Minutes of the Regular Meeting

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

**January 24, 2012**

**8:35 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Beverly Holmes**, Vice Chair, Springfield

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**Matthew Gifford**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

**Paul Reville**, Secretary of Education, Worcester

**David Roach**, Sutton

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Banta said she attended the Governor’s State of the State address, and in that speech the Governor’s commitment to K-12 education and higher education was clear. The chair said the Governor also presented an exciting new model for community colleges. Chair Banta asked chairs of the various Board committees to provide updates.

Mr. Chertavian said the College and Career Readiness Task Force held its first meeting and the 30 or so members include a broad representation of business, education, union, and trade officials. Mr. Chertavian said the group will look at how to align with Governor Patrick’s objectives around the skills gap, so that young people are career ready as well as college ready. Mr. Chertavian said the group had a good start and appointed four subcommittees.

Secretary Reville arrived at 8:40 a.m.

Ms. Chernow, chair of the Proficiency Gap Committee, said the committee heard a presentation from Department staff on its ESEA/NCLB flexibility waiver request, the creation of a Progress and Performance Index, and the goal to reduce proficiency gaps in half by 2016-17.

Ms. Holmes, chair of the Charter School Committee, said the committee is looking at both short- and long-term issues concerning process and policy. She said the goal of the committee is to ensure the Board’s work is efficient, effective, and consistent. Chair Banta said one issue is how often the Board hears from constituents on new charter applicants. The chair said Board members go to each community for public hearings and spend a significant amount of time hearing from constituents. The chair said the Board will also take any amount of written testimony.

Ms. Kaplan, who is the Board’s representative to the Massachusetts Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey (TeLLS), said the Race to the Top grant included a requirement to conduct a survey of the working conditions of teachers. Ms. Kaplan said this year’s survey would be launched on March 12th and run through April 20th. Ms. Kaplan said there is a separate component for administrators.

Chair Banta thanked all members who are chairing or serving on committees.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester said there is much to celebrate. The commissioner referred Board members to the Race to the Top Year 1 report behind Tab 12 of the Board book, which summarizes what we have accomplished to date. The commissioner also noted the Board’s annual report under Tab 14. He called attention to the *Education Week* assessment of states behind Tab 15 that showed Massachusetts ranked first among all states in two areas, Chance of Success and K-12 Achievement. The commissioner said he had a great meeting recently with Matthew Gifford and three other members of the state Student Advisory Council to think about how they can engage Lawrence students. Commissioner Chester said he recently participated in a two-day meeting in Washington, D.C. with other Race to the Top states.

The commissioner discussed the Superior Court decision in the Dolan case, which upheld the legitimacy of the process by which the Board and commissioner decided to grant a charter to the Gloucester Community Arts Charter School. General Counsel Rhoda Schneider noted that the decision is subject to appeal. General Counsel Schneider said the decision affirms the integrity of the Board’s process in granting charters in general and in granting this charter in particular. General Counsel Schneider said the judge’s decision is strongly worded, and the judge agreed with the Department on all points.

Commissioner Chester introduced Jeff Riley, whom he appointed as receiver of the Lawrence Public School District earlier in January. Mr. Riley addressed the Board, saying he was excited to be here but more excited to be in Lawrence. Mr. Riley said he sees an opportunity for children in Lawrence and the possibility for the community, teachers, and stakeholders to work together to make positive changes.

Mr. Gifford said the state Student Advisory Committee is available to advise Mr. Riley on student input. Mr. Riley says he looks forward to it, and noted the significant contribution that the Boston Student Advisory Council had in that district. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked what Mr. Riley did in Boston to turn around performance that will inform Lawrence. Mr. Riley said they personalized education for students. Mr. Riley said his school made heavy use of data to address gaps that students had in their education, and the school took teams of teachers to the community to meet with parents. Ms. Kaplan asked about Mr. Riley’s philosophy on the whole child. Mr. Riley said his background is as an adjustment counselor, and he believes deeply that students need support for theird their social-emotional needs so that they are ready to learn. Mr. Riley said we need to address opportunity gaps, and students need high quality enrichment programs.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Reville on behalf of the Governor welcomed Mr. Riley and said he is eager to work with the receiver. Secretary Reville discussed the Governor’s State of the State address and its focus on youth violence and community colleges. The secretary said the Governor’s FY13 budget proposal would be announced tomorrow and will include the Gateway Cities initiative and a record commitment to Chapter 70 funding.

**Public Comment**

1. State Senator Pat Jehlen addressed the Board about the proposed Somerville Progressive Charter School.
2. Selena Fitanides, founder of the Somerville Progressive Charter School, addressed the Board about the school’s application.
3. State Representative Stephen DiNatale addressed the Board about the North Central Charter Essential School.
4. Stephanie Davolos addressed the Board about the North Central Charter Essential School.
5. Robert Kostka from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies addressed the Board on the MCAS History test.
6. Superintendent Alan Ingram, School Committee members Chris Collins and Norman Roldan, and Springfield Education Association president Tim Collins addressed the Board on Springfield and the 2012 MCAS administration.
7. The Honorable Lisa Wong, Mayor of Fitchburg, addressed the Board on the North Central Charter Essential School.

# Approval of the Minutes

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the December 19, 2011 special meeting and December 20, 2011 regular meeting.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Amendments to Regulations on Innovation Schools, 603 CMR 48.00**

Executive Office of Education General Counsel Jim DiTullio said there were three very small changes to the proposed regulations that related to a typographical error and a reference. The commissioner said the regulations sent out for comment by the Board in November received several comments. Bridget Rodríguez, Director of Planning and Collaboration at the Executive Office of Education, said the intent was to clarify the regulations and make sure the approval process is clear to applicants. Ms. Rodriguez said other changes pertained to issues around the definition of a “teacher,” whether a revised prospectus could be resubmitted to a superintendent, conversions of existing academies to innovation schools, and notifying the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the establishment of an innovation school. Mr. DiTullio discussed the five comments received from the Massachusetts Teachers Association and how those were addressed.

Commissioner Chester said the Department received some comments related to virtual schools, but that is not part of this discussion. The commissioner said the Department had sent to the Legislature a set of recommendations to change the process for authorizing virtual schools with more robust quality control by the state. Mr. Roach asked about regulations on virtual schools. Commissioner Chester said the regulations require a virtual school to serve at least 25% students from within the district unless the district receives a waiver from the Board, and the Board decided not to grant additional waivers at this time. He said if the Legislature creates a new law on virtual schools, then the Board would need to adopt new regulations. Mr. DiTullio noted that the amendments to the regulations make one change regarding special education and virtual schools.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B, and chapter 71, § 92, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Innovation Schools Regulations, 603 CMR 48.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

Secretary Reville had to leave the meeting at 10:10 a.m. and Mr. DiTullio sat as designee.

**School and District Leadership Initiatives**

Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy introduced Glenn Koocher, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Tom Scott, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), and Joan Connolly, project director for the new superintendent induction program. Ms. Foisy described the system that the Department is designing called “Massachusetts Way of Leading.” Ms. Foisy said there are four initiatives based on current research, and each includes a strong coaching concept and strong evaluation piece. Ms. Foisy said the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) developed a set of school leadership skills, and over 1,200 principals have been trained as of 2011. Ms. Foisy said NISL training is now offered through the District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs).

Mr. Scott thanked the commissioner and former deputy commissioner Karla Baehr for including the district leadership initiative in the Race to the Top grant proposal. He said that of the 277 superintendents in the Commonwealth, there is typically about an annual turnover of 55-65, or close to 20 percent. Mr. Scott said the position of superintendent is complicated and challenging. Mr. Scott said the New Superintendent Induction Program is offered to all new superintendents or superintendents new to Massachusetts. The program provides important tools, skills and strategies to focus on student learning. Joan Connolly presented the curriculum and coaching model.

Mr. Koocher said that starting in 2003, new school committee members have been required to get 8 hours of training through MASC. Mr. Koocher said MASC does intensive work with school committees on student achievement, and provides a focus on superintendent – school committee relationships. There is also a heavy focus on fiduciary responsibilities and the role of school committees in strategies for student success.

Ms. Foisy said the newest project is in building effective labor-management relations with a focus on student achievement.

In response to questions, Mr. Scott said half of superintendent turnover is retirement and the other half is moving to other districts. Mr. Scott said the average age of a superintendent has not changed over the past 8 years; it is a little over 56.

Dr. Howard said this is a terrific initiative and asked if other states had done anything similar in terms of a coordinated approach to governance. Commissioner Chester said Mr. Scott had not found much going on in other states. Ms. Kaplan said she is excited about the superintendent leadership process, and asked whether diversity of the pool is a goal. Mr. Scott said we have concerns about the pipeline and MASS has a affiliation with Boston College where MASS taps school leaders for a three-year doctoral program. Mr. Scott said 50 percent of the slots are for under-represented groups and those representing baseline populations such as urban centers.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she is excited about this initiative and sees connections with closing the proficiency gap. She asked what kinds of support the new receiver in Lawrence, Jeff Riley, will have. Commissioner Chester said Mr. Riley would not lack for support. The commissioner said the receiver will meet with Department senior staff on a weekly basis and is meeting with many interested outside organizations as well as stakeholders.

The commissioner said this is a very impressive body of work. Commissioner Chester commended the work of Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy and Associate Commissioner Lise Zeig. The commissioner said the kind of leadership that Mr. Scott and Mr. Koocher represent, as well as the two teacher unions, is invaluable.

Mr. Gifford and Dr. Mohler-Faria had to leave at 11:15 a.m.

**District and School Assistance Centers: U.Mass.-Donahue Institute Evaluation Report**

Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy said that each of the ten Commissioner’s Districts has a liaison in the Office of District and School Turnaround. Ms. Zeig said the District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs) provide assistance based on districts’ priority status. Ms. Zeig said these six regional assistance centers are virtual, though they are provided space when needed from the Readiness Centers. The DSACs’ purpose is to provide regional assistance to districts.

Ms. Zeig said the Department commissioned an evaluation with the UMass-Donahue Institute that helps us think through the design of the program. Ms. Zeig said there is a range of participation among districts, and districts rated a lot of the assistance as high quality. Ms. Foisy said DSACs are successful by building relationships and trust with educators in the field, supporting a cycle of continuous improvement and building capacity.

Dr. Howard asked when student outcomes would be reviewed in relation to the work of the DSACs. Ms. Zeig said the Department is talking with evaluators about how to collect that information.

**Charter Schools**

**Edward M. Kennedy Academy of Health Careers: Major Amendment Request**

Commissioner Chester said this Horace Mann charter school has submitted a major amendment request to double its enrollment. The commissioner said this is a worthy request, the school is in high demand, and it is doing a good job. Commissioner Chester added that Superintendent Johnson supports this request. Ms. Chernow asked about back- filling vacant seats. Charter School Office staff member Alison Bagg said back-filling does not apply to Horace Mann charter schools.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

***Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, a Horace Mann Charter School (enrollment increase from 220 to 448 students)***

**Location: Boston**

**Maximum enrollment: 448**

**Grade levels: 9-12**

**Effective year: 2012-13**

The vote was unanimous.

**Innovation Academy Charter School: Report on Conditions and Major Amendment Request**

Commissioner Chester reported on the school’s conditions and a recommendation to approve a major amendment request. The commissioner said the school has been doing a good job and is looking to expand enrollment in its 5-12 program. The commissioner said the condition had to do with programs for English language learners. Commissioner Chester said the condition has been met and consequently he recommends that the amendment request be approved.

Mr. Roach asked what percentage of the students are ELL. Ms. Bagg said three students out of 600 are ELL. Dr. Howard asked for similar documentation that the Board received for the North Central Charter Essential School. The commissioner said the Department could get that data, and we typically have more documentation in the case of a renewal. Ms. Kaplan asked since one of the communities is Lowell, why the ELL population is so low. Charter School director Marlon Davis said a lottery determines who comes through the doors. Ms. Kaplan asked if students from Lowell get free transportation to the school. Mr. Davis said parents are responsible for transportation to charter schools outside of the district. Ms. Chernow said it was hard to vote to increase enrollment for schools where the Board does not have a lot of information.

Ms. Holmes expressed a concern about expanding enrollment if the demographics do not reflect the broader student population. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said this is an issue the Board has discussed, and the 2010 Achievement Gap Act placed an added emphasis on recruiting and retaining students in underrepresented categories. Mr. Wulfson said there is a limit to what schools can do because the lottery remains in effect. Commissioner Chester asked about the impact of delaying the Board’s vote a month. Mr. Wulfson said it would be hard to implement the amendment for this school year with the deadline to report pre-enrollment numbers to the Department. The Board tabled the discussion until later in the meeting when more data would be available.

**North Central Charter Essential School: Renewal with Probation**

Commissioner Chester said this school has been in operation for 10 years and has been in and out of conditions. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson explained the renewal protocol. He said the primary concern here is academic performance, and how to convey in renewing the charter that we expect stronger and more consistent academic gains from this established charter school. Chair Banta asked if the school were renewed with conditions, when it would come back to the Board. Mr. Wulfson said typically the Department allows two years. Mr. Chertavian said his expectation is that charter schools do better than the district and keep up with the state average. Mr. Chertavian said the school’s 10th graders are doing very well but it was concerning that the school said it did not teach to 7th grade standards. Mr. Chertavian said as a public school its obligation is to teach to the state standards. Mr. Chertavian said this seems to be a well integrated school, with a lot going right, but there is some disconnect.

Ms. Kaplan said the Board should be clear on the definition of conditions versus probation and the expectations for mature charter schools, so schools have adequate notice. Dr. Howard said he believes charter schools should be expected to do better than other schools. Ms. Chernow said this school does not have the organizational disarray that has prompted the Board to put other charter schools on probation. Ms. Chernow said the standard for conditions, probation, and non-renewal should be clearer. Mr. DiTullio, the Secretary’s designee, said conditions placed on the school were met, and this seems to be a school receptive to conditions. Mr. DiTullio said probation means the Board has to be prepared to close the school, and in his judgment the school does not seem in position for closure. Chair Banta said these issues are judgment calls and the question is what to expect of a charter school that has been operating for 10 years.

Mr. Chertavian offered an amendment to the proposed motion so that it would refer to renewal of the charter with conditions but not probation. Ms. Kaplan seconded the motion and proposed specific language to renew the school’s charter with conditions rather than probation.

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

**VOTED: to amend the motion to refer to renewal of the school’s charter with conditions rather than probation.**

The vote was 5-4. Dr. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. DiTullio, Chair Banta, Mr. Chertavian, and Ms. Kaplan voted in support. Mr. Roach, Ms. Chernow, Dr. Howard, and Ms. Holmes voted in opposition.

**On an amended motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grants a renewal to the North Central Charter Essential School, with one condition on the school’s charter, for the five-year period from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2017, as recommended by the Commissioner.**

**Commonwealth Charter School (Regional):**

**North Central Charter Essential School**

 **Location: Fitchburg**

 **Districts in Region: Ashburnham-Westminster,**

 **Clinton,**

 **Fitchburg, Gardner,**

 **Leominster, Lunenburg, Nashoba,**

 **North Middlesex, Wachusett**

 **Maximum Enrollment: 400**

 **Grade levels: 7-12**

**This charter renewal is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in placing the school on probation, revocation of the charter, or imposition of additional conditions.**

**By December 31, 2013, North Central Charter Essential School must demonstrate academic success by:**

1. **Meeting academic growth targets in mathematics and English language arts, as established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:**
2. **Demonstrating improvement in absolute CPI scores; and**
3. **Meeting academic goals and objectives established in the school’s accountability plan.**

**North Central Charter Essential School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote was 5-4. Dr. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. DiTullio, Chair Banta, Mr. Chertavian, and Ms. Kaplan voted in support. Mr. Roach, Ms. Chernow, Dr. Howard, and Ms. Holmes voted in opposition.

**Information on New Charter Applicants**

Commissioner Chester provided the Board with information on the new charter applicants. There were a total of six final applications. The commissioner said he would make his recommendations in February and bring those with his rationale to the February 28th regular meeting. Ms. Kaplan asked about the role of Board members at the public hearings. Commissioner Chester said the public hearing process is designed to let the public weigh in, and members would report at the February meeting on what they heard at the hearings. Ms. Kaplan suggested that the Board’s Charter School Committee address the role of Board members in those hearings.

**Innovation Academy Charter School: Report on Conditions and Major Amendment Request**

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson provided the Board with additional data on the school’s percentage of low income students, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about the school’s outreach plan. Ms. Bagg said the school has two strategies around recruitment in Lowell.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

***Innovation Academy Charter School (enrollment increase from 600 to 800 students)***

**Regional Charter School**

**Location: Tyngsborough**

**Districts in Region Billerica, Chelmsford,**

 **Dracut, Groton-Dunstable,**

 **Littleton, Lowell,**

 **Tewksbury, Tyngsborough,**

 **and Westford**

**Maximum enrollment: 800**

**Grade levels: 5-12**

**Effective year: 2012-13**

The vote was unanimous.

**Student Assessment and Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**

Chair Banta said the Board would take up a continuing discussion of PARCC at a future meeting.

**Update on Level 5 District Designation for Lawrence Public Schools**

Chair Banta said the Board would take up a continuing discussion of Lawrence at the next meeting.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:15 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board

Minutes of the Special Meeting

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

**January 23, 2012**

**4:10 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Beverly Holmes**, Vice Chair, Springfield

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**James DiTullio**, Designee for the Secretary of Education

**Matthew Gifford**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**David Roach**, Sutton

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Chair Banta welcomed the Board to its special meeting on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Commissioner Chester said he was pleased to welcome Michael Cohen, President of Achieve, Inc., and Laura Slover, Senior Vice President of Achieve, Inc. The commissioner said that a funding opportunity grew out of Race to the Top for a consortium of states to develop next-generation assessments. The commissioner said a major concern in Massachusetts is that more than a third of public school graduates get placed in non-credit bearing coursework in public higher education.

Mr. Cohen thanked the commissioner and said it was a pleasure to visit the Board again. Mr. Cohen described PARCC’s Governing Board, which Commissioner Chester chairs. Mr. Cohen said that as was true for the development of the Common Core State Standards, Massachusetts was a bellwether state for PARCC. Mr. Cohen said Massachusetts is setting the benchmark, and it is a high standard.

Mr. Cohen described six priorities for PARCC, which aims to: (1) create high quality assessments; (2) build a pathway to college and career readiness for all students; (3) support educators in the classroom; (4) develop 21st century, technology-based assessments; (5) advance accountability at all levels; and (6) build an assessment system that is sustainable and affordable. Ms. Slover said a key facet of PARCC is that it is not just a one-time, end-of-year, multiple-choice assessment. Ms. Slover said PARCC will have multiple components and two summative components will be: (1) computer-based testing that is innovative and scored rapidly; and (2) a performance-based assessment that calls on students to apply knowledge. Ms. Slover also described a speaking and learning assessment that would be a performance assessment that requires a student to do a formal presentation in front of an audience. That assessment would be scored on a rubric.

Ms. Slover said PARCC will have a laser-like focus for preparing students for college and career. It would start with tools for diagnostic assessments for K-2 students. PARCC will develop bridge courses for 11th or 12th grade students who are not scoring at the “ready” level. Ms. Slover said PARCC is not just about testing, in that it also provides supports for students and teachers. PARCC will provide a set of rich examples, prototypes and sample tasks to help students and teachers know what the target is. Ms. Slover said PARCC will be delivered entirely online, though students in grades 3-5 can take the assessment using paper and pencil. Ms. Slover said computer-based assessments allow for economies of scale to drive down costs and produce a much faster return of results.

Mr. Cohen said that in the PARCC states, school level accountability is a significant part of the reform strategy. Mr. Cohen said all the states understood that what gets tested drives instruction. Mr. Cohen said what was needed was a test robust enough to support accountability judgments, support the evaluation of educators, and produce common cut scores to provide for comparability of results across the states.

Mr. Cohen said the cost per student per test for PARCC will be $11 per student. This assumes that the performance assessments are scored by teachers. Mr. Cohen said if we get to the use of artificial intelligence to score tests, then costs will be even lower. By comparison, MCAS costs about $23 per student. A big part of the cost savings is tied to the assessments being computer-based. Mr. Cohen said this does require investments in technology infrastructure and in improving instruction. Mr. Cohen said he is aware that the federal grant supporting PARCC runs out in 2014-15, and the consortium has started plans to sustain the effort.

Dr. Howard asked if the only technology-based test is the end-of-year assessment. Ms. Slover said that all are technology-based. Ms. Slover said the performance based design is delivered by computer, but the model includes a predominance of teacher-scored items. Mr. Cohen said states will vary on teachers scoring or hiring a vendor. Dr. Howard asked how PARCC is related to NAEP. Ms. Slover said it is not the intention of PARCC to supplant NAEP. Ms. Slover said Achieve is currently in discussion with the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees NAEP, to talk about the possibility of item embedding.

Ms. Chernow asked if PARCC will replace MCAS. Commissioner Chester said there is no pre-determined commitment to sunset MCAS. The commissioner said if PARCC is a step forward for us and does not water down our high standards, he would likely recommend to the Board a transition plan to move from MCAS. Ms. Chernow said it looks like a lot of assessment time involved here, and also computer labs seem extraordinarily expensive. Ms. Chernow asked about the difference between a cut score, high school graduation, and being college ready. Commissioner Chester said testing time is a critical issue, and many districts are doing a lot of assessment, only a small part of which is what the state requires. The commissioner said the goal is to build an assessment system that is valuable enough for districts to abandon some of those other tests.

The commissioner said the technology piece is huge, and in the short run the state will have to offer paper and pencil alternatives. The commissioner said the state will complete an analysis of each building’s technology infrastructure. Commissioner Chester said he spoke with Treasurer Grossman today about the possibility of committing School Building Authority (SBA) funds to support the strengthening of infrastructure in each school building.

Ms. Kaplan arrived at 4:50 p.m.

Mr. Cohen said he would advise against states setting a college readiness standard for a high school diploma. He said a college ready level should be set in an accurate way. Mr. Cohen said you want to be able to say at the end of the 11th grade either that a student has done so well that the student is on track to do credit-bearing work in college, or that a student is not yet college ready and here are some suggestions for the senior year.

Ms. Slover said PARCC will develop two math sequences, one for Algebra I, II and Geometry, and one for Integrated Math. Mr. Roach asked about the differences between PARCC and the other consortium, Smarter Balance. Mr. Cohen said PARCC will assess how well students met grade-level standards, while Smarter Balance will be computer adaptive testing that will try to locate where a student’s performance is. Mr. Roach asked about cut scores. Commissioner Chester said the key driver of the 18 governing states is to come up with a common standard for college and career readiness. The commissioner said the college readiness standard would be constant across states, while any Competency Determination standard would be state-specific.

Mr. Roach asked about the psychometrics of computer-based testing. Mr. Cohen said there is no reason to think that we can’t achieve a high level of reliability. Mr. Cohen said no state will accept tests that do not meet or exceed current levels of psychometrics. Chair Banta asked why computer-based testing won’t be available for grades 3, 4 and 5 and whether that is related to cost or appropriateness. Ms. Slover said it is by design because there is a sense of a digital divide that is not the same for all students in those grades.

Mr. Gifford expressed a concern about the speaking and listening section for students in the early grades. Ms. Slover said expectations will shift as students get older, and that the speaking and listening portion for younger students may look quite different than for older students. Mr. Chertavian asked what concerns there are about PARCC. Ms. Slover said PARCC is on track, but there are multiple milestones that lie ahead and little room for error. Ms. Slover said the technology infrastructure is the biggest challenge.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she is concerned about the technology and its associated costs. Mr. Cohen said he estimates the summative assessments to be about $11 per student, and the mid-year assessments to be less costly. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she was concerned about human scoring if results will be used as an educator evaluation tool, and about adding to teachers’ workloads.

Mr. Cohen said the timeline for PARCC is for it to be ready in the 2014-15 school year. Commissioner Chester said the caution about who scores the test is right on target. The commissioner said right now all tests in Massachusetts have open-ended items that are scored by people who are not in-state. The commissioner said artificial intelligence scoring continues to evolve and offers an interesting potential to bring down costs. Commissioner Chester said part of the challenge is to anticipate where the development curve will be two years from now.

Chair Banta asked if students will get to pilot-test this new system. Mr. Cohen said when prototypes are developed they will have to be tried out with students.

Ms. Slover said PARCC’s real goal is to measure the content standards of the Common Core State Standards. The tasks will embody the kinds of things you want students to be doing. Acting Director of Student Assessment Elizabeth Davis said that two Race to the Top initiatives parallel what PARCC is doing – curriculum-embedded performance assessments (CEPA) and online interim and formative assessments.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board