*****Massachusetts Board of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Katherine Craven  *Chair* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Katherine Craven, Chair |
| **Date:** | February 23, 2024 |
| **Subject:** | Transition and Appointment of Acting Commissioner |

Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley announced on February 15 that after six years of service, he is stepping down from his position as Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education effective March 15, 2024. The Board is grateful for his leadership and service.

During an historic time of pandemic, societal and educational disruption, Commissioner Riley led the Commonwealth’s schools by prioritizing the urgent need to return children to in-person learning. From his advocacy for universal school meals, his groundbreaking work in creating, championing, and expanding the Early College program across Massachusetts, his nationally recognized work on Deeper Learning, to his support for access to high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction for all students, Massachusetts students will enjoy the benefits of his work for years to come.

The Board needs to vote to recommend an Acting Commissioner to the Secretary of Education for appointment. We are fortunate that Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston is willing and able to serve in this role during the transition period. Commissioner Riley and I both endorse this appointment. By statute, the Secretary of Education appoints the Commissioner (or Acting Commissioner), and the Secretary may make the appointment only from candidates submitted by the Board upon a two-thirds vote (at least 8 of 11 members).

I recommend that the Board vote on February 27 to recommend the appointment of Russell Johnston as Acting Commissioner at an annual salary rate of $246,636 and request that the Secretary of Education approve said appointment, effective March 16, 2024, pursuant to [General Laws c. 15, § 1F](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1f#:~:text=Section%201F%3A%20Commissioner%20of%20elementary,education%3B%20appointment%3B%20duties%3B%20salary&text=Whenever%20a%20vacancy%20occurs%20in,candidate%20to%20fill%20that%20vacancy.). A motion is attached for your convenience.

At the March 26 Board meeting, we will discuss the process to select the next Commissioner.

Encl: Motion