**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

**of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street, Malden MA**

**March 28, 2023, 9:11 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:**

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

**Matthew Hills**, Vice-Chair, Newton

**Tricia Canavan,** South Hadley

**Darlene Lombos,** Boston

**Farzana Mohamed,** Newton

**Michael Moriarty,** Holyoke (attended virtually via Zoom)

**Eric Plankey,** Westford, Student Member

**Mary Ann Stewart,** Lexington

**Patrick Tutwiler**, Secretary of Education, Andover

**Martin West,** Newton

**Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:**

**Paymon Rouhanifard,** Brookline

**Jeffrey C. Riley,** Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Chair Craven called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m., and members introduced themselves. She stated that today’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting, like all open meetings of the Board, is being [livestreamed and recorded](https://livestream.com/accounts/22459134).

**Public Comment**

1. **Patrick Lattuca, Ph.D., Superintendent, TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA),** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools
2. **Heidi Nelson-Buffa, TECCA, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability & Instruction,** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools
3. **Meredith Arieta-Heaney, K-12 504 Coordinator, TECCA,** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools
4. **Madison Harris-Parks, TECCA representative,** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools
5. **Jean Kenney, TECCA Board Member and Treasurer,** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools
6. **Jerry Helsing, TECCA parent,** addressed the Board on the use of remote proctoring for the MCAS assessment for Commonwealth Virtual Schools

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven reported that the Early College Joint Committee met recently and approved several new programs. She said she is hoping to schedule a retreat for the Board and will be in touch about possible dates. Chair Craven noted that the Board will hold its April meeting at Mr. Plankey’s school, Westford Academy, as it is customary to hold one meeting at the student member’s school. She said she looks forward to holding more Board meetings around the Commonwealth in the future.

Chair Craven asked Mr. Moriarty to report on the recent meeting of the Board’s Special Committee on Pandemic Recovery and Literacy. Mr. Moriarty said the committee met via Zoom on March 10 and heard from Katherine Tarca of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), who presented an overview of DESE’s early literacy work and related it to principles that Dr. Kymona Burk of ExcelinEd had outlined at the committee’s previous meeting. Mr. Moriarty commended the chart that Ms. Tarca prepared for the committee and asked that it be shared with the full Board. Mr. Moriarty said the second speaker was Dr. Ester DeJong, professor at the University of Colorado, who is an expert on multilingual learners and literacy. He said Dr. DeJong presented a compelling case for putting second language knowledge at the forefront of student learning and building on the assets of emerging bilingual students. Mr. Moriarty added that evidence-based literacy encompasses speaking, listening, and writing as well as reading, for students should be proficient in all these skills.

Ms. Stewart commented that she attended the recent National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) legislative conference and literacy was a key topic, with several states reporting on their literacy initiatives. She noted that Mr. Moriarty is on NASBE’s literacy committee and Mr. Moriarty said he is pleased to be on it. In response to a question from Ms. Stewart about assessment of students’ reading skills before the third grade MCAS tests, Commissioner Riley said this is done locally; schools and districts assess students’ skills in kindergarten, first, and second grades. Mr. Moriarty said the committee will look at this issue.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Tutwiler said he has been very involved with development of Governor Healey's FY24 education budget proposal. He thanked Commissioner Riley for his testimony at the Joint Ways and Means Committee hearing at UMass two weeks ago. Secretary Tutwiler commended the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston, and Director of Special Education Planning and Policy Jamie Camacho, for their work on the IEP Improvement Project. He said he appreciates the focus on equity and the effort to center the voices and strengths of students.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Riley reported that he visited Hajjar Elementary School in Billerica last week with Governor Healey and Secretary Tutwiler. He noted that the Governor has put forward a proposal to continue funding of universal school meals, which is very important for students. The Commissioner gave a brief update on Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the BPS systemic improvement plan that resulted from DESE’s district review. He said the plan calls for BPS to report on actions to improve transportation, safety, special education and other areas and he expects the district to present a coordinated action plan to DESE and the school committee later this spring. Commissioner Riley said he recently attended the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) meeting in Washington, DC and met with US Education Secretary Cardona. The Commissioner said the CCSSO meeting focused on reading and on students’ mental health, both of which are priorities here. In closing, Commissioner Riley said DESE is partnering with MassHire to hold a virtual job fair on April 12 to support schools and districts in recruiting for various positions.

Chair Craven noted the Board’s Educator Diversification Committee is planning to schedule a meeting soon.

**Approval of the Minutes of the** **February 27, 2023 Special Meeting and the February 28, 2023 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the** **February 27, 2023 Special Meeting and the February 28, 2023 Regular Meeting**

The vote was unanimous.

**School Counselor of the Year: Andrea Encarnacao**

Commissioner Riley welcomed Andrea Encarnacao, school counselor at Boston Latin School (BLS), who has been selected as the 2023 School Counselor of the Year by the Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA). The Commissioner introduced Nyal Fuentes from DESE’s Office of College, Career, and Technical Education and Bob Bardwell, executive director of MASCA. Mr. Fuentes spoke about the partnership between DESE and MASCA and the important work that counselors do to support students.

Mr. Bardwell presented some data on school counseling. He said school counselors play an essential role in preparing students to be college- and career-ready and helping meet their social and emotional needs. Mr. Bardwell said the need for school counselors and other mental health professionals is greater than ever, and there is a shortage of qualified school counselors to fill these positions. He said in the face of these challenges, we celebrate our 2023 School Counselor of the Year, Andrea Encarnacao, whose joy comes from her connections with others, who helps students feel seen and heard, and who sets an example for strength-based student support.

Ms. Encarnacao thanked her partner, nominator, and Mr. Bardwell for their support and

leadership. She discussed her background, educational journey, and what brought her to BLS. Ms. Encarnacao said she loves being able to talk with young people about their future, connect them with mentors and opportunities, and have them imagine themselves beyond the walls of high school. She said she aims to create a safe, welcoming space for students in which each feels valued. Ms. Encarnacao said her concern about marginalized students, especially students of color, has led her to participate in diversity and equity committees at BLS and for MASCA. She said she continues to ask, “What did the pandemic teach us?” so she can help students and teachers apply lessons we have learned about how to use our time and build connections.

Ms. Encarnacao said both students and staff have mental health needs and she works to support wellness as a priority. She advocated for more counselors in schools, more flexibility in the school day, and a health curriculum starting in elementary school that helps students to persevere and manage stress. Ms. Encarnacao and Mr. Bardwell responded to questions from Board members.

Chair Craven congratulated and thanked Ms. Encarnacao on behalf of the Board and called for a brief break at 10:20 a.m. The Board resumed its meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**Special Education: Progress Report on IEP Improvement Project**

Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston and Director of Special Education Planning and Policy Jamie Camacho presented a progress report on DESE’s initiative to improve special education services and outcomes for eligible students with disabilities through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Improvement Project, which comprises a suite of resources and supports for schools and families. They said DESE plans to release the updated forms this month. The IEP forms have not been updated comprehensively since 2001, and the updates reflect input from stakeholders during the past several years to make the forms and the IEP process more responsive to the strengths and needs of students with disabilities.

Deputy Commissioner Johnston pointed out that the updated IEP form centers student voice. Ms. Camacho explained that to support implementation of the new IEP, DESE’s rollout plan includes technical assistance for schools, districts, and their partners in implementing the new form, as well as synchronous and asynchronous training and professional development on the IEP process. She said schools and districts will begin using the new IEP forms between fall 2023 and fall 2024. The presenters responded to questions from Board members.

Chair Craven said the section of the IEP form on transition planning is especially meaningful to her. She recalled that in 2005 she was a member of what was then called the Governor's Commission on Mental Retardation (now called Developmental Services), as the mother of a child with Down syndrome and also having a sister with Down syndrome. She said the commission heard from families across the state who were concerned about what would happen when their child turned 22 and would no longer be eligible for special education services from their school district. Chair Craven said it is critically important that transition planning has been built into the new IEP form. She thanked the Deputy Commissioner and Ms. Camacho for leading this project.

**Education Budget Update: Governor’s FY24 House 1 Budget Proposal**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell presented an overview of the FY24 budget proposal filed by the Healey/Driscoll administration as it relates to K-12 education. He highlighted provisions outlined in the Commissioner’s memo to the Board. Mr. Bell also summarized districts’ spending rates for the three waves of federal ESSER funding, noting that ESSER-3 funds are available through September 30, 2024. He responded to questions from Board members.

Chair Craven thanked Mr. Bell for his presentation and reminded members that the next regular meeting will be held at Westford Academy.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board