

Dear Fellow Board Members,

The 2021-22 school year marked the return to post-pandemic in-school learning, and the emergence from the uncertainty of having lived through a tremendous societal disruption. As a board, we worked to ensure that all Massachusetts students have access to high quality curriculum and learning opportunities, to continue to diversify the teacher workforce, and to support work in such targeted programs as early literacy and Early College, which systemizes a new pathway for our high schoolers to access higher education.

We also heard from districts about the post-pandemic challenges they continue to face, while DESE administered infusions of federal COVID relief money aimed at addressing academic needs, social and emotional wellbeing, and even certain building issues. In some districts, the Board and DESE took a greater role, tailoring interventions to meet the needs. Boston Public Schools' Systemic Improvement Plan is a unique document, and we will continue to monitor the district's progress in the coming months. We continue to listen acutely to feedback about the needs of the field, particularly as we seek to ameliorate educational disparities that were exacerbated by the pandemic. As a mom of five children, including one who has Down Syndrome, I am grateful to the countless people across the Commonwealth who are committed to working with our kids every day to guide them in opportunities that encourage their innate curiosity for learning — not just during the pandemic but every day.

I am grateful to each of you for your expertise, and I would especially like to thank outgoing board members James Morton, Amanda Fernández, and former Secretary of Education James Peyser for all of their work on behalf of the nearly 1 million schoolchildren in Massachusetts. You truly made a difference.

Gratefully,

Katherine Craven

Chair of the Board