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|  | Advisory Councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: Annual Reports for 2019-2020 |
|  |
| November 2020 |
| Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370www.doe.mass.edu |
| ESE logoThis document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary EducationJeffrey C. RileyCommissioner **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members**Ms. Katherine Craven, Chair, BrooklineMr. James Morton, Vice Chair, SpringfieldMr. Jasper S. Coughlin, Billerica, Student MemberMs. Amanda Fernández, BelmontMr. Matthew Hills, NewtonMs. Darlene Lombos, BostonMr. Michael Moriarty, HolyokeMr. James Peyser, Secretary of Education, MiltonMr. Paymon Rouhanifard, BrooklineMs. Mary Ann Stewart, LexingtonDr. Martin West, NewtonJeffrey C. Riley, CommissionerSecretary to the BoardThe Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.  Inquiries regarding the Department’s compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.© 2020 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary EducationPermission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the “Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”This document printed on recycled paperMassachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370www.doe.mass.eduState Seal of Massachusetts |

***Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

November 2020

Dear Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,

Enclosed please find the 2019-2020 Advisory Councils’ Annual Reports to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Advisory councils, established by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15, Section 1G, advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters pertinent to the implementation of education reform in the Commonwealth and to provide programmatic recommendations.

There are currently 11 advisory councils: Adult Basic Education, Arts Education, Braille Literacy, Digital Learning, Educational Personnel, English Language Learners/Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Parent and Community Education and Involvement, Racial Imbalance, School and District Accountability and Assistance, and Special Education. This document compiles the reports from the eight advisory councils that submitted a report this year. In addition, the State Student Advisory Council, whose members are elected by other students rather than appointed by the Board, is an active and important advisory council to the Board.

Each council’s annual report, submitted by the council chair, includes a summary of the work of the council, recommendations to the Commissioner and Board, council leadership and membership, and meetings held. The reports and their recommendations are those of the councils and not of the Department.

Thank you to the council members and liaisons for their time, efforts, and constructive feedback. If the Board is interested in greater detail on the activities and recommendations of any council, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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**2019-2020 Adult Education Advisory Council**

**Annual Report**

1. INTRODUCTION

The 11-member Adult Education Advisory Council advises the Board and the Commissioner on matters pertinent to the development of adult education services in the Commonwealth. The FY20 charge for the Council was to advise the Adult and Community Services Unit (ACLS) on 1) implementation of our Theory of Action throughout FY19-22; 2) building system capacity to serve special populations 3) increasing integration of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts in programming and 4) updating the 2020 WIOA State Plan.

1. **2019-2020 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council was updated on the progress of goals set for FY20. The Council continued to advise ACLS on system implementation, policies, and areas for system development.

The Council members discussed, reviewed, and provided feedback on the following ACLS initiatives:

* FY20 WIOA State Plan Development (November, January, March)
* State as Partner (which is part of the Commissioner’s “Moving our Way Forward” initiative that he has with the PK-12) webinars in order increase frequency of communication between the state and local providers. (November)
* Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as it relates to program monitoring, system evaluation, and using demographic data to identify students not currently be served well or at all in adult education. Council advised on looking at state and program level data. (November, January)
* Potential employers that support adult learners obtaining basic education and training skill obtainment while employed. (November)
* Adult education services systems map in relationship to WIOA partner service provider. (January)
* Alternative measures for students facing barriers to obtaining goals i.e. Ability to benefit, competency-based model. (January)
* Impact of COVID-19 on funding, program services, staff, and students. (March, June)
1. **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council members provided feedback on all initiative discussed above which informed further development and refinement of those initiatives as they were being finalized.

1. **COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:** *Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, AE Administrator*

**Department Liaison:** *Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, AE Administrator*

**Chairperson:** *Stacy Randell Shaheen, Director, North Shore Community College*

**FY2019-2020 Council Members**

1. Kate Anderson, Coordinator of IT and Assessment System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES)
2. Ernest Best, Executive Director, Massachusetts Alliance of Adult Learns
3. Rachel Pleasants McDonnell, Associate Director, Jobs for The Future
4. David Cedrone, Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development, MA Department of Higher Education
5. Rachael Gwaltney, Director, Mass Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE)
6. Mary Sarris, Executive Director, North Shore Workforce Investment Board
7. Stacy Randell Shaheen, Director, North Shore Community College
8. Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Director, Intergenerational Literacy Program, Chelsea, MA
9. Ana Liria Tizol Cantor, Student, Intergenerational Literacy Program, Chelsea, MA

**Council Meeting Dates:**

1. November 8, 2019
2. January 31, 2020
3. March 20, 2020
4. June 19, 2020

ARTS EDUCTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Annual Reports**

**July 2018- July 2020**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This year focused on the developed of the new arts curriculum framework. The council gave feedback and was updated on status of the process. Also, the council discussed the roll-out of the framework across the state and what the council can do to assist. The council has recommendations and would like a charge from the DESE for continuing and focusing the work moving forward.

**II. 2018-2019 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

AEAC gave input and feedback on the development of the arts curriculum framework including:

* Disciplines: Media Arts and Visual Arts vs. Visual Arts only
* Structure of framework
	+ Alignment to NCCAS
	+ Alignment to MA frameworks for other subjects
	+ Alignment across disciplines including language
* Which guiding principles/clusters/standards should be included and how many?
* Feedback on drafts:
	+ What needs to be included?
	+ What needs to be clearer?
	+ Overall edits
* Assisted in getting the word out across the state to elicit feedback during public comment
* Assisted in the “Arts Roadshow” to give an overview and discuss revision with arts educators across the state.
* Met with some state arts organizations to begin brainstorming the inclusion of professional development at conferences moving forward.

AEAC discussed role of the council moving forward:

* Orient new DESE Arts Content Lead
* Develop Professional Development on new framework
* Identify and implement projects
* Create regional groups
* Work with state arts organizations to develop professional development offerings at conferences.

**III. 2019-2020 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

Over the year, the council focused on feedback regarding the PD series on the new arts framework, brainstorming idea for conferences, as well as feedback about the arts in terms of remote learning.

PD Series

* Some AEAC members are also arts ambassadors and shared how the series was going. From the council, the recommendation was to have more online components available moving forward.

Diverse Arts Guidebook

* The council showed support for this and is looking forward to the release.

Conferences

* The council would like to see conferences such as the Arts Literacy Conference moving forward.
* The council would like to see more sessions about the framework at state-wide arts conferences (ex. MAEA, MMEA, etc.)

Remote Learning

* The council advocated to have targeted arts standards included in the list from DESE.
* The council would like to see more remote learning resources available to arts educators.
* The council discussed challenges with remote learning and the varied approach to arts education across the state including teacher and student accountability.

**IV. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

As in past years, the AEAC continues to make over-arching recommendations relating to the inclusion of the arts in the general academic curriculum of all Massachusetts K-12 schools. Several of the below recommendations appeared in the last AEAC Annual Report.

1. AEAC Membership: We are appreciative for the tireless efforts of Dr. Muñoz-Bennett, former council liaison, and grateful that DESE has identified the need for recruiting new members and addressing the issue that due to term expirations and a lack of a process to nominate replacements, the AEAC has been reduced from 24 members to 9 currently. (Most of the current members are slated to have their terms expire this year.)
2. The AEAC is appreciative that an Arts Content Lead was hired and that DESE has moved forward with an arts ambassadors program in order to assist with the roll out of the new arts framework. It is recommended that the AEAC also assist with this process in collaboration with the ambassadors.
3. AEAC Charge: The Council requests that we be allowed to formulate our own annual charge based upon our rich experiences in the field of arts education and understanding of the needs in this area across the state. This would enable the AEAC to properly advise “the Commissioner and Board of Education on matters pertinent to the development of arts education in the Commonwealth.” (p. 2 for AEAC description on DESE Website)
4. In addition to areas of specific support that the Commissioner deems necessary, the AEAC should annually focus upon the primary tasks as identified on the DESE website:
	1. Examining statewide trends and needs
	2. Seeking public and professional input
	3. Identifying model programs
5. The AEAC recommends that DESE develops a specific budget to support arts education in the Commonwealth, including professional development institutes for curriculum development, arts assessment, and other key strategies for quality arts education.
6. The AEAC recommends that DESE clarifies to districts that it is permissible for districts to use funding from Federal Title grants, Chapter 70, RTTT, and other appropriate education funding sources to support arts education.
7. The Council recommends funding to develop a resource document, such as the one from Maryland, that lists resources for both domain-specific arts education as well as arts integration with and through other subjects and disciplines

**Additional Recommendations**: These were recommendations made in prior annual reports. They have not been fully achieved; therefore, we include them once again in our current annual report.

1. Elevate MassCore from a “recommended” to the “default” high school course of study in alignment with goals expressed in the MA RTTT grant application narrative, page 14, 2010.
2. Support the inclusion of an admission requirement for Massachusetts public universities (four year institutions) of a minimum of one year in visual and/or performing arts at the high school level (dance, music, theatre/drama, visual art), thereby aligning state university entrance requirements with the MassCore course of study, also expressed on page 14 of the MA RTTT grant application of 2010 (see appendix 1).
3. Require arts coursework or professional development in arts and learning for licensure for all persons who hire or evaluate arts educators (such as principals, curriculum directors, and superintendents).
4. Evaluation of arts educators should primarily be based on assessment of arts-specific student learning outcomes in the area(s) of the teacher’s licensure, rather than primarily on their students’ performance on standardized state examinations in Common Core subjects of ELA, math, and other subjects.
5. Develop and provide enhanced professional development for arts educators and classroom teachers to promote collaboration through aligning their work across content areas.
6. Develop and provide enhanced professional development for arts educators regarding practices in curriculum development, student assessment, instructional practices, and new national standards.
7. Implement the recommendations of the Massachusetts Commission to Develop an Index of Creative and Innovative Education in the Public Schools (published by DESE in September 2012).

**V. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Council Meeting Dates:**

July 24, 2018

October 30, 2018

January 10, 2019

March 7, 2019

May 2, 2019

January 9, 2020

November 14, 2020

March 12, 2020

May 7, 2020

**Department Council Liaison:**

* Dawn Benski,
	+ Arts Content Support Lead

**Co-Chairperson:**

* Lynn Souza
	+ Director of Fine Arts, New Bedford Public Schools

**Members of the 2019-2020 Arts Education Advisory Council:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Institution** |
| Elizabeth Byron | Visual Art and Special Education | Billerica Public Schools |
| Diane Daily | Education Programs Manager | MA Cultural Council |
| Christopher P. Dearbeck | Fine Arts Coordinator | Billerica Public Schools |
| Alice Matthews Gentili | Visual Art Educator | Mendon Upton Regional School District |
| Hannah Hammond | Theatre Teacher | UP Academy Holland Elementary School |
| Priscilla Kane Hellweg  | Executive Artistic Dir. | Enchanted Circle Theatre Holyoke |
| Julie Jaron | Director of Visual and Performing Arts  | Springfield Public Schools |
| Richard P. King | Music, Theatre, Visual Art Coordinator | Newton Public Schools  |
| Simone Kivett | Visual Art Teacher | Lynn Public Schools |
| Timmary Leary  | Visual Arts Liaison | Worcester Public Schools  |
| Sandra Nicolucci Ed. D. | Music Education Consulting | For any or All School Districts |
| Joan A. Ortu  | Visual Art Teacher | Malden Public Schools  |
| William Thomas Pappazisis  | Director of Performing Arts | Arlington Public Schools |
| Luci Prawdzik Ed. D. | Supervisor of Art K-12 | Somerville Public Schools |
| Lynn Souza | Director of Fine Arts K-12 | New Bedford Public Schools  |
| John Travlo | Visual Arts Educator/Curriculum Liaison For The Visual and Performing Arts | Lawrence Public Schools |

**Digital Learning Advisory Council**

**Annual Report for 2019-2020**

I. Introduction

The 2013 virtual schools legislation ([Chapter 379 of the Acts of 2012, An Act Establishing Commonwealth Virtual Schools](http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379)[[1]](#footnote-2)) created the Digital Learning Advisory Council (DLAC) to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Commissioner on:

* The development of policies guiding virtual schools, supplemental online courses, education technology, and other matters related to virtual education.
* The identification of best practices to encourage online education to complement classroom instruction in district schools.
* The assessment of the appropriateness of the fee that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) may retain for the administration of the virtual school program.

The law specifies that the DLAC include representatives from various statewide education organizations, districts and schools including virtual schools (i.e., teacher, administrator, parent), higher education, and non-profit and technology companies. The current DLAC includes a broad range of experts who meet these criteria.

II. Work of the Council - 2019-2020

The DLAC started the 2019-2020 school year discussing a range of topics from digital literacy professional development offerings and educator preparation, to student and educator privacy and security, to revising the criteria for Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (CMVS) to reflect national standards, and educational technology issues, including purchasing hardware, software, site licenses, adaptive technology, and broadband access.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the DLAC primarily focused on the performance of the two CMVS based on DESE accountability reviews of each school. As a result, the DLAC held a series of meetings to discuss the results of accountability reviews for the schools. At their May 2, 2019 meeting, the DLAC met with representatives of both CMVS.

As a result of that work, DESE engaged a consultant to update the CMVS Performance Criteria, the site visit protocol, and the site visit report template. During the spring of 2020, members of the DLAC met with the consultants to review the CMVS Performance Criteria and potential CMVS accountability metrics.

Additionally, during the 2019-2020 school year, the DLAC spent considerable energy providing advice to DESE and the commissioner in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration announced suspension of school operations for educational purposes at all public and private elementary and secondary (K-12) schools in the Commonwealth and a series of new guidance and legislation in response to COVID-19 soon followed.

In response, the DLAC focused on providing guidance to DESE on how to best support school districts interested in the delivery of remote and online learning. On March 19, 2020, the DLAC submitted a memo to DESE providing considerations and suggestions to support of school districts in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. See Appendix A.

The DLAC’s March memo outlined a range of recommendations, including but not limited to:

* Reinstating and staffing the Office of Digital Learning (with the possibility of reporting directly to the Commissioner)
* Providing guidance for educators on appropriate practices and mandated reporting requirements for using technology to engage with students and families.
* Developing resources for districts who wish to provide learning tools and activities for students to use at home.
* Providing sample survey tools to districts that can quickly identify the local parameters of and barriers to internet access, devices and learning management systems, resulting in the leveraging of local regional and statewide data to target gaps and areas of need.
* Prioritizing low-tech best practices and guidance for family engagement such as the use of phones, journals, or other community communication systems.
* Identifying opportunities for educators to collaborate and develop a supportive culture in a distance learning environment.
* Communicating the need for age-appropriate routines for all students with the understanding that such routines may or may not mimic a traditional school day /schedule.
* Identifying and supporting high-quality training for coordinators and teachers on remote engagement and distance learning practices.
* Intentionally planning the implementation, a range of learning management systems, resources and supports that will serve to mitigate academic slide for students, with particular attention to students with limited or no access to the internet and public services.
* Encouraging DESE to partner with Education Collaboratives to disseminate consistent professional development and curricular resources to their members and geographic districts, aligned with DESE guidelines and stakeholder recommendations.

The DLAC met five times during March and April 2020, and members were deeply engaged in sharing experiences from the field, surfacing issues, and problem solving. At the request of DESE, by the end of April, the DLAC submitted a second memorandum that explored the role of the state, the local district, or a partnership between both to provide guidance, procurement support, or decision making with regard to digital learning. See Appendix B.

III. Council Details

**Department Administrator:** Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign

**Co-Chairs:** Angela T. Burke and Elizabeth Tripathi

**Members of the 2019-2020 DLAC:[[2]](#footnote-3)**

* Amy Michalowski, Dean, The Virtual High School
* Andrea Wadsworth; Former Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance, Mt. Greylock Regional School District
* Angela T. Burke, Director of Professional Services/CTO, Collaborative for Educational Services
* Bill Silver, Director of Information Communication and Technology Services, Chelmsford Public Schools
* Daniel Murphy, Director of Education Policy and Programs, AFT Massachusetts
* David O’Connor, Founding Executive Director, MAPLE Consortium
* Elizabeth Tripathi, Education Policy Specialist, Massachusetts Teachers Association
* Jared Perrine, Director of Innovation, Technology, and Digital Learning, Benjamin Banneker Charter School
* Keith Ford, Assistant Principal, Needham High School (oversees online learning programs), Needham High School
* Lynn McCormack, Software Engineer, Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)
* Patrick Larkin, Assistant Superintendent, Burlington Public Schools, (MASS)
* Robert Reilly, School Committee Member, Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical
* Sarah Haavind, Senior Research Project Manager, The Concord Consortium
* Sarah Kyriazis, Manager of Instructional Technology and Digital Learning, Worcester Public Schools

**Council Meeting Dates:**

August 13, 2019; September 30, 2019; November 4, 2019; January 24, 2020; March 19, 2020; March 26, 2020; April 2, 2020; April 9, 2020; April 29. 2020; May 22, 2020

Appendix A:

TO: Commissioner Jeff Riley

CC: Allison Bagg, Director, Charter School Redesign

 Ruth Hersh, Assistant Director of Educational Collaboratives, Charter Schools and School Redesign

FROM: Digital Learning Advisory Council

RE: Supporting remote engagement during the COVID-19 situation

DATE: March 19, 2020

We all agree that these are unprecedented times. We are buoyed by the fact that schools and educators are working overtime to maintain connections with students and some level of continuity in learning. However, with all of this said we want to urge caution and provide some guidance as so many enter this remote engagement and possibly segue to distance learning environments for the first time.

The recommendations on behalf of the members of the Digital Learning Advisory Council are not based on a best-case scenario of schools reopening April 7, 2020, but rather that this crisis may go on for an unknown period of time, possibly not having schools even reopen before summer. We think such planning is prudent, but the sooner the Commissioner or the Governor can make a determination on the timeline, the better for all our schools and community members.

Below is the charge of the DLAC and we are highlighting bullet two of our responsibility as we craft this message:

*The 2013 virtual schools legislation (*[*Chapter 379 of the Acts of 2012, An Act Establishing Commonwealth Virtual Schools*](http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379)*) created a Digital Learning Advisory Council to advise the Board and the Commissioner on:*

* *The development of policies guiding virtual schools, supplemental online courses, education technology, and other matters related to virtual education.*
* ***The identification of best practices to encourage online education to complement classroom instruction in district schools.***
* *The assessment of the appropriateness of the fee that the Department may retain for the administration of the virtual school program.*

**Core Tenets to Consider:**

* Prioritizing Family Engagement and learning enrichment over instructional programming
* Recognizing the needs for social and emotional well-being of students and staff
* A need for unified messaging from the Department addressing barriers to the internet, television and informational systems that impeded schools abilities to communicate with families
* DLAC members should be actively involved in any engagement with the department in reference to remote learning policies and practices.
* Educators at all levels need planning time and patience with themselves while they develop a sense of confidence, and are finding their own online “voice” in distance education settings. This requires safety and low-stakes experimentation for both educators and students.
* Intentional planning must include considerations for diverse student populations, English learners and special education students throughout all phases.

**Phase I: Now until April 3, 2020**

1. Reactivate and effectively staff the Office of Digital Learning (maybe temporarily elevate to report directly to the Commissioner)
2. Guidance for educators on appropriate practices and mandated reporting requirements for educators using technology to engage with students and families.
3. Clear guidance for districts who wish to provide learning tools and activities for students to use at home:
	1. Tools need to have signed either the Massachusetts Student Data Privacy Agreement or other statewide student privacy agreements (for example, [CT student privacy portal](https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTEdTech/Commission-for-Educational-Technology/Initiatives/Student-Data-Privacy)).
	2. Tools are accessible and usable by students using established accessibility standards.
	3. Consideration of using paid resources that are “temporarily free” as they will not be free forever.
	4. Consideration of promotion or sharing of electronic resources that are not district-provided or approved resources.
4. Provide sample survey tools that can be quickly implemented by districts to identify the local parameters of internet access, devices and learning management systems. Such data can be leveraged locally, regionally and statewide to target gaps and areas of need.
5. Prioritize low-tech best practices and guidance for family engagement such as phones, journals or other community communication systems.
6. Support and flexibility for districts to leverage regional and statewide partnerships for purchasing, systems sharing and collaboration in using existing systems.
7. Identify opportunities for educators to collaborate and foster a collaborative culture in a distance learning environment.
8. Communicate the need for age-appropriate routines for all students and that such routines do not need to mimic a traditional school day and schedule. Learning can happen anytime, anywhere and communities should not feel bound by a bell-to-bell school schedule.

**Phase II: Through May 1, 2020**

1. Identify and share model agreements for partnership or regional purchasing of learning management systems and online resources, and support efforts to meet this goal.
2. DESE should redeploy staffing and resources in the Statewide Systems of Support (SSOS) offices to assist districts in longer-term partnerships and planning.
3. Identify and support high-quality training for coordinators and teachers on remote engagement and distance learning practices. Any such professional learning should also provide teachers and support staff separate opportunities to cultivate their online presence *not* in front of students but in small groups or school-level teacher communities.
4. Engage stakeholders to develop a repository of student learning and district employee models for different grade levels, course configurations and learning management systems. Such models should encompass a range of technology and school configurations.

**Phase III: May 3, 2020 - June 30, 2020**

1. Intentional planning to implement a range of learning management systems, resources and supports that will serve to mitigate academic slide for students. Any planning should include consideration of students with limited or no access to the internet and public services.
2. Engage stakeholders to develop common guidelines for grade level progression, completion of sequential courses and placement of students in the 2020-2021 school year.
3. If long term distance engagement and learning are necessary, provide guidance around school day and year flexibility to allow educators to manage personal and family needs while engaging in district-based plans for student engagement. It may be beneficial for the Department to provide common definitions of program designs such as synchronous, asynchronous, teacher-led instruction and computer-based learning so all educators are using the same language throughout the planning.
4. DESE should partner with Education Collaboratives to disseminate consistent professional development and curricular resources to their member/geographic districts. Any such PD or related resources shall align with DESE guidelines and stakeholder recommendations.

**Re-Entry Plan - Intentional Planning for Re-Entry for Schools**

At the time of writing, Massachusetts schools are required to remain closed only through April 6, 2020. Many districts have already announced closures for longer periods of time. Under the current timelines, there will be a staggered reopening of schools in April due to the fact that some districts have already announced closures beyond the April 6th mandate. Regardless if schools reopen in April or September, there will need to be serious considerations to the different experiences of students and educators. Any planning for family engagement and learning enrichment should continue through the transition back into the school routine.

Appendix B

**Role of state procurement versus local district procurement to improve internet access, devices, learning platforms & professional development.**

During these unprecedented times, we have been forced into addressing the immediacy of a situation without the benefit of time. We do, although, need to think of both the current and future investments that will impact our students' learning for years to come. Although we have an opportunity to capture funds, we need to be strategic when developing recommendations to support “remote learning.”

The teachers are instrumental in developing these digital and remote learning opportunities for the students. The administrative support for educators is uneven. Some school districts are fortunate to have an Educational Technology leader who understands both the educational and technical components of an effective and strategic deployment.

The Digital Learning Advisory Council has long called for leadership from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on educational technology issues. The need for a DESE office with oversight on digital learning throughout the state as well as recognition of the specialized role of district based Education Technology leaders have been articulated through DLAC on several occasions. The hope is that in the near future when we get back to “normalcy,” this is something that DESE will address.

Current and former members of the DLAC have collaborated to develop the following document. Issues related to internet connectivity, devices, learning platforms, and training and professional learning are interconnected. Prior to the Department embarking on state-wide purchasing or recommendations for districts, the following issues should be considered. The issues have been color coded to represent where DLAC members have identified where the state agencies can provide the primary means of support and where local districts can make decisions based on local contexts. We recognize that not all districts have the capacity at this time and areas highlighted in yellow represent issues where districts can benefit from collaboration when necessary.

.

Red - State as primary

Yellow - Hybrid based on local needs

Green - District as primary but aligned to industry, national and/or state standards

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | Comments/Known Concerns  |
| **Internet Connectivity** |
| Coordinate with state and federal agencies to mandate access to Wifi connections in shelters, public housing and Section 8. Dedicated access points should be available for households with children or adults enrolled in post-secondary educational programs.  |  |
| Procure, install, and manage Wi-Fi and other related network services necessary to deliver Internet and network resources accessible **off campus** for educators and students.Explore opportunities to work with district technology departments and service centers on projects that enhance connectivity and security. | * The cost of initial quotes for large districts has been very high. The procurement of hotspots is difficult for districts as devices are in short supply.
* Ability to integrate with existing district network and systems by building off regional networks.
* How can school districts including higher ed institutions share resources?
* Guest wifi on buses strategically place them throughout the state for access
* Ensure CIPA compliant
* Communicate and post access locations and instructions in multiple languages and formats.
* Many rural areas have last mile issues - this needs to be addressed to ensure equity to access. Hot spots do not always work in these locations.
 |
| Establish network and cybersecurity standards. Ensure that the network is secure according to current industry best practices. All vendor-provided services must meet these same best practices.  | MASS IT could assist by providing details on what the state is using and assist schools with securing their networks.  |
| Provide and enhance filtering solution options to Districts for on and off-campus networks. | Cost and establishment of filtering systems can be a challenge to smaller/less prepared districts.   |
| Maintain an inventory of all software and hardware systems used in the education environment.  | DESE/MassIT can provide assistance with inventory templates, reporting standards and reporting timelines. See Kentucky system documents here https://education.ky.gov/districts/tech/kpur/Pages/eScrap.aspx |
| Digital Connections Partnership Grant | This was a very successful program, consider doing something similar for districts to purchase devices for K-12 1:1 program.  |
| **Devices** |
| Establish minimum specifications for operating systems and hardware. Need processes for revising and updating minimum specs.  | * School-level learning platforms may vary within the district and different device capabilities may better service specific grades or programs.
* Parent/Community stakeholders can provide service as local device purchasing vs. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD).
* See Commonwealth Virtual Schools (CMVS) minimum specifications at the end of this document.
 |
| Instructional device and asset purchasing agreements with vendors. Negotiated agreements will include, but are not limited to: minimum specifications, professional development, warranty, repairs, replacements, software/operating systems, device cases, battery replacements, and other peripherals. Mobile Device Management Software | State procurement and contracts may reduce costs for initial purchase well as service agreements, streamline replacement and upgrading. This option also supports schools and districts that have already deployed their preferred system so they may continue to grow their program. |
| Ensure each district has a dedicated administrator to coordinate technology purchasing, deployment and coordination of training prior to full device deployment.  | A couple of years ago there were technology grants, and a district earned additional points if they had an Educational Technology Leader who had a METAA CTO Certificate or CETL and DESE Director License (this is the generalist director’s license but still put the emphasis on licensure)Additional personnel: Instructional Technology Specialist (DESE License) Technical support (appropriate professional credentials) |
| Determine policies for home and/or summer use of the device by students and educators. | Possibly the state could provide some guidance to ensure equity across the state  |
| Availability of supported platforms and browsers based on operating systems |  |
| Individual devices and operating systems are compatible with interactive learning tools.  |  |
| Policies and procedures for collection, redeployment, recycling and disposal of technology assets | Provide guidance on trading in old devices to fund the purchase of new equipment and green recycling options. |
| Mobile Device Manager Licenses,White-Glove Service  | * Mobile Device Management software is very expensive, and districts need assistance with the funding of these systems.
* If the state procures devices, they should consider white-glove service since not all districts have the staff to deploy a large number of devices at once.
 |
| **Learning Platforms** |
| Educators, particularly grade level teams and teachers, as the primary architect of content, social skills and instructional practices for leveraging technology in remote learning.  | Classroom and specialist educators can collaborate to determine age-appropriate and subject appropriate systems for exchanging student works to meet the needs of students in their community. This may include students working on paper and submitting work via photo or mail. See Illinois Board of Education Remote Learning Guidelines <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf> |
| Short term and long term costs of platforms/tools. Statewide contracts for widely used tools. | * Free is not free—how can we ensure that districts are not doing impulse commitments to various vendors offering “free resources” for a few months.
* How will the district support these resources once the time has lapsed?
* Investment in teachers' time in developing lessons and building resources will be lost unless the district commits to purchasing resources.
* See Utah Essential Elements for Technology Powered Learning report:
* <https://www.uen.org/digital-learning/downloads/Utah_Essential_Elements_Technology_Powered_Learning.pdf#a=>
 |
| Negotiate Student Data Privacy Agreements for all vendors and tools that utilize student, family and educator data. Template language, developed by legal counsel, to protect the security of student data in software contracts.Vendors listed on state contracts.  | * Work with The Education Collaborative (TEC) and Massachusetts Student Privacy Alliance to get all software used in the state signed on to the agreement.
* Student Data Privacy—ensure that all data systems/resources comply. Reading contracts; upon separation with the vendor who owns the data and what format will the district receive the data?
 |
| Map student administrative software platforms that are compatible with EPIMS, SIMS and other DESE data reporting requirements | * The state collects an extensive amount of data on schools. Yet, there is no cohesive mechanism giving the state the ability to leverage this data for some of the recommendations proposed.
* A recommendation would be a central repository of critical resources used by districts throughout the state. These data sets have been collected on several occasions in a very rudimentary way by METAA and MAVA. This may include:
* COMMBUYS—Districts who have purchased on the state bid lists; useful data on what districts are currently purchasing.
* BUDGET—What the districts are currently spending for looking at specific line items created and adopted several years ago by DLAC
* PERSONNEL—EPIMs collection outlines the support relating to technology throughout the district including licensure for some of the staff if applicable.
* ONLINE PLATFORMS/SOFTWARE/RESOURCES—currently there is no database listing what cities and towns are currently using for operational and educational resources. This can be data for professional development offerings through the state.
 |
| Identify learning management systems, productivity, rostering and single sign on tools that meet student data privacy standards. | * Work with TEC and Massachusetts Student Privacy Alliance to get all software used in the state signed on to the agreement.
* How can we support districts to create single sign-on so that students/parents are not juggling multiple usernames and passwords for the resources given to the students?
 |
| Bundle preK-12 software licensing. | Using the data gathered from the surveys mentioned above - negotiate with vendors who have a large MA installed base to leverage better pricing for all users across the state. |
| Provide common definitions of ADA compliant interface and content to ensure all systems are compliant (i.e. WC3 compliant, closed captioning, screen reading, transcripts) | Provide PD to district personnel on how to make their systems compliant. Provide statewide systems such as close captioning that all districts could use.  |
| Identify embedded multi-language interface, translation, or adaptable for English learners.  | The state could work with Districts to negotiate lower pricing for translation services. DESE could partner with HHS to supply a single system for all state users - this would simplify end user access to all state systems  |
| Vendor provides training support and adequate release time for technical support personnel to attend and take advantage of training associated with the program.Create and support a statewide community of technical support personnel and facilitate feedback among parents, educators, district administration and the Department to vendors.  |    |
| Consult in procurement processes, including developing RFP’s, evaluating RFP’s, making purchasing recommendations and decisions, leveraging consortium purchases to drive down cost, and implementing products and services that are procured.  | DESE could partner with OSD to create some contracts that are specific to school districts. |
| Negotiate and manage contracts with awarded vendors.  | OSD and DESE could coordinate on this with input from school business managers |
| Remote learning plans take into account a balance of print and electronic resources. This includes consideration of screen time guidelines. | “‘Screens in Schools Action Kit’ to Help Parents Push Back Against Edtech Overuse”<https://nancyebailey.com/2020/02/21/screens-in-schools-action-kit-to-help-parents-push-back-against-edtech-overuse/> |
| **Training and Professional Learning**  |
| Ensure each district has a dedicated administrator to coordinate instructional technology, planning and professional development.  |   |
| Identify instructional technology specialists, technology trainers, and other personnel whose primary responsibility is to support effective technology integration for educators.  | * DESE could identify additional pathways for educators to obtain the Instructional Technology Specialist Teacher license and offer professional learning for classroom educators.
* Mentor educators in pedagogical practice and efficient use of educational technology, critical digital literacy skills, and strategies for meeting needs of diverse learners.
 |
| Design and issue licenses, endorsements, license renewal requirements or administrator licensure requirements and identify programs that incorporate best practices with educational technology integration.  | Have the Licensure Department coordinate this with Higher Ed and current Instructional Technology Specialists to ensure that the new content/courses is aligned with what is actually happening in classrooms  |
| Use the National Standards of Quality Online Courses/Programs/Instruction and ISTE Standards to determine high quality professional learning opportunities for teachers.  | Also recommend referencing and sharing National Standards of Quality Online Courses/Programs/Instruction as well as ISTE standards. These were created in 2019 by Quality Matters and the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance. Focuses more on practices for distance learning models and is an update of the iNACOL standards that were developed over a decade ago.<https://www.nsqol.org/> |
| Host workshops, learning communities, and other ongoing opportunities for purpose-built professional learning activities.  | Work with MassCue and METAA and Education Collaboratives to host and coordinate |
| Align educator preparation programs to ensure candidates are well prepared to use technology platforms and the Massachusetts Digital Literacy frameworks.  | Have the Licensure Department coordinate this with Higher Ed and current Instructional Technology Specialists to ensure that the new content/courses is aligned with what is actually happening in classrooms |
| Support for districts to share/collaborate on lessons, resources, curating high quality activities  | * Potential to build off of shared models used by Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education programs.
* Collaboration with professional associations for subject areas/fields to host shared resources.
 |
| Scheduling time for educator training, professional learning and assistance in learning and applying new skills for remote learning.  | * Educators need to have just in time training and support. What does this look like? Who will support this initiative? Online/remote learning PD, what does this need to look like? A review of available data on professional development may inform these practices.
* Districts can support educators in documenting PDPs and self-directed activities to meet the requirements for licensure renewal.
* https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OLa1ylHx5k7\_9gqTJk1PSn3aryHvc3NG/view
 |

**DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**2019-2020 Annual Report**

### INTRODUCTION

The 15-member Advisory Council on District and School Accountability and Assistance (AAAC) advises the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on matters pertaining to the development and implementation of the Commonwealth’s District and School Accountability and Assistance system. The Council reviews and advises the Department and the Board on the policies and practices of the Center for District Support. In the 2019-2020 school year, the Council provided feedback on the district and school accountability and assistance system and requirements of the Student Opportunity Act related to targets and planning.

**2019-2020 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

Overview:

The work of the Council reflectedthe Department’s ongoing focus on design and implementation of the accountability system as well as updated planning requirements for districts and schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention from the Department. The Council also discussed requirements of the Student Opportunity Act related to targets and planning.

Activities:

The Council met three times in during the 2019-2020 school year. Topics of discussion included:

* District and school accountability system
	+ The 2019 district and school accountability results
	+ Considerations for future accountability reporting in light of the COVID-19 health emergency
* District and school assistance
	+ Updated planning requirements for districts and schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention
	+ Department support for districts and schools in light of the COVID-19 health emergency
* Student Opportunity Act
	+ District targets and planning requirements

**COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council offered specific input on the topics outlined above. Summaries and recommendations (where applicable) included the following:

**District and School Accountability System:** The Council has provided input and feedback on the design and implementation of the existing district and school accountability system over the course of the last few years. After reviewing the 2019 accountability results, Council members encouraged the Department to continue to review accountability data and consider making improvements, where appropriate. Specifically, they suggested that the Department review data related to subgroups that are not low-performing overall, except when comparing their results relative to the same group statewide. As a result of this suggestion, the Department made a small technical change to its approach for identifying low-performing subgroups that takes into consideration both the group’s performance in relation to the school as a whole and its performance in relation to similar subgroups statewide.

The Council also discussed issues that the Department should consider when thinking about accountability reporting following the COVID-19 health emergency. Members noted the importance of having data available to inform decision-making. However, they expressed concerns about the validity of certain measures and indicators in the time immediately following the pandemic.

**District and School Assistance:** The Council offered feedback on updated planning requirements for schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention through the district and accountability system. The updates included plan submission format, adjusted terminology, updated guidance with new resources, and changes in the feedback process. Council members offered the following suggestions:

* Ensure that the planning process remains rigorous and that the expectations for plan quality remain high, even though plan formats may change; and
* Build feedback into the plan-writing process, so that it is ongoing and tailored to the individual school or district.

The Council also discussed ways in which the Department can best support districts as they think about teaching and learning in the wake of the COVID-19 health emergency. While no formal recommendations we made, Council members expressed a need for clear guidance from the Department around budgeting and safety. They also expressed an interest in support from the Department in identifying and establishing quality remote learning programs.

**Student Opportunity Act:** The Council had a number of questions and suggestions regarding the requirements of the recently enacted Student Opportunity Act. Most commonly, Council members recommended that the Department provide districts with clear guidance related to various aspects of the Student Opportunity Act, including but not limited to: the connection to existing district review and planning processes; funding and budgets; plan submissions and amendments; performance measures; and stakeholder engagement.

**COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:** Dr. Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner, Center for District Support

**Department Liaison:** Erica Gonzales, Accountability Coordinator

**Chairpersons:** Jason DeFalco (Superintendent, Blackstone-Millville Regional School District) and Mary Skipper (Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools)

**Members of the 2019-2020 Advisory Council:**

* Erica Brown, Chief of Policy and School Supports, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association
* Ethan Cancell, Executive Director of Assessment, Accountability, Technology and Student Data Research, Brockton Public Schools
* Tiffani Curtis, School Supervisor, Holyoke Public Schools
* Jason DeFalco, Superintendent, Blackstone-Millville Regional School District
* Samuel DePina, Operational Superintendent, Boston Public Schools
* Heidi Driscoll, Academic Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District
* Sharita Fauche, Co-Director, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network
* Julia Mejia, Founder and Director, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network
* Tim Piwowar, Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools
* Jennifer Randall, Associate Professor of Research, Educational Measurement and Psychometrics and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts Amherst
* Bertha-Elena Rojas, Board of Directors and Chair of Advocacy Committee, Multistate Association for Bilingual Education
* Ron Sanborn, Principal, Charles Jaworek Elementary School, Marlborough Public Schools
* Paul Schlichtman, Past President, Massachusetts Association of School Committees
* Mary Skipper, Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools
* Nancy Urbschat, Business Owner, TSM Design

**Council Meeting Dates:** October 25, 2019; January 8, 2020; May 27, 2020 (virtual meeting)

**2020 English Learner/Bilingual Education Advisory Council (ELBAC)**

**Annual Report**

**June 2020**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This ELBAC was appointed in spring 2018. For SY 2019-20, the ELBAC has been tasked with ***“providing input and advice on family engagement for ELs and the implementation of pillar one of the Blueprint for EL Success.”***

**Tasks associated with the charge:**

1. Providing feedback on the online ELPAC training presentations that will be developed by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); one for school and district leaders and another for EL parents.
2. Providing advice on the implementation of Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success for Pillar One.
	* Pillar One: English learners in Massachusetts attend schools in which educators share responsibility for their success, engage effectively with their families, and value and nurture their linguistic and cultural assets.
3. Parent Portal Project: Provide input to DESE staff to improve the schools search page and the parent resources page on the DESE website.

The council was grateful for the opportunity to advise the Commissioner and the Board during this time of change in the Commonwealth.

1. **2020 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

The ELBAC held four meetings during which we examined the following education topics and conducted the following business items:

* 1. ***Education Topics Examined***
		1. ELPAC Parent Training
		2. English Learner Blueprint
		3. Parent Portal Presentation
		4. Innovative Sciences MCAS
		5. Remote Learning & Equitable Access to WiFi during the pandemic
	2. ***Business Items Conducted***
		1. Receipt and review of Open Meeting Materials
		2. Review of ELBAC Charge
		3. Vacancies
1. **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**
2. ***ELPAC Parent Training***
	1. Consider having this training available in additional languages (beyond Spanish and Portuguese); additionally, all word format trainings should be translated
	2. Consider sharing how different districts are using training videos with families so districts can learn about promising practices
	3. Consider how to get more families involved that may be experiencing barriers to joining the ELPAC (food and shelter insecurity, discomfort, time and availability constraints).
3. ***MA Blueprint for EL Success (pillar 1)***
	1. Supporting ELs in post-secondary college and career readiness should address the needs of dually identified students (classified ELs with learning disabilities). In regard to this recommendation we offer the following suggestions:
		* + Guidance for college and career counseling teams, to prepare students for what they want to do after graduating, which includes the following:
			+ incorporating/listening to the voices of students and families
			+ offering suggestions for “life skills” courses
			+ offering support for vocational community programs
			+ suggestions on how to make this a team effort
	2. Provide guidance on supporting progress to high school degree and post-secondary education for overage students (e.g., older newcomers).
	3. Provide guidance for low-incidence districts to support the need for bilingual therapists and evaluators.
	4. Provide guidance for how districts can more easily share information with each other.
4. ***Parent Portal***
	1. Add language program as a feature for searching
	2. Translate profiles of schools
5. ***Innovative Sciences MCAS (as requested by Sam Ribnick, Special Advisor, Innovative Assessments and Data)***

*This request was related to Matt Deninger’s work on the federal waiver application related to innovative assessments to support:*

* + - *the Commissioner’s vision of deeper learning.*
		- *a proposed trial design for the science MCAS for a small group of schools or districts.*
		- *making any new test formats accessible to ELs*
1. Work with families for more input on information and features
2. Consider multilingual testing options
3. Conduct focus groups with students, including ELs and FELs, for student feedback on MCAS development
4. ***Supporting multilingual learners and families during remote learning (as requested by OLA upon posting*** [***Guidance for Educators on Remote Learning for English Learners***](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/ele/guidance/)***:***
	1. Promote a team approach for engaging students during remote learning - teacher, principal, multilingual translators
	2. Provide guidance for non-technical activities (i.e., not just activities that rely on technology or internet)
	3. Promote mental health needs of immigrant students
	4. Provide schools and districts with funding and programs to address unique needs for immigrant students and undocumented students including:
		* technology
		* technology literacy
		* language access
		* WIFI access
	5. Provide guidance for reclassification and placement for the 2020-2021 school year as well as subsequent funding for the students who are not reclassified
	6. Provide additional guidance for remote learning for English Learners which includes the following:
		* examples in the guidance for remote learning for English learners
		* statewide vision for equitable access for all ELs in relation to technology and WIFI
		* provide guidance for tools that are most effective for multilingual family communication
	7. Provide guidance on how to go from online to hybrid and how to deal with consequential issues such as (one week on, one week off, 10 students here or there, staffing, health, security, and safety)
	8. Provide guidance on how to address the needs of EL students who also suffer from trauma or other SEL related challenges
	9. Provide guidance that explicitly names how to support multilingual families in the 20-21 school year
5. **Plans for the coming academic year**

Upon reviewing the charge for SY2019-20, the ELBAC would like to engage in the following tasks for SY 2020-21:

* 1. Recruit and fill the 4 vacancies on ELBAC with students and parents of bilingual families
	2. Continue to provide more specific recommendations for serving ELs during remote and/or hybrid learning
	3. Getting more families involved in ELBAC and ELPAC by holding all meetings virtually.

**V. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:**

Sibel Hughes

**Department Liaisons**:

Sibel Hughes, David Valade

**Chairpersons**:

Christine Montecillo Leider, Clinical Asst. Professor/Director, Bilingual Education and TESOL, Boston University

Antonina Parris-Yarbrough, EL Specialist, Excel Academy Charter Schools

**Members of the 2019-2020 Advisory Council**:

Monica Abdullah, Special Education/Vocational Tech Educator, The Center School Holyoke

Allison Balter, Founding Principal, ENLACE, Lawrence Public Schools

Ivonne Borrero, Supervisor, English Learners and Students with Disabilities, Boston Public Schools

Meg Burns, President, MABE, Asst. Professor TESOL/Bilingual Education, Lesley University

Craig Consigli, Asst. Superintendent, Milford Public Schools

Jill Davan, Parent, ELD Instructional Coach/Teacher Dual Immersion, Framingham School District

Virginia Guglielmo-Brady, EL Director and Curriculum Coordinator, Pittsfield Public Schools

Kellie Jones, Director of Bilingual Education, Brockton Public Schools

Meghan Lampert, Parent, English Learner Teacher

Kerri Lamprey, ESL Curriculum Coordinator, Burlington Public Schools

Christine Montecillo Leider, Clinical Asst. Professor/Director, Bilingual Education and TESOL, Boston University

Heidys Mendez, Parent Liaison, Haverhill Public Schools, Chatham Elementary School

Andrea Parker, Parent, Diversity-Equity Coach

Antonina Parris-Yarbrough, EL Specialist, Excel Academy Charter Schools

Mary Jo Rendón, Family/Community Engagement Specialist, Waltham School District

Dalida Rocha, Political Coordinator SEIU

**ELBAC Meeting Dates:**  SY 2019-2020

October 22, 2019

February 11, 2020

April 23, 2020

June 9, 2020

**Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council**

**2019-2020 Annual Report**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council (PCEIAC) advises the Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on matters pertaining to the development of family and community engagement in education. Its function is to help inform and advise the Department on policy issues that relate to the enhancement of the educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes of Massachusetts students.

**II. 2019-2020 WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

The PCEIAC conducted three meetings (two in-person and one virtual) and cancelled a fourth meeting for reasons associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings featured representatives from several DESE offices and covered a variety of topics, including:

1. *Cross-agency Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal to Post-Secondary Family Engagement in Massachusetts[[3]](#footnote-4) (standing agenda item)*
2. *Improving Access to Information on the DESE Website*
3. *Family Engagement and Curriculum*
4. *Special Education Guide: Is Special Education the Right Service?*

**III. COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS**

1. *Cross-agency Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal to Post-Secondary Family Engagement in Massachusetts*

At the first meeting, the DESE Early Learning Team Lead, Donna Traynham, explained that participants in a recent regional coalition meeting wrote about feelings and challenges related to family engagement including the absence of family voice and concerns that family engagement is not equitable across cultures. She also spoke to state and local capacity building, showing a chart with potential needs related to staffing, training and PD, resource development, and evaluation. Suggestions for capacity building that emerged were to use a train the trainer model and see if state coalition members can serve as mentors.

At the second meeting, Donna provided an overview of the framework and announced that federal funds will be used to support the work of aligning the framework and the Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals (the Fundamentals). Next, members provided suggestions for implementation of the framework including:

1. Keep mindset front and center. It’s not just what families can do – it’s what teachers can do, too!
2. The new definition of family engagement invites us to rethink old ideas and change our ways.
3. Be careful not to say some families engage “less.” Say some engage “differently” than others.

At the third meeting, Donna explained that we have been receiving positive and constructive feedback on the framework since it was sent to state agencies for review in February 2020. She informed members that federal funds are being used to develop implementation tools, shared a crosswalk of the framework and the Fundamentals, and noted that Vito Borrello, the Executive Director of the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE), is helping Massachusetts develop an implementation plan with four components:

1. Four training modules on the family engagement framework.
2. A train the trainer model for practitioners working with families.
3. Alignment of the Fundamentals with the family engagement framework.
4. An evaluation tool to go with the training modules.

In closing, she described the framework as a research-based roadmap that will be supported by sector-specific tools (such as the Fundamentals for the education field) to help practitioners reflect on where they are in their work, and what next steps they want to take.

1. *Improving Access to Information on the DESE Website*

DESE’s Senior Associate Commissioner for Educational Options, Cliff Chuang, introduced the “schools near me” search on the DESE website. He explained that the site is being upgraded and mentioned the [Boston School Finder](https://www.bostonschoolfinder.org/) as a similar site. Then DESE’s technology (IT) staff provided a tour of the site and members provided suggestions for improvement including:

* Consider adding additional data (e.g., gifted and talented programs, programs for teen moms).
* Consider including a Q&A section with tips (e.g., registration deadlines) to help newcomers.
* Hide information (e.g., org code) that parents don’t need.

After questions that emerged when members did a school search for a real child were answered, members suggested possible site names and advice for pushing out information about the site.

The next topic addressed was the Parent (Family) Portal, a site under development to provide access to information for families. Suggestions offered to make the site more family friendly included:

* Use graphics, photos, videos for interest.
* Use short blurbs to describe the hyperlinked information.
* Make it practical. Start with family focused information and sites.
* Minimize the number of clicks families need to make to find what they are looking for.
* Delete the curriculum frameworks. Substitute the grade by grade curriculum guides for parents.
* Include family engagement information!
1. *Family Engagement with Curriculum*

Staff from the [Instructional Support](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/) team explained that, because many Massachusetts students do not have access to challenging tasks, content, and learning experiences, the team is working to increase family access to curriculum information including [family learning guides](http://www.doe.mass.edu/highstandards/). Members lent suggestions for this work such as: add information to materials explaining how readers can get more information; put links to materials on district websites; share materials with families of younger children to prepare them for school ahead of time; give materials to libraries and family-supporting entities including pediatricians and afterschool programs that can help with distribution; and share materials with teachers at summer institutes. Additionally, the team described the workings of the [CuRaTe](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) process where teachers meet in teams, review curricula using rubrics, and arrive at consensus ratings. More information is available on the DESE website.

1. *Special Education Guide: Is Special Education the Right Service?*

Staff from the Special Education Planning and Policy (SEPP) team provided a presentation on the *Is Special Education the Right Services* (ISERS) technical assistance guide currently under revision. The staff explained that the guide, including tips at the practitioner and system levels, will be released for comment and asked members to share it with stakeholders in their communities. It is anticipated this discussion will continue in school year 2020-2021.

**IV. COUNCIL DETAILS**

**Department Administrator:** Rachelle Engler Bennett, Associate Commissioner, Student and Family Support

**Department Liaison**: Kathy Rodriguez, Adult and Community Learning Services

**Member List:**

| **Name** | **Title** | **Institution** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Clayton Connor | Finance and Administration Director | Westover Job Corps Center |
| Victoria Ekk, Ph.D. | Director of Professional Learning | Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL) |
| Yvonne Endara | English Language Education Director | Malden Public Schools |
| Sharita Fauche | Substance Abuse Coordinator | Department of Children and Families, C-PLAN Member |
| Roberta E. Hantgan | Director | Hantgan Associates |
| Kathleen Jones | President & CEO | TTT Mentor Program |
| Eva Kelly | Director of Enrollment and Family Engagement | Fitchburg Public Schools |
| Garland Kimmer | Director of International Development | Double E Company |
| Jessica Lander | Author and Journalist, Fellow | Emerson Collective |
| Jacqueline E. Lipson | Vice President, PreK-12 Education | Widmeyer Communications |
| Yahaira Lopez | Founder | Autism Sprinter, Inc., C-PLAN Member |
| Joselyn Marte | HiSET Advisor, Evening Facilitator | Lawrence Adult Learning Center |
| Lorette McWilliams | Professor | School Counseling Department, Assumption College |
| Theresa A. Melito-Conners, Ph.D. | Out-of-District Special Education Coordinator | Melrose Public Schools |
| Magda L. Rodriguez | Director of Programming | Families First Parenting Programs |
| Teresa A. Rodriguez | Director of Family Relations | Windsor School |
| Christine V. Tangishaka | Parent Member |   |
| Adanma K. Ude | Community Partnerships Director | City Year Boston |

**Meeting Dates:** October 28, 2019; January 27, 2020; and May 3, 2020

**2020 Racial Imbalance Advisory Council (RIAC)**

**Annual Report**

**June 2020**

**Report to Commissioner Riley on the RIAC Charge Concerning the 26 percent Teacher Diversification Goal**

**Members**:

Charlotte Clarke, Gloria Buffonge, William Newell, Kalise Warnum, Shannah Varon, Christina Horner, Christine Murray, Kenann McKenzie, Jessica Samuels, Michael Morris, Millie Arbaje-Thomas, Rachel Bowen, Brian Castellanos, Raul Fernandez, Barbara Fields, LaTonia Naylor, John Ritz.

**DESE Liaisons**:

Shay Edmunds, Ventura Rodriguez, Sylvia Lam

**RIAC Meeting Dates**:

9/23/2019, 11/4/2019, 1/ 9/2020, 3/23 /2020, 5/5/2020, 6/2/2020

Commissioner Riley has tasked the Racial Imbalance Advisory Council with the review of the 26 percent teacher diversification goal for public schools; RIAC fully supports this goal**.** The Commissioner has stated a state-wide goal of 26 percent teachers of color, and RIAC proposes that individual district targets will vary according to the student diversity now present in each school district. Therefore, RIAC recommends the following formula that will support the development of recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of a highly qualified staff of color. Districts that have 0-10 percent students of color should have 10 percent staff diversity; districts that have 20 percent and more students of color should have the stated goal of 26 percent; large urban school districts should have staff of color goals from 35 percent to 50 percent, particularly in districts that have 50 percent+ students of color.

It is also important that teachers of color should be given the opportunity to thrive in school environments that embrace diversity and have culturally responsive staff and student polices. RIAC reviewed the low matriculation rates of students of color in teacher preparation programs and the results of Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) results which demonstrates that future teachers of color who comprise less than 10 percent of the MTEL pool are more likely to have provisional or temporary certification; further, the retaking of the MTELs is financially prohibitive for some future teachers. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has noted that the superintendents of urban districts who hire the most teachers each year consistently hire many provisionally certified teachers which results in the children who need the best teachers having access to the least qualified teachers. In fact, DESE’s Student Learning Experience (SLE) shows that historically marginalized students have a greater incidence of exposure to teachers who are inexperienced, are provisionally certified, and are in need of improvement. In the document, “A Fair Chance,” National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) results consistently demonstrate that too many students of color reach grade 12 with major knowledge gaps and then are educated by teacher prep programs that do not closely align curriculum with state certification requirements. RIAC posits that if Massachusetts public schools do not close present academic, social and emotional gaps, teacher diversity goals will not be met through the graduation of students of color who too often enter teacher preparation programs ill-prepared by their secondary school experience.

In order for the teacher diversity goal to be achieved, RIAC posits that there is a need to increase the diversity within school leadership; a review of DESE data demonstrates that less than 5% of at least 406 superintendents are people of color and principals of color are largely concentrated in urban school districts. DESE has acknowledged the dearth of diversity in school leadership and has created year-long internships, through the Influence 100 and the InSPIRED Fellowship Program, which have provided the opportunity to increase the numbers of future superintendents and principals of color who will be ready for employment within school districts.

RIAC believes there is also a need to have conversations about staff diversity with school committee members; people who serve on school committees are elected, except in the case of Boston Public Schools which has an appointed school committee, and collectively they have the power to create inclusive policy that will support the recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of a diverse school staff. RIAC acknowledges that even with these promising and innovative programs and practices, the hiring of superintendents, principals and school committee diversity is not within DESE’s domain; the Education Reform Act of 1993 gave authority to school committees to hire and evaluate superintendents, superintendents to hire and evaluate principals and principals to hire and evaluate teachers. Therefore, it will be essential that the Strategic Initiatives Project which is led by Senior Associate Commissioner Ventura Rodriguez, provides the cultural competency training and assessments that will lead to a more culturally responsive DESE staff who will then share that skillset with the superintendent and principal group. For example, a review of Vocational Schools demonstrated that there are no superintendents of color and less than 5 percent teachers of color; in METCO school districts, there are two superintendents of color in 40+ school districts, and in charter schools, there are more superintendents and principals of color. However, in the case of most charter schools, the student population is most often racially imbalanced.

RIAC notes that Massachusetts schools have recently lost its status as the premier education system in the nation; according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2018-2019 Report, Massachusetts schools are now in third place and that is largely the result of the failure to close historic academic achievement gaps. RIAC recommends that DESE continues the annual collection, analysis, and reporting of authentic disaggregated student data of each school district that distinctly shows the strengths and weaknesses of historically marginalized students in all categories, even when those numbers are deemed statistically irrelevant, as is the case for METCO students of color who are a small portion of the school districts they attend. RIAC acknowledges that the school data of disaggregated student groups where gaps still exist may prove disconcerting to school superintendents and school communities in general, but if the Commonwealth is to regain its number 1 status, disaggregated student outcome data must be distinct and accurate and not subsumed and/or concealed within the academic data of students, usually middle-class white and Asian students, who may have already reached particular targets in the proficient and advanced range.

RIAC supports the Commissioner’s goal of deep learning experiences for all students and this learning will benefit historically marginalized students; however, it will be necessary to hire a culturally competent and diverse school staff who collectively believe that all children can excel through the provision of an enriched curriculum. Increased opportunity will be measured by entry to higher level curriculum programs which will result in increased access to examination schools, dual enrollment programs, advanced placement courses, and school-based enrichment experiences which will ensure that all students to graduate from high school career and college ready. To that end, RIAC reviewed the revised standards and indicators within the Primary School Social and Emotional Learning Rubric and agrees with the goals and objectives as presented. However, RIAC is concerned that most administrators and teachers in public schools may not have the culturally responsive skills necessary to address the emotional and social needs of marginalized children., particularly in light of the pandemic which has affected the lives of black and brown children disproportionately. Through culturally proficient training opportunities, the Strategic Initiatives Group should have the capacity to prepare DESE staff and public-school administrators to adequately address these needs which have been exacerbated by the interrupted school experience of public-school students.

**RIAC’s Recommendations to Commissioner Riley:**

* The social and emotional curriculum for grades 1-3 should be part of the curriculum for all children PreK- 12 to address recent experiences that include, but are not limited to, interrupted schooling and sheltering created by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, the unprecedented experience of widespread family illnesses and death, decreased family employment, and an unprecedented exposure to issues of extreme racism daily reported by the national and local media outlets.
* The review of DESE’s Ed Prep Program and the curriculum of local teacher education programs should be a focus of RIAC in the coming year. Further, DESE should revisit the Praxis certification process which certifies most of the nation’s teachers, including teachers of color.
* The hiring and the retention of staff of color is a major barrier and is too often the result of institutional racism; therefore, the employment procedures of school districts should be reviewed to identify practices and policies which may not be culturally responsive. In order to ensure that districts realize the equity goals put forth by the Commissioner, school committees and superintendents should ensure through inclusive policy development and implementation that the hiring of staff of color is a priority and that results are assessed annually and presented to the school committee and the school community. At the same time, the Strategic Initiatives group should work with school districts on strategies to recruit, hire, retain and support superintendents, principals, teachers and staff of color; the Strategic Initiatives unit should provide an annual report to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
* RIAC will review disaggregated student outcome data as it relates to student graduation rates, access and passage rates in Advanced Placement courses, access to enrichment experiences, and discipline rates.
* RIAC will review the racial imbalance of students within charter schools through the lens of the 1965 Racial Imbalance Act and will review the historic METCO Advisory Committee (MAC) Report. There is also a need to amend the Racial Imbalance Act of 1965 so that it more accurately reflects the current academic, social and emotional needs of students of color in the Commonwealth’s public schools.
* Because the issues of historic and documented inequity can be found in every facet of the school experience, DESE should incorporate within the Strategic Initiatives unit the ability to oversee the outcomes of all DESE units to ensure that there is a commitment to school equality and that the academic improvement of all students is a goal.
* Already more likely to be disadvantaged by an inequitable system of K-12 education, only 38 percent of black teacher candidates and 57 percent of Hispanic teacher candidates pass the most widely used licensing test even after multiple attempts, compared to 75 percent of white candidates. Also, teacher preparation programs give scant attention to the content knowledge teacher candidates need.[[4]](#footnote-5) If passage rates were comparable to white candidates, the diversity of the new teaching pool would increase by half. There is a need to review the curricular process of teacher preparation programs and MTEL vs. Praxis successful completion rates for future teachers, and in particular, teachers of color.

**Commendation to the Commissioner:**

RIAC is certain that the creation of the Strategic Initiatives Unit and its goal of cultural proficiency of DESE staff along with the creation of culturally responsive policies designed to increase the diversity of the educator workforce demonstrates Commissioner Riley’s commitment to cultural competency for the state’s educational force. RIAC applauds this effort. At the same time, Commissioner Riley has publicly acknowledged that the recent pandemic has shown a new light upon systemic racial inequalities that affect students and staff who are Black and Brown at disproportionate rates. Since the issues of race and its effect upon the school experience have reemerged, there is a need for a reaffirmation from the Commissioner that the work of the Racial Imbalance Advisory Committee is necessary, viable and valued by DESE.

**Conclusion:**

It is hoped that these collective recommendations from RIAC to the Commissioner will assist the members of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the DESE staff and public school administrators and teachers in their provision of a culturally competent curriculum and student supports that will increase the ability of all children to graduate college and career ready. The public schools of Massachusetts will be resoundingly successful when all students leave school ready to participate as good citizens in the bounty of their communities, the state and the world. The late Ron Edmonds, the African-American leader of the Effective Schools Movement, shared the following statement in the late 1970s and his sentiments are still appropriate today:

**We can whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do this. Whether we do it or not must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we have not done it so far.**

RIAC thanks both the Commissioner and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for their dedication to effective, quality education for all the Commonwealth’s children.

**Special Education State Advisory Panel**

##### Annual Report

#####  July 2020

1. **INTRODUCTION**

*Executive Summary and Panel Charge*

The Special Education State Advisory Panel (Panel) under state and federal law is organized to provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Massachusetts. The Panel offers the opportunity for discussions between parents, educators, and state leaders on special education topics that affect students and families in Massachusetts. Its existence, mission, and composition continue to be governed by federal and state laws. The Panel members:

* Advise on unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
* Comment publicly on proposed rules and regulations involving special education;
* Advise on evaluating services and developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports; and
* Advise in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. (34 C.F.R. § 300.169).

The Panel held a total of six meetings, three in person and three virtually. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, three virtual meetings were held at the request of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to solicit feedback on special education guidance being developed related to the disruption to education resulting from the public health emergency. Panel members provided valuable input and guidance to the DESE on how to proceed with school year activities specific to the provision of special education services amid the pandemic. During these meetings, Panel members discussed issues related to remote instruction as well as, equity and racial equity, particularly for the state’s most vulnerable students with disabilities. Emphasis centered on maintaining connections between school staff and students to promote continuity of learning, supporting social-emotional needs, and ensuring students' needs continue to be at the forefront and are consistently addressed.

1. **2019-2020 Panel Work**

The Panel held six meetings that took place in September, January, April, May, June, and July.

To begin the year, the Panel conducted a recruitment period for new members. The Panel welcomed a total of 19 new members, inclusive of new member serving as designees of state agencies and education associations with standing membership on the Panel.

The Panel Co-Chairs, Carmen Pimentel and Shai Fuxman, facilitated discussions on the following topics:

1. How Panel recommendations are considered and benefit the Department. At the center of every meeting was the request by members to obtain reports from DESE staff regarding consideration and implementation of any recommendations provided by the Panel.
2. U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Fact Sheet demonstrating a big shift in how students with disabilities engaged with school
3. Provision of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) during remote learning
4. Input to identifying what districts need to have in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a continuum of remote service delivery and instruction
5. Procedural Issues - Special Education Timelines, Transition from Early Intervention to IDEA Part B: Initial evaluation and Re-evaluations
6. MA IEP Project
7. State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Review (SPP/APR)
8. Deeper Learning
9. Significant Disproportionality
10. Dyslexia Legislation
11. **The Panel’s work during the 2019-2020 year focused on:**

**PK-Instructional Groupings**

L. Viviani discussed possible changes to the guidance DESE provides to school districts regarding instructional groupings for Pre-K students who meet IEP eligibility.

**Deeper Learning Update**

T. Williams Valentine shared DESE Commissioner Riley’s *Our Way Forward* document. Panel members engaged in a discussion of what Deeper Learning means in the context of special education. The Panel brainstormed in small groups, identifying ways of re-envisioning public education in MA to help prepare special education students for the future. DESE collected written comments from the small groups.

**Significant Disproportionality Update**

T. Williams Valentine shared that DESE notified districts of disproportionality in June 2019 for action to be taken in 2019-2020. Districts identified in August 2019 are required to take supplemental actions in school year 2020-2021.

**Dyslexia Legislation Update**

T. Williams Valentine provided an update on legislation. Chapter 272 of the Acts of 2018 was enacted in October 2018. The legislation does not require regulations regarding screening but instructs DESE to create guidance in conjunction with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to support districts in doing the work. DESE anticipated this work would be released by summer 2020 or the 2020-2021 school year. Both agencies engaged with the vendor, Pivot Learning, to address this work.

**MA IEP Improvement Process Project**

H. Neal presented an update on the DESE’s IEP Project. The components of the project expanded to include stakeholder engagement, ISERS (Is Special Education the Right Service), and professional development.

**State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Review (APR)**

DESE staff presented an overview of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report requirements and how the U.S. Department of Education makes State determinations of performance. Panel members participated in target setting discussions and agreed on targets for Indicator 3 (Assessment), Indicator 5 (Educational Environments), Indicator 6 (Students 3-5 with IEPs), Indicator 15 (Dispute Resolution Sessions) and Indicator 16 (Mediation Agreements).

**Innovative Assessment for Deeper Learning**

S. Ribnick from DESE presented on the development of a new student assessment design focused on deeper learning.

**SPP/APR Indicator 7: Early Childhood Outcomes**

B. Coonley from the Office of Special Education Planning and Policy (SEPP) presented an overview of Indicator 7 and considerations for updated target setting. The Panel engaged in discussion about the data collection process and options for target setting. Panel members discussed and considered how would greater emphasis on deeper learning benefit students with disabilities.

1. **Additional Discussion**

***Due to school closings and the health crisis faced by the Commonwealth related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Panel participated virtually in the following meetings to discuss how to address the special educational needs of students during this critical period:***

**U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Fact Sheet and Outline of DESE’s Guidance on the Implementation of Special Education Timelines During COVID-19 State of Emergency**

During the May virtual meeting, T. Williams Valentine of DESE provided an overview of the [fact sheet](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/rr/policyguidance/Supple%20Fact%20Sheet%203.21.20%20FINAL.pdf) developed by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The fact sheet affirmed that states are required to continue to provide FAPE to students with disabilities during school closures and acknowledged there may be a difference in how services and supports are delivered. DESE emphasized that a central feature to success in this era of school closures is ongoing, transparent communication with families. DESE has communicated this to LEAs. DESE's intent is to ensure that the foundations of good implementation continue, with the understanding that the way services and resources are provided may look different.

In addition. T. Williams Valentine indicated that the Department conducted outreach and launched a listening tour soliciting input, ideas and feedback from key stakeholders at many levels, including members of the Panel, during school closures, to help identify the support and resources necessary for remote instruction and learning, while focusing on the provision of a continuum of remote service delivery.

Panel members raised questions, identified challenges, and offered solutions to removing barriers to identify the best thinking around remote learning approaches.

DESE provided resources and information necessary for more in depth remote learning services for students with disabilities within the models of whole class, small group and individualized instruction, as well as many online resources and links, which contain tools, instructional strategies for instructional support, and professional development opportunities that districts and their staff as well as parents can access.

**Procedural Issues: Special Education Timelines**

**Transition from Early Intervention to IDEA Part B: Initial evaluation, Re-evaluations**

R. Johnston engaged Panel members in extensive discussion on how to address IEP initial, re-evaluation, and early childhood timelines during this unique time of school closures. Two scenarios were put forth for Panel consideration and feedback where members expressed pros and cons of both scenarios.

**Guidance on Timelines *Transition from Early Intervention to IDEA Part B***

***Initial evaluations and Re-evaluations***

V. Rastogi-Kelly presented the topic of timelines with a focus on family engagement and documentation. Members had the opportunity to provide input and feedback that included concerns and what revisions should be made.

**Q&A on Transition to Adult Life for Students Turning 22, March 2020 - January 2021**

Panel discussion on transition services:

* Suggestion of using school or SEPACs to host transitioning workshops, asking if perhaps the Federation could help with what would be useful for parents
* Suggestion of districts trying to gather information from meetings with active parents to better understand their concerns with transitions
* In cases where the student has demonstrated regression, compensatory services should be provided, with special attention to students who have been disadvantaged based on race and other disparities

**Draft Technical Assistance Advisory-Compensatory Services for Students with IEPs Due to the Suspension of In-person services Related to COVID**

The June meeting, led by T. Williams Valentine of DESE, focused on obtaining input from members on the topic of compensatory services. The intent of the document was to identify the “how” in delivery of services, specifically translate policy into practice. Members participated in extensive discussion around specific questions each had about the draft guidance and what they would like to see in future guidance. The greatest amount of time was spent with members providing feedback on their recommendations about what should be revised or removed from the draft guidance. Significant discussion centered on, but was not limited to, understanding the guidance from a cultural lens, data collection, importance of emphasizing parental input and engagement, access to resources and issues of racial equity and equity in general.

**Comprehensive Special Education Guidance for the 2020-2021 School Year**

The final virtual meeting in July was led by Senior Associate Commissioner R. Johnston. Members discussed the latest draft developed by DESE intended to provide relevant guidance to districts on planning, to ensure districts are provided the critical information they need now to be ready for the start of the school year. Members were informed that districts are required to send DESE their plans for reopening in August 2020. R. Johnston described the plans are for in-person, remote or hybrid. DESE will be sending districts information on the critical issues they will need to address in each plan. Members were asked to provide feedback regarding the feasibility to provide services, including considerations such as group services. If services are done remotely, can there be the same requirements? Can services be provided close to the minutes specified? What should the expectation be when instruction is delivered remotely?

Discussion centered around concerns specific to racial inequity and systemic inequities specific to black and brown students and issues of equity specific to students who have not received services. In addition, members highlighted the importance of the role of general education and the critical need for general education to support the emotional well-being of students in partnership with special education.

1. **Panel Recommendations for the 2020-2021 year:**
2. **Updates and ongoing engagement with DESE on guidance from the Department to districts during pandemic:** The Panel commends the Department for engaging us as a membership throughout the ongoing school closures, allowing us to provide feedback on various documents and steps the Department took to support children with disabilities. As the prospects of the 2020-2021 school year continue to be filled with uncertainties due to the pandemic and its consequences, we recommend—and ask—the Department to continue to engage this Panel, allowing us to provide our cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary perspectives on the best steps to provide the best education for students with special needs.
3. **Social and Emotional Learning:** The Panel is interested in providing advice regarding recommendations to improve social /emotional learning and approaches to behavioral needs of students. This issue is particularly critical with the wave of anxieties and fears brought about by the pandemic.
4. **Focus on racial equity and social justice:** Throughout our meetings, our members have highlighted the importance of uncovering and addressing the inequities that exist in the supports, services, and outcomes of students by race, language, and other characteristics. We appreciate the Department’s commitment to the issue of racial equity and social justice and recommend that the Department make this a priority—and engage us so we may provide necessary input to allow us to act on these issues.
5. **Engagement with Commissioner Jeffrey Riley’s post-Kairos Initiatives:** Through a one-day event called Kairos, DESE Commissioner issued a call for the Massachusetts education community to embrace a shift towards a focus on applied deeper learning with the goal of engaging students in interdisciplinary tasks aligned to state standards. In addition, students use critical thinking skills and work collaboratively to solve problems with relevance to their lives. The Panel wishes to be an active participant in this initiative, being informed about the work, and providing advice on this process as it pertains to special education. This includes exploring options to build *21st Century skills for students with disabilities*, within the context of future employment in a post-pandemic economy.
6. **MA IEP project:** The Panel looks forward to being actively involved in the IEP project by reviewing data and offering advice.
7. **Evaluation Consent Form (N1A):** The Panel would like to continue to discuss and provide guidance on how the Department can provide supportive guidelines to districts around changes related to providing families with evaluation reports two days before IEP meeting.
8. **Guidelines Related to Dyslexia:** A new law regarding early screening for learning disabilities was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by Governor Baker on October 19, 2018. The law calls for the Department to issue guidelines to assist districts in developing screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate one or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to, dyslexia. The Panel would like to be informed about and provide advice on this guidance and other aspects of the implementation of this new law.
9. **Significant Disproportionality:** The Panel would like to continue to be informed about and provide advice on the process and work related to Significant Disproportionality to decrease issues of disproportionality and increase student achievement.
10. **Indicator 8 Family Engagement:** The Panel would like to be informed and provide advice on process and outcomes with a focus on exploring ways in which to increase family and community engagement.
11. **Emergency Preparedness Specific to Students with Special Needs**: The Panel looks forward to advising on ways in which to address the unique safety needs of students with disabilities, i.e., emergency preparedness for students with disabilities.

**V. Panel Membership Details**

**Department Administrator:** Teri Williams Valentine

**Department Liaison:** Amy Krukonis

**Co-Chairpersons:**  Carmen Pimentel and Shai Fuxman

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| Edith Bazile | Parent Representative | Randolph, MA |
| Kelly Bilodeau | Parent Representative | Westborough, MA |
| Paul Bottome | Director of Education | Anchor Academy, Middleboro |
| Michelle Botus | Director of Cross Agency Initiatives | Department of Mental Health, **DMH designee** |
| Catherine Brown | Director of Disability Access | Department of Transitional Assistance, **DTA designee** |
| Mary Dennehy-Colorusso | Procedural Safeguard Coordinator | Department of Public Health, **DPH designee** |
| Ruth Diaz | Parent Training & Information Center Director | Federation for Children with Special Needs |
| Beth Doyle | DDS Education Manager | Department of Developmental Services, **DDS designee** |
| Jennie DunKley | Parent Representative | South Easton, MA |
| Susan Farrell | Executive Director | **Central Mass Collaborative,** Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives **(MOEC) designee** |
| Shai Fuxman | Parent Representative, Co-chair | Natick, MA |
| Jennifer Greenfield |  | Milford, MA |
| Judy Hurlburt | Chief Administrative Office, Evergreen Center, Milford | Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools designee |
| Carla B. Jentz | Executive Director | Massachusetts Administrators for Special Education |
| Nina Kagan |  | West Roxbury, MA |
| Amy LaBarge | Parent Representative | Leominster, MA |
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| Gail Havelick  | Director, SSI and Public Benefits Training and Technical Assistance  | Department of Public Health designee  |
| Kim Levy |  | Holyoke, MA |
| Cynthia Mahoney | Parent Representative | Florence, MA |
| Laurie Mason | Director of Special Education | Brockton, MA |
| Laurie McCarron | Parent Representative | Chelmsford, MA |
| James Morrison | Education Manager | Department of Children and Families, **DCF designee** |
| Christine Palladino-Downs | Parent Representative | Boxford, MA |
| Carmen Pimentel | Parent Representative, Co-chair | Everett, MA |
| Chris Pond | Behavioral Health and Special Education Specialist | Department of Early Education and Care designee |
| Helen Scarr | Parent Representative | Newton, MA |
| Lisa Sirois | Assistant Director of Educational Services | Department of Youth Services, **DYS designee** |
| Sarah Slautterback | Homeless Education State Coordinator | DESE Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth |
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| Jean Spera | Assistant Director, Office of Special Education | Cambridge Public Schools; Mass Urban designee |
| Thomas Stewart | Parent Representative |

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| --- |
| Georgetown, MA |

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| Andrea Stolar | Director of Special Education | Chicopee, MA |
| Aubry Threlkeld | Director of Graduate Education | Endicott College |
| Renee Toth | Parent Representative | Byfield, MA |
| Melissa Winchell | Parent Representative | West Bridgewater, MA |

**Panel Meeting Dates**: September 17, 2019; January 21, 2020; April 14, 2020; May 15, 2020, June 25, 2019, and July 6, 2020

We would like to thank Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner; Teri Williams Valentine, Director of Special Education Planning and Policy; and Amy Krukonis, the Department’s liaison to the Advisory Panel.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by:

Carmen Pimentel and Shai Fuxman, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel (Panel)

1. <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. There was no parent representation on the DLAC in FY20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This framework, intended for statewide use by the education, health, human services, housing, and other agencies, was produced with assistance of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. A Fair Chance, Simple steps to strengthen and diversify the teacher workforce. February 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)