*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | April 20 2023  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the April 25, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold its **regular meeting** on **Tuesday, April 25, 2023**, at Westford Academy, 30 Patten Road, Westford, MA. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m**. The Board will meet in open session from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 12:15 p.m. and then hold an executive session to discuss litigation from approximately 12:30–1:00 p.m. The Board will meet in person, following the Commonwealth’s current health and safety guidelines, and the open session will be live-streamed and recorded. Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements; please email or call them if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

We are meeting at Westford Academy in honor of Board member Eric Plankey, who is a senior at the school. Following a welcome from the Westford Public Schools, our business agenda leads off with a report on the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative. The Board will hear from the 2023 Massachusetts Milken Educator Award Recipient, Leigh Beson, a teacher at Dighton Elementary School. The Board will have an initial discussion and vote to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the educator licensure regulations. This will be followed by an update on the Lawrence Public Schools and an update on the education budget, focusing on the House Ways and Means Committee’s education budget recommendations for FY24. After concluding discussion of these items, the Board will meet in executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation matters.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Secretary**

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Chair Craven, Secretary Tutwiler, and I will update the Board on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the March 28, 2023** **Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Welcome from Westford Academy**

Dr. Chris Chew, superintendent of Westford Public Schools, and Jim Antonelli, Westford Academy principal, will welcome the Board to [Westford Academy](https://www.westfordk12.us/wa).

1. **Higher Education for Students with Disabilities: Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) – Discussion**

The [Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative](https://www.mass.edu/strategic/MAICEI.asp) (MAICEI) is a state-funded program to support partnerships between local school districts and public colleges and universities in Massachusetts, enabling eligible public high school students with intellectual disabilities to increase their academic and career success by being included in a college or university community of learners. The enclosed memorandum provides more details. At the April 25 Board meeting, Jamie Camacho, our director of special education planning and policy; the Department of Higher Education’s Director of MAICEI Mary Price; and Salem State University MAICEI Project Coordinator Chris Lenahan will present an overview of the initiative and recent changes expanding higher education opportunities for students with disabilities. They will be joined by two students who will share their experiences in the program.

1. **2023 Milken Educator Award Recipient: Leigh Beson – Presentation and Discussion**

Leigh Beson, a teacher at Dighton Elementary School in Dighton, has received the 2023 Milken Educator Award for Massachusetts. I am delighted she will join us at the Board meeting to speak about her experience. Please see the enclosed memorandum for more information about Ms. Beson.

1. **Proposed Amendments to Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

In our continuing effort to address educator staffing challenges while maintaining key qualifications, I am presenting proposed amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations this month for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. The proposed amendments would allow educators with Initial and Professional licenses to obtain Provisional licenses in certain fields; create a new grade span, PreK-2, for licensure as teacher of students with moderate disabilities and teacher of students with severe disabilities; permit applicants for Provisional licenses to meet a requirement by demonstrating knowledge as an alternative to taking a course or seminar; and create a new Provisional license for school nurses. Jamie Camacho, director of special education planning and policy; Brian Devine, director of educator licensure; Liz Losee, director of educator effectiveness policy; and Lucy Wall of our legal staff will join us for the discussion.

1. **Lawrence Public Schools Update – Discussion**

The enclosed memorandum provides a brief update on ongoing work relating to the Lawrence Public Schools turnaround plan and anticipated next steps for the Lawrence Alliance for Education (LAE). At our meeting, Patricia Mariano, interim chair of the LAE, and Juan Rodriguez, interim superintendent, will present an overview of the district’s strategic priorities, implementation of its district-wide literacy plan, initiatives to continue diversifying the workforce, and efforts to improve attendance and family engagement. Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston and Strategic Transformation Director Lauren Woo will be available to answer questions.

1. **Education Budget Update: House Ways and Means FY24 State Education Budget Recommendations – Discussion**

On April 12, the House Ways and Means Committee released its FY24 state spending recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year. At our meeting, Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will review the House Ways and Means education budget recommendations. Your materials include a summary and spreadsheet on the education recommendations by program area.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

Enclosed is information on grants I have approved since our last meeting under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Executive Session to Discuss Litigation Strategy**

After the Board concludes its discussion of the above items, Chair Craven will ask for a vote to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to the following litigation matters, as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body:

* Family Freedom Endeavor, Inc. et al. v. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, et al., Hampden Superior Court Civil Action No. 2179CV00494; MA App. Ct. No. 21-J-599
* Frigon et al. v. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, et al., Suffolk Superior Court Civil Action No. 2284CV00344-E
* Open Meeting Law complaint filed April 3, 2023; review per 940 CMR 29.05(5)

The Board will move to a designated room at the school for the executive session and will adjourn the meeting following the executive session.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you at Westford Academy on April 25.