



## 2021 Annual Report to BESE | Katherine Craven

Chair, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education



Dear Fellow Board Members,

I had hoped that my letter to you this January would be a post-pandemic one, reflecting on how far we had come. Even though the pandemic is still with us, we have, in fact, come a long way. After months of remote learning, we took a huge step to support our students in March 2020, when we agreed that in-person learning was critically important to their wellbeing and authorized Commissioner Riley to decide when schools would be required to offer all students full-time, in-person learning. All schools did so by the end of spring, allowing students to begin the process of readjusting to in-person school and connecting them with needed services. As we continue to address the pandemic's effects, I'm proud that we recognized the importance of that first step.

While COVID-19 dominated our time last year, it was not our sole focus. I am grateful that each of you brought your perspectives and expertise to all of the issues we are addressing, including educator diversity, early literacy, budgeting, assessment, curriculum, and more. Our work toward high-quality, equitable education for all students has never been more important, particularly in light of the disparities that the pandemic laid bare. I thank each of you, and Commissioner Riley and everyone at DESE, for your continuing service.

I also would like to express my profound gratitude to Governor Charlie Baker for the honor he gave me when he appointed me chair of this great board.