification and trajectory of students capable of high achievement.

References

* Gentry, M., Gray, A., Whiting, G. W. (in press). Black youth in gifted education: Access, equity, and missingness across the U. S. status and solutions. Urban Education.
* Office for Civil Rights data collection (2017-2018 OCR CRDC)

**IV. Council Details**

**Council Members:** Donna Potter Astion (Chair 2021-present); Meena Bharath (Chair 2020-2021); Dr. Katharina Elbert (Co-chair); Kenya Guerra; Prof. Betsy McCoach; Yaileen Moscat; Tyrone Mowatt; Takeru Nagayoshi; Courtney Perdios; Magalie Pinney; Dr. MaryGrace Stewart; Lance Sun; Heny Taraz; Myriam Ulloa-Skolnick

**DESE Representatives**: Thomas Zorich (Liaison), Sheika Edmond, Dr. Regina Robinson, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez (2020-2021)

**Council Meeting Dates in 2021-2022**

July 15, 2021; September 16, 2021; November 18, 2021; January 20, 2022; February 17, 2022; March 17, 2022; May 19, 2022

**Racial Imbalance Advisory Committee (RIAC)**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

The RIAC membership is co-chaired by Bill Newell and Kahris White-McLaughlin; the membership includes culturally and racially diverse members Gloria Buffonge, LaTonia Naylor, Superintendent of Schools Michael Morris, Raul Fernandez, Christina Horner, Christine Murray, Charlotte Clarke, Cleonie Mainveille, Jessica Samuels, John Ritz, Barbara Fields, and Kenann McKenzie. RIAC’s DESE liaisons Erick Alvarez-Warner and Sylvia Lam have served for two school years, and they have provided much needed guidance and information which facilitates the work process of RIAC. The council met at least seven times during the school year on October 14, 2021, December 9, 2021, February 10. 2022, March 10, 2022, April 7, 2022, May 12, 2022, and June 9, 2022, and held one subcommittee meeting early in the School Year.

The Covid Pandemic has affected the work of RIAC; in the effort to maintain social distancing, RIAC has had Zoom meetings to ensure the safety and good health of the membership. RIAC has found that it is sometimes difficult to have the necessary conversations about race at a distance and the group hopes to return to meeting together during the next school year.

RIAC has fulfilled the Commissioner’s requests and charges concerning teacher diversity and continues to support his diversity goal of 26% for teachers; RIAC has expanded that vision to include a 26% goal for both superintendents and principals. RIAC has also worked with other councils and/or DESE staff when requested to ensure a context for racial balance and inclusion. A review of the Racial Imbalance guidelines as presented in the Massachusetts General Laws that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees sends to school committees and school superintendents annually demonstrates the need for a charge from the Commissioner to update this antiquated law similarly to the regulations for the 2017 English Language Learners.

**Family Engagement**

The Family Engagement Unit presented to RIAC and the group supports the enhancement of that unit; RIAC will continue to collaborate with DESE staff person Olga Lopez to ensure that the implementation of the stated goals and objectives presented by her to the group continue to include efforts that should result in the increase of racially diverse and culturally competent and responsive school staff in both the administrative and teacher categories that will more readily respond to the needs of families, and the communities from which they come. The example of this effort by the Parents and Community Engagement and Involvement Council (PCEIC) Initiative which created the framework serves as a model to RIAC in its endeavor to create an Equity Bureau at DESE.

RIAC believes that the engagement of all families must be supported by racially and culturally diverse community agencies to ensure that academic, social, and emotional gaps will close. RIAC also hopes that the Family Engagement Unit will provide DESE staff the opportunity to work more closely with families and school districts. At this point, RIAC has limited information about the funding sources allocated for this work but supports sufficient funding and looks forward to more collaboration next school year.

**RIAC participated in the Implementation of Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems for schools in disadvantaged communities**

RIAC met with Matthew Deninger, who is responsible for the HVAC program that will provide HVAC upgrades to public schools through a $100 million grant from the US Department of Education, and Senior Associate Commissioner William Bell, who is responsible for the procurement process at DESE. RIAC and Matt developed recommendations that are both cost-effective and efficient so that the children can breathe safely through an enhanced air quality while in school. RIAC and Matt decided together recommendations that might best address the needs of children who may attend schools which may have been built in the early 1900s.

**RIAC met with the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Tom Scott, and the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Glenn Koocher**

RIAC invited the input of Tom Scott and Glenn Koocher and RIAC appreciated the opportunity to share educational strategies; RIAC met with these school leaders two times this year. RIAC discussed school accountability strategies and educator diversity and shared its plan to request an Equity Bureau to work with DESE to ensure the closure of academic, social and emotional gaps experienced by too many children of color, others who are historically marginalized, and students who may be socioeconomically disadvantaged. During these meetings, Tom and Glenn shared their concern about the lack of representation of citizens of color during Massachusetts State Legislature deliberations and law development. As a result of these meetings, RIAC reaffirmed its commitment to be present in the development of legal protections for all children who attend public schools in our Commonwealth. RIAC will submit a copy of this report, along with the two versions of the Equity Plan to both MASC and MASS. RIAC will continue to work collaboratively during the next school year with the leadership of MASC and MASS in the goal to close all educational gaps.

**The Commissioner will update the Civics Curriculum in school year 2022-2023**

RIAC applauds the Commissioner’s effort to address RIAC’s increasing concerns about Critical Race Theory legal challenges in Massachusetts. RIAC is deeply concerned about the public attempts to rewrite historical fact and believes that students should have access to accurate information about both our state and our nation. DESE’s Civics Unit, which also includes social studies and history curriculum, has reached out to RIAC, and it is hoped that RIAC will be able to work with this unit in the next school year to ensure that children who attend the Commonwealth’s public schools are taught by teachers who have been given factual historical information.

RIAC believes that the presentation of accurate historical information rather than sanitized historical narrative will render all students knowledgeable citizens who will confidently exercise their first amendment rights and who will gain the skills to participate in the development of inclusive government and to become civic leaders in the future. In embracing civic engagement, the Commissioner has taken an innovative approach that could serve as a model to the nation: the US Supreme Court may well decide to hear the court case, Cooke v. Raimondo, brought by urban students of color who attend Rhode Island public schools who have claimed that they do not have equal access to civics curriculum.

Judge Smith from the Court of Appeals agreed with the student claim but could not rule for them; he cited that lack of a constitutional right to quantum education. At the same time, the denial of basic literacy which is necessary for learning and civic engagement was the foundation of the 2020 Gary v. Whitmer public school case in Michigan: though the governor’s office and state educators claimed that there was no constitutional duty to provide literacy to students in Detroit Public Schools, a Settlement Agreement determined otherwise, and damages were paid. Amazingly, the case did not establish the right to read and rejected Judge Eric Clay’s opinion that the right to read is implicitly protected by the fourteenth amendment. These are present day issues of systemic racism in America’s public schools and political and/or judicial partisanship/bias should have no place in the education of our nation’s children.

**Racial isolation in the Commonwealth’s School Systems**

The issues of racial isolation are still prevalent in the Commonwealth’s public schools. RIAC viewed a YouTube documentary entitled “Evolution Awakened Steps” which compared the enriched educational experiences of white-passing Asian and Hispanic students who attend school at Wellesley High School with their darker-skinned African American counterparts; both the Asian and the Hispanic student acknowledged the benefits of lighter skin. At the same time, an administrator of color described his daily work experience as difficult; he is one of a few staff of color in Wellesley Public Schools. Educators who are beset by systemic racism will find it difficult to adequately educate and advocate for marginalized students.

On the legislative front, in 2018 the United States District Court in Boston heard the anti-affirmative action college admissions case, Students for Fair Admissions vs. Harvard University, and determined that students of African and Hispanic descent should be part of Harvard’s freshman class; during arguments, Harvard’s lawyers blamed the inefficiencies of K-12 education nationwide for the failure to provide fully prepared students of color. This case may also be heard at the Supreme Court in school year 2022-2023.

**RIAC submits the following recommendations for school year 2022-2023**

1. RIAC requested an end of year meeting with Commissioner Riley and RIAC leadership met with Deputy Commissioner, Regina Robinson and she has attended several of our RIAC meetings. The meeting with the Commissioner did not occur this school year and RIAC would like to meet with the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education by October 2022 to discuss issues of race within the Commonwealth’s public schools:
   1. Historically marginalized student access within vocational schools
   2. The increase from a class of 6 to 10 students for purposes of school accountability as demonstrated in access to Advanced Placement courses.
      1. In the past, DESE has suppressed student outcome information for classes of less than six. A recent review of Advanced Placement Courses demonstrates that the historic class size of six students has been increased to ten which will further suppress the data of students of color who may attend school in suburban school communities.[[2]](#footnote-3)
   3. The receivership of schools and districts in Massachusetts which predominantly affects the teaching and learning of students of color in general, and Hispanic students in particular.
2. The expansion of the Commissioner’s goal of 26% teacher diversity to include a parity rate of 26% within the Superintendent and principal categories. RIAC believes that positive educational change begins with the leadership of schools and districts.
3. RIAC will continue to meet with Executive Director Tom Scott of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, and Glenn Koocher, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, to work on mutual goals concerning staff diversity and the closure of academic, social, and emotional gaps of historically marginalized children and diversity within the superintendent group and the school committee membership.
4. RIAC has suggested the following recommendations for DESE’s HVAC Program:
   * + 1. Non-competitive grants for high-poverty school districts
       2. The purchase of air filtration units ($1,000 each)
       3. The installation of windows that can open to provide cross ventilation in old school buildings,
       4. Twenty-five percent people of color and women representation in construction contracts,
       5. RIAC participation between July 1, 2022, in the development of the Request for Proposal (RFP), a review of accepted grants, the expenditure of funds, project completion and the provision of maintenance funds until June 2027.
5. The support for and the continued review of the Family Engagement work with DESE.
6. The establishment of an Equity Bureau[[3]](#footnote-4) for the social, emotional, and educational achievement of all students, and students of color and those who are historically marginalized, in particular. This request is reasonable and follows the model of the Parents and Community Engagement and Involvement Council (PCEIC) Initiative which provided the framework for the Family Engagement effort with DESE staff.[[4]](#footnote-5) The work of RIAC needs to be intentional and measurable; too many children of color continue to suffer systemic racism in our public schools, in their neighborhoods, [[5]](#footnote-6) the state of Massachusetts and the nation.
   * + 1. A determination must be made concerning the location of the Equity Bureau that will ensure authenticity and autonomy.
       2. A review of the needs of Massachusetts schools will shape the qualifications and number of staff required.
       3. The Chief Diversity Officer will determine the scope of annual services along with quarterly and annual reporting to BESE, the Secretary of Education, the Massachusetts State Legislature, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Governor as described in the Chief of School Systems Organization’s document, Leading the Way, and information from the organization “Chiefs for Change.”

In closure, RIAC supports the DESE goal of a racially representative staff at both schools and at DESE; RIAC will continue to work diligently to keep DESE aware of issues that affect children of color and historically marginalized children in their educational process in Massachusetts. RIAC hopes to influence and participate in efforts that will soon realize the Number 1 status that Massachusetts now enjoys in the aggregate for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, home language or socioeconomic status. All the Commonwealth’s children deserve the provision of a high-quality education that will render them college and career ready after graduation from high school. RIAC appreciates the opportunity to serve the children and families of the Commonwealth, the Commissioner, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the staff of DESE and the Commonwealth’s public schools.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

**2021 – 2022 Annual Report**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The 15-member Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance (AAAC) advises the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on matters pertaining to the development and implementation of the Commonwealth’s District and School Accountability and Assistance system. The Council reviews and advises the Department and the Board on the policies and practices of the Center for District Support. In the 2021-2022 school year, the Council provided feedback on the district and school accountability system and related supports in light of the COVID-19 health emergency.

**II. 2021-2022 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

Overview:

The work of the Council centered around the state and federal flexibilities related to district and school accountability reporting following the 2021-2022 school year. These flexibilities were available and necessary because of the cancellation of the spring 2020 MCAS assessments and the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning. The Council also discussed the assistance and resources that districts, and schools need most as they return to in-person learning.

Activities:

Discussion topics included:

* District and school accountability system
  + Temporary changes to the district and school accountability system for the 2021-2022 school year, as allowed by the U.S. Department of Education
  + An amendment to state accountability regulations to align with the state’s federally approved request for temporary changes to the accountability system
* District and school assistance
  + Strategic assistance and supports that the Department provides to districts and schools
  + An update on amendments to district plans required by the Student Opportunity Act

**III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council offered specific input on the topics outlined above. Summaries and recommendations (where applicable) included the following:

**District and School Accountability System:** The Council has provided input and feedback on the design and implementation of the existing district and school accountability system over the course of the last few years. In light of the pandemic, the Council encouraged the Department to take full advantage of any flexibilities that the U.S. Department of Education might offer related to the accountability system in 2022. The Department applied for, and received, temporary flexibility related to certain federal accountability reporting requirements following the 2021-2022 school year. The Council also reviewed and supported the Department’s proposed amendment to state accountability regulations, which allowed the Department to report some, but not all, of the measures reported via the accountability system following the 2021-2022 school year.

**District and School Assistance:** The Council discussed ways in which the Department can best support districts as they think about teaching and learning during the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency. They called for support related to academic recovery, as well as social-emotional supports for students. The Council also discussed ways in which the Department can help districts identify priority needs and match them with the appropriate supports and resources.

The Council also the Department’s process for reviewing the Student Opportunity Act plan amendments that districts submitted in spring 2022. Members encouraged the Department to conduct and analysis of the kinds of amendments that districts were making to their plans, and to ensure that stakeholder feedback was considered prior to submitting the amendments.

**IV. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Liaison:** Erica Gonzales

**Co-Chairs:**

* Heidi Driscoll, Assistant Superintendent, Scituate Public Schools
* Tim Piwowar, Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools

**Members:[[6]](#footnote-7)**

* Mike Barth, Principal of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, The Fowler School, Maynard Public Schools
* Erica Brown, Chief of Policy and School Supports, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association
* Ethan Cancell, Executive Director of Assessment, Accountability, Technology, and Student Data Research, Brockton Public Schools
* Jason DeFalco, Superintendent, Blackstone-Millville Regional School District
* Samuel DePina, Secondary Superintendent of School Operations and Safety, Boston Public Schools
* Heidi Driscoll, Academic Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District
* Sharita Fauche, Co-Director, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network
* Andre Green, School Committee Member, Somerville Public Schools
* Barish Icin, Chief Executive Officer, Pioneer Charter School of Science
* Ed Lambert, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
* Craig Martin, Executive Director, Bridge Boston Charter Public School
* Tim Piwowar, Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools
* Jennifer Randall, Associate Professor of Research, Educational Measurement and Psychometrics and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts Amherst
* Bertha-Elena Rojas, Board of Directors and Chair of Advocacy Committee, Multistate Association for Bilingual Education
* Ron Sanborn, Principal, Charles Jaworek Elementary School, Marlborough Public Schools
* Mary Skipper, Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools
* Marc Smith, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and EL Director, Monomoy Regional School District
* Nancy Urbschat, Business Owner, TSM Design

**Council Meeting Dates:** The Council met with a quorum on three occasions: October 20, 2021; April 8, 2022; and June 1, 2022. The Council also met without a quorum on March 2, 2022. Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, all four meetings took place virtually.

**Special Education State Advisory Panel**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

1. **INTRODUCTION -** *Executive Summary and Panel Charge*

The Special Education State Advisory Panel (Panel), under state and federal law, is organized to provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Massachusetts. The Panel offers the opportunity for discussions between parents, educators, and state leaders on special education topics that affect students and families in Massachusetts. Its existence, mission, and composition continue to be governed by federal and state laws. The Panel members:

* Advise on unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities
* Comment publicly on proposed rules and regulations involving special education
* Advise on evaluating services and developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports; and
* Advise in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. (34 C.F.R. § 300.169)

The Panel held a total of five (5) virtual meetings. During these meetings, Panel had public participation from several community members. Panel members discussed issues related to SPP/APR Indicators, DESE updates, IEP Improvement Project, Changes to Advisory Councils. DESE also engaged the Panel in discussions around a) data that would be helpful for DESE to examine, to better understand issues of inequities for students with disabilities, b) other areas that the data does not cover and that DESE might not be examining, that DESE should be looking at to support, c) what other community partners and organizations to engage with to support equity in the special education work of LEAs, and d) input on Policy, Practices and Procedures.

1. **2021-2022 Panel Work**
2. **Meetings:** The Panel held five (5) meetings that took place in December, January, March, May, and June**.**
3. **Topics:** The Panel Chair, Carmen Pimentel, facilitated discussions on the following topics:
4. **State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) – Indicators 15 and 16 –** DESE Proposal to retain the ambitious yet attainable 77-87% agreement rate target range, despite the challenges and uncertainties presented by the global COVID pandemic. Panel proposed use of last year’s prior to COVID (48-75% baseline) for this year.
5. **DESE Updates, IEP Improvement Project, Changes to Advisory Councils -**

DESE shared updates on changes in DESE support staff for Panel activities, as well as determination of the composition between the federal steering committee and the Panel, with no overlap.

1. **Special Education Determinations and Assistance –** DESE shared with the Panel framing questions meant to improve understanding of DESE's eight components of key supervision and how these components drive the work of schools forward. The purpose of the questions was: 1) to provide a framework to conceptualize special education overall; 2) for DESE to make clear connections between the SPP/APR and other departmental work as well as related work with internal and external stakeholders for greater transparency throughout the system; and 3) to use SPP/APR indicators to guide decisions regarding LEA assistance and accountability while providing stakeholders greater access and understanding of the SPP/APR indicators through use of the website, PD, etc.
2. **State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) – Indicators 7 and 17 –** Guest presented on The Pyramid Model and its components, ex. Pyramid Model Practices, Intervention Fidelity, and Systems for Implementation Fidelity.
3. **State Systemic Improvement Plan and Child Outcomes Evaluation –** Guestspresented the American Institute for Research (AIR) review of 2020-2021 program implementation data, summarized findings of preschool child outcomes, and shared coaching data from the current school year.
4. **Presentation of DESE's 8 Key Components of Supervision –** DESE staff presented on key components that guide DESE's general supervision function and purpose of components redesign to create a transparent process that includes both compliance and performance, specifically focused on data that most impacts outcomes for students with disabilities. Survey was sent to membership so members could provide additional feedback on the data that is used to make determinations. Panel members were encouraged to provide narratives (and reasons why) as additional information DESE should be reconsidering.
5. **Advisory Bodies updates –** Panel discussion on the two advisory bodies required under state and federal law, and the shifting of membership to the State Advisory Council for fall 2022.
6. **Draft IEP Launch–** DESE staff provided an update and engaged membership on the draft IEP, which is focused on EI transition, secondary transition, student voice. DESE shared that it had looked at other states to see what they are doing as best practices that can be adopted.
7. **Response to Public Participants –** The Panel expressed concerns that public participants share, but public participation protocols do not allow the Panel to respond during the meeting. DESE expressed appreciation to the parents who spoke and understands how frustrating it is when parents are trying to help their children. Members suggested having an ombudsman for each district. Though DESE cannot share specifics with the Panel, DESE wanted to assure public participants that DESE is working with these families, as well as countless other families who contact DESE daily.
8. **Proposed Revisions to the MA SSIP Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan –** DESE presented an overview of Improving Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Social Emotional, State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR), Theory of Action Drives the ECSE Work, Proposed Revised Theory of Action, and Evaluation Plan and Proposed Questions.
9. **Public Participation:** 
   1. Four observers offered public comment in March 2022.
   2. Public participant made public comment, in May 2022, on policies and procedures at the state level on Part B, and policies and procedures for PRS and having a through line on accountability for out-of=district placements. Public participant recommended guidance and clarification on teacher training, policies, and procedures on oversight and what can be done when there is misconduct.
   3. Public participant made public comment, in June 2022, on policies and procedures for the 300.149 and 201 IDEA Part B funds – Some of the advisories and some of the guidelines are required. In collecting policy and procedure manuals, some districts follow the Mass Association of School Committees guidance. Public participant recommended clarity on which are the policies, which are the procedures, and ensure consistency with Child Find and FAPE.
   4. Public participant parent shared, in June 2022, frustration with child find and getting support/services from school. Public participant parent shared, in June 2022, concerns about out-of-district placement, accountability and DESE role in ensuring all districts are listening to parent concerns and meeting their obligations.
10. **Panel Recommendations for the 2022-2023 Panel year:**
11. **Focus on racial equity and social justice:** As the state of MA has continued to deal with aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts across the nation continue to witness negative impacts on learning. Specially highlighted are racial and social inequalities that have disproportionally impacted vulnerable communities of color, including communities with diverse immigrant backgrounds and immigration status. Throughout meetings, our members have highlighted the importance of uncovering and addressing the inequities that exist in the supports, services, and outcomes of students by race, language, and other characteristics. We appreciate the Department’s commitment to the issue of racial equity and social justice. We underscore the Department prioritizing racial equity and social justice, while engaging this advisory body to provide necessary input in crafting actionable strategies on these issues.
12. **Social and Emotional Learning:** This advisory body is interested in continuing to engage and provide advice, regarding recommendations to improve social-emotional learning and approaches to behavioral needs of students. This issue is particularly critical with the wave of anxieties and fears brought about by the pandemic.
13. **Updates and ongoing engagement with DESE on guidance from the Department to districts during pandemic**: As we continue to monitor the prospects of the 2022-2023 school year, this advisory body recommends and requests that DESE continues to engage this advisory body, allowing it to provide cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary perspectives, on the best steps to provide the best education for students with special needs.
14. **MA IEP project**: This advisory body looks forward to being actively involved in the IEP project by reviewing data and offering advice.
15. **Engagement with Commissioner Jeffrey Riley’s post-Kairos Initiatives**: DESE Commissioner issued a call for the Massachusetts education community, around 3 years ago, to embrace a shift towards a focus on applied deeper learning with the goal of engaging students in interdisciplinary tasks aligned to state standards. In addition, students use critical thinking skills and work collaboratively to solve problems with relevance to their lives. This advisory body wishes to be an active participant in this initiative, being informed about the work, and provide advice on this process as it pertains to special education. This includes exploring options to build 21st Century skills for students with disabilities, within the context of future employment in a post-pandemic economy.
16. **Guidelines Related to Dyslexia**: This advisory body would like to be informed about and provide advice on this guidance and other aspects of the implementation of Dyslexia guidance.
17. **Significant Disproportionality**: This advisory body would like to continue to be informed about and provide advice on the process and work related to Significant Disproportionality to decrease issues of disproportionality and increase student achievement.
18. **Indicator 8 Family Engagement**: This advisory body would like to be informed and provide advice on process and outcomes with a focus on exploring ways in which to increase family and community engagement.
19. **Emergency Preparedness** **Specific to Students with Special Needs**: This advisory body looks forward to advising on ways in which to address the unique safety needs of students with disabilities, i.e., emergency preparedness for students with disabilities.
20. **Office of the Child Advocate**: This advisory body recommends the formation of a committee, as discussed and agreed by membership in the 2021 school year, with participation with child serving agencies and DESE, to focus on the evaluation of current systems in place to protect children and how we communicate across multiservice agencies and school districts, to better serve students of the Commonwealth who are in vulnerable situations due to different socioeconomic issues and events. Further discussion is needed to define logistics.
21. **Code of Ethics** for Massachusetts teachers, private school special education programming, and private school MCAS testing and accountability.
22. **Grading policy** for individuals with disabilities, including testing relative to GPA, high school graduation, and college entry with focus on improving access.
23. **Policies and procedures** at the state level on Part B, and policies and procedures for PRS and having a through line on accountability for out-of-district placements.
24. **Policies and procedures for the 300.149 and 201 IDEA Part B funds** – Some of the advisories and some of the guidelines are required. Helpful to get clarity on which are the policies, which are the procedures, and ensure consistency with Child Find and FAPE.

**V**. **Panel Meeting Dates**: December 14, 2021; January 11, 2022; March 15, 2022; May 10,

2022; and June 14, 2022.

This advisory body would like to thank Russell Johnston, Deputy Commissioner; Jamie Camacho, Director of Special Education Planning and Policy, Lauren Viviani, former Assistant Director of Special Education Planning and Policy; and Martha Daigle, the Department’s Liaison to the panel.

**Respectfully prepared and submitted by:**

*Carmen Pimentel, Chair*

*Edith Bazile - Secretary*

On behalf of the Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel (Panel)

**Vocational Technical Education Advisory Council**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**

**I.** **INTRODUCTION**

The council advises the Board and the Commissioner on matters related to Career Technical Education (CTE) across the Commonwealth. The focus for this year included equitable access to CVTE pathways, Department monitoring and support systems and processes for CTE programs, and program quality and alignment to business and industry.

**II.** **2021-2022 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) formed the VTE Advisory Council in October 2020, with 20 members from role-, geographic-, and demographically diverse backgrounds. Given the high priority of the proposal and approval of CTE admissions regulations (along with supporting guidance), this work served as the primary focus of the council this year. Additional topics of discussion were monitoring processes and curriculum frameworks. The council reviewed, provided feedback, and otherwise advised the Department’s work in the following areas:

* The council normed with each other and developed an understanding of its priorities, asking guiding questions. Priority discussion topics for the year were reviewed including admissions, CTE monitoring, Frameworks, and teacher recruitment. (**October**)
* Council members engaged in a dialogue regarding the Secondary Options Family Engagement Project. (**December**)
* Council members received and discussed CCTE updates regarding the School Finder Project. The council also received information regarding a new project for Quality Support Systems for CCTE programs, which led to a discussion where they offered their unique perspectives and feedback. (**January**)
* The council welcomed the new Co-Chairman, Brad Jackson, Superintendent-Director, from Shawsheen Valley Technical School. The Office of College, Career and Technical Education provided updates and shared a new project: Expanding Access through Innovative programming (Career Technical Institute and CTE Partnership: After Dark), which led to a discussion where the council offered their comments and creative ideas. (**March**)
* The council heard updates from DESE staff for the 2021-2022 SY regarding the merger of monitoring processes for schools offering CTE programs, as well as the ongoing work of updating curriculum frameworks, and members posed questions to staff to help guide the work of these initiatives. (**May**)

**III.** **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council members provided, from their unique perspectives, feedback on all initiatives discussed above, which informed the Department’s further development and refinement of those initiatives, as well as next steps.

**IV.** **COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:**

Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner for College, Career and Technical Education

**Department Liaison(s):**

Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner for College, Career and Technical Education

Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner for Educational Options

Nicole Smith, Assistant Director for College, Career and Technical Education

**Chair:**

Brad Jackson, Superintendent-Director, Shawsheen Valley Technical School

**Members of the 2021-2022 VTE Advisory Council**

| **Last** | **First** | **Current Role** | **Organization** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Custodio | Lord | Student (Freshman) | U MA Amherst |
| Dagesse | Derek | HVAC Instructor | Plymouth South HS |
| Desmond | Shawn | Coordinator of Voc and Career Education | Brockton Public Schools |
| Douglas | Laura | President | Bristol Community College |
| Finfer | Lew | Senior Advisor | MASS Community Actions |
| Hackel | Nina | Owner | Dream Kitchens |
| Hathaway | Tim | President | Larkin/Hathaway Sheet Metal / HVAC |
| Houle | Ernest | Superintendent-Director | Assabet Valley Regional Vocational SD |
| Jackson | Brad | Superintendent-Director | Shawsheen Valley Tech |
| Langone | Joseph | Principal | Westfield Technical Academy |
| Loiseau | Marvin | Dean of Academic Affairs | Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology |
| Maguire | Karen | Superintendent | Tri-County |
| Martin | Aliyana | Student (Freshman) | U MA |
| Megie-Maddrey | Natasha | Chief of Policy | Mass Parents United |
| Montoute | LaVonia | Director of Career Pathways | EdVestors |
| Sands | Adele | Superintendent-Director | Bristol County Agricultural High School |
| Sharek | Steve | Executive Director | MAVA |
| Spencer-Robinson | Julie | Parent | Parent |
| Vargas | Abel | Executive Director | MassHire Merrimack Valley |
| Viera | Nikita | Academic Coordinator — College Access | Bristol CC |

**Council Meeting Dates**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Monday, October 25, 2021 - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm | Zoom Virtual Meeting |
| Monday, December 13, 2021 - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm | Zoom Virtual Meeting |
| Monday, January 31, 2022 - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm | Zoom Virtual Meeting |
| Monday, March 28, 2022 - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm | Zoom Virtual Meeting |
| Monday, May 23, 2022 - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm | Zoom Virtual Meeting |

1. <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In the case of Lowell Public Schools, 8 students each took two STEM courses, but no results are provided to determine results or what might be best practices if all students were successful. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Attachment. Family Engagement document [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Attachments, Equity Plan, Executive Summary and the original report to DESE with added subtitles [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Gary v. Whitmer (Detroit, Michigan) School Literacy Court Case in 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Members serve for a term of three years, with the option of remaining on the Council for a second three-year term. Due to the nature of Council membership, terms begin and end at various times over the course of the school year. The Council seat reserved for union representation (American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts or the Massachusetts Teachers Association) remained vacant in 2021-2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)