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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Board Documents - December 18, 2007

Regular Meeting Agenda
 Massachusetts Board of Education
 75 Pleasant Street
 Malden, MA 02148
 Tuesday, December 18, 2007
 9:00 a.m.

Comments from the Chairman
Comments from the Commissioner
Statements from the Public

Routine Business:

Approval of the Minutes of the November 27, 2007 Regular Meeting and the December 4, 2007 Special Meeting - Vote

Items for Discussion and Action:

1. [Report of the Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time](#) - **Discussion**
2. [Commissioner's Recommendations on 10 Underperforming Schools](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
3. [Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
4. Support for Students - **Continuing Discussion (Deferred until the January 22, 2008 meeting)**
5. [Report of the Graduation Rate Task Force](#) - **Discussion**
6. Charter Renewals for Three Schools: [Boston Collegiate](#), [Excel](#), and [Smith Leadership Academy](#) - **Initial Discussion**
7. [Advisory Council Appointments](#) - **Vote on Two Additional Appointments**
8. [Approval of Grants](#) - **Vote**

Other Items for Information:

9. Education-Related News Clippings
10. [Update on Randolph Public Schools](#)
11. Reports on [Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School](#), [Boston Renaissance Charter Public School](#), [North Central Charter Essential School](#), [Uphams Corner Charter School](#)

Briefing

last updated: December 19, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Report on the Massachusetts Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

I am pleased that Representative Marie St. Fleur and Senator Thomas McGee will join us at the December meeting to share with us the work and recommendations of the Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time. Representative St. Fleur and Senator McGee were co-chairs of this Special Commission.

The Massachusetts Legislature created the Special Commission to understand better the impact of after-school and out-of-school time programs in the daily lives of many of the Commonwealth's school age children and youth. The 36-member Commission, established in March of 2007, was asked to "study and recommend how to define and better coordinate, expand, finance, and improve accessible, affordable, and quality out-of-school time programming for school age children in all settings in Massachusetts."

The Special Commission conducted 10 hearings and site visits throughout the Commonwealth and held numerous Commission work sessions and meetings. Commissioner Ann Reale and Associate Commissioner Carole Thomson represented the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on the Commission.

Enclosed with your materials is the Special Commission's November 2007 Executive Summary entitled "[Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth](#)" .

last updated: December 14, 2007



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Status of Underperforming (Commonwealth Priority) Schools (2000-2004)

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 10, 2007

At the November 2007 Board meeting, the Board voted to remove from underperforming (*Commonwealth Priority Schools*) status four of the 14 schools that were identified as underperforming during the review periods of 2000 through 2004. The Board agreed that the improvement gains achieved at Washington Elementary School and Liberty Elementary School in Springfield, Arlington Elementary School in Lawrence, and Laurel Lake Elementary School in Fall River were significant enough to remove these schools from *Commonwealth Priority Schools* status.

The Board deferred action until this month on the remaining 10 schools. I am recommending that the Board retain four of the schools as *Commonwealth Priority Schools* and designate the remaining six schools as *Priority 1* schools.

Attachment A   is a chart listing all 10 schools.

I recommend that the following four schools remain as *Commonwealth Priority Schools*: Lucy Stone Elementary School, Elihu Greenwood Elementary School, and Michael Perkins Elementary School in Boston, and James Sullivan Middle School in Lowell. Each of these schools has achieved some improvement, but the gains have not been consistent and more time is needed to ensure that the progress is sustainable. We provided the Board with information on each of these schools in October and November.

I recommend that the Board designate the remaining six schools as Priority 1 schools - a designation equivalent to the statutory term "chronically underperforming school. Four of the schools are in Springfield: Homer Street Elementary School, M. Marcus Kiley Middle School, White Street Elementary School, and Gerena Elementary School. The others are the Arlington Middle School in Lawrence and John Lynch Middle School in Holyoke. Some of the schools are in Restructuring status in both English language arts and mathematics and did not make Adequate Yearly Progress in 2007 in either subject for students in the aggregate or for subgroups. In all of the schools, CPI levels are significantly below the state average in both subjects. We provided the Board with information on each of

these schools in October and November.

A designation of *Priority 1* for these six schools will intensify the Department's involvement in the design and pace of the schools' improvement work. In some cases, that involvement may include the selection of a turnaround partner, under contract to the Department, who can deliver a more significant level of support to accelerate improvement in student performance at the school. For other schools, it may mean that the Department will work with school and district leaders and existing partners to review the school's experience and current data and determine whether a different strategy is needed. We believe each of these schools falls within the category of "chronically underperforming schools" as set forth in the statute and regulations, enclosed at [Attachment B](#).

Associate Commissioner Juliane Dow and Lynda Foisy will be at the Board meeting to respond to any questions Board members may have about the status of these schools. We have also invited the superintendents from Springfield, Lawrence and Holyoke to the meeting to present their views regarding the *Priority 1* recommendations.

Enclosures:



Attachment A: Schools Currently in Commonwealth Priority School (CPS) Status



Attachment B: Statute and Regulations on "Chronically Underperforming Schools"

last updated: December 14, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

In April 2007 the Board of Education voted to approve amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations to strengthen the mathematical preparation and knowledge of elementary and special education teachers. The standards in the new regulations will be reflected in the Massachusetts Tests of Educator Licensure (MTEL) by means of a revised general curriculum test with a separately scored mathematics subtest as of January 2009.

The regulations direct the Commissioner, in consultation with the Chancellor of Higher Education, to issue guidelines for the scope and depth of knowledge expected in elementary mathematics. At our August 2007 meeting, we distributed the completed *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers*. Board member Tom Fortmann played a major role in preparing this landmark document. The guidelines are already motivating and assisting Massachusetts teacher preparation programs to revise how they prepare candidates for licenses at the elementary level, including K-8 special education teachers. The guidelines are posted on the Department's Web site. A copy is enclosed with this memo.

I recommend that the Board formally approve the *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers* at this month's meeting. The Board's action to strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills in mathematics, through the licensure regulations and these more detailed guidelines, is a significant step to improve students' proficiency in mathematics. Your approval of the guidelines affirms the importance of this action.

  Enclosure: *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers*



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Charter Renewal - Initial Discussion for Boston Collegiate Charter School

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This month, the Board will have its initial discussion of the charter renewal application of Boston Collegiate Charter School (BCCS), a Commonwealth charter school located in Dorchester and serving students from Boston. The Board will vote on this renewal at its meeting on January 22, 2008.

Basis of Recommendations Regarding the Renewal of Charters

The charter school regulations state that "[t]he decision by the Board to renew a charter shall be based upon the presentation of affirmative evidence regarding the success of the school's academic program; the viability of the school as an organization; and the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter" 603 CMR 1.12. Consistent with the regulations, recommendations regarding renewal are based upon the Department's evaluation of the school's performance in these areas. In its review, the Department has considered both the school's absolute performance at the time of the application for renewal and the progress the school has made during the first four years of its charter.

The summary document that follows this memorandum was prepared for you as a compilation of the school's record for the term of this charter. The accountability process for charter schools recognizes that in exchange for increased freedom, a school must demonstrate results within the term of its five-year charter or risk non-renewal. I recommend that the Board renew the charter for Boston Collegiate Charter School based on the evidence gathered in the attached Summary of Review and as further summarized below.

I. Academic Success

- BCCS serves students in grades 5-12 in a highly structured school environment that sets high academic and behavioral expectations.

- BCCS has developed a highly detailed scope and sequence for all subject areas that is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Teachers develop and document curriculum in binders and electronic planning documents that are based on the school's scope and sequence. Curriculum is regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect student needs.
- Site visit teams from the Charter School Office and members of the renewal inspection team found a variety of instructional practices. Over the past two years, teachers have increased the focus on active learning for students and offer fewer teacher-directed lessons. High levels of student engagement were observed throughout the school.
- The results of a number of internal and external assessments are used to inform instruction. BCCS was one of the first schools to participate in the Massachusetts Public School Performance Project, through which six MCAS-like interim assessments are administered throughout the school year.
- The school's performance on MCAS examinations has been very strong throughout the term of its charter, with a composite CPI of 90.9 in ELA and 86.0 in mathematics in 2007. BCCS made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA and mathematics in the aggregate and in all statistically significant subgroups in all years between 2003 and 2007.

II. Organizational Viability

- BCCS is fiscally sound and stable.
- The school's administrative team includes an executive director, two principals, a dean of curriculum and assessment, a dean of administration, and a dean of students. All members of the administrative team have been at the school for five to nine years, creating significant continuity.
- The BCCS Board consists of eleven members. The site visit and renewal inspection teams reported effective board leadership and a sound governance structure, with three well-functioning standing committees - governance, finance, and development.
- The school reports high levels of parent satisfaction through the results of a parent survey.
- BCCS maintains full enrollment and a waiting list. In November of 2005, the school received approval to expand its enrollment and plans to open a separate campus for grades 5 and 6 in September 2008, expanding enrollment from 483 students to 620 students by the 2012-2013 school year.

III. Faithfulness to Charter

- The mission of BCCS is to "to prepare each of our students for college." Preparation of all of its students for college is a strong focus for the school. Every graduate has gained admission into a four-year college for the past four years.
- The school successfully completed a full Coordinated Program Review in May 2003 and a mid-cycle review in April 2006. No further monitoring activity is scheduled to occur at the school until the 2008-09 school year.

IV. Dissemination

- In 2006, BCCS was one of five charter schools chosen to participate in a three-year, federally funded dissemination program managed by the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, which will result in a book, a documentary film, and training of other educators.
- For seven consecutive years, BCCS has organized the annual Boston Charter School Showcase of Schools, providing families with the opportunity to learn about charter school options.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781 338-6500, Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781 338-3200, or me.

Enclosure:   Summary of Review

last updated: December 14, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Charter Renewal - Initial Discussion for Excel Academy Charter School

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This month, the Board will have its initial discussion of the charter renewal application of Excel Academy Charter School (Excel). The Board will vote on this renewal at its meeting on January 22, 2008.

Basis of Recommendations Regarding the Renewal of Charters

The charter school regulations state that "[t]he decision by the Board to renew a charter shall be based upon the presentation of affirmative evidence regarding the success of the school's academic program; the viability of the school as an organization; and the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter 603 CMR 1.12. Consistent with the regulations, recommendations regarding renewal are based upon the Department's evaluation of the school's performance in these areas. In its review, the Department has considered both the school's absolute performance at the time of the application for renewal and the progress the school has made during the first four years of its charter.

The summary document that follows this memorandum was prepared for you as a compilation of the school's record for the term of this charter. The accountability process for charter schools recognizes that in exchange for increased freedom, a school must demonstrate results within the term of its five-year charter or risk non-renewal. I recommend that the Board renew the charter for Excel Academy Charter School based on the evidence gathered in the attached Summary of Review and as further summarized below.

I. Academic Success

- Excel serves students in grades 5-8 with a rigorous curriculum based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and designed to prepare students for college-preparatory high schools and college. Teachers draw on a number of sources for lessons, including materials created by themselves, other Excel teachers,

and by teachers at other schools.

- Curriculum is extensively documented and aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
- Site visit teams from the Charter School Office and members of the renewal inspection team found instruction to be primarily teacher-centered and creative. Student engagement levels were consistently high.
- Excel made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA in the aggregate and for all subgroups in 2005, 2006, and 2007. Excel made AYP in mathematics in the aggregate and for all subgroups in all years from 2004, 2006, and 2007. In 2005, the school did not make AYP in the aggregate or for the Low Income and Hispanic subgroups.
- The school uses the TerraNova for measuring student progress in math, reading, and language, and participates in the Massachusetts Public School Performance Project (MPSPP), which provides MCAS-aligned assessments and teacher training in the usage and analysis of data.

II. Organizational Viability

- Excel is fiscally sound and stable.
- Site visit teams and the renewal inspection team reported highly effective leadership at the school.
- The Excel Board of Trustees consists of twelve members, six of whom are founders of the school. Site visit and renewal inspection teams reported effective management and appropriate levels of oversight.
- The school reports high levels of parent satisfaction through the results of a parent survey.
- Excel maintains full enrollment and a waiting list.

III. Faithfulness to Charter

- Excel's mission is to "prepare middle school students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities." In order to realize its mission, Excel provides a range of support services to students and has created a High School Placement Program manual and the positions of director of high school placement and director of graduate services.
- A full Coordinated Program Review (CPR) was conducted in March 2005. By September of 2007, the school had satisfactorily remedied all areas of non-compliance identified in the CPR, including the appropriate assessment of students with disabilities, the reconvening of IEP teams, and the identification, assessment, and provision of services for students who might be limited English proficient.

IV. Dissemination

- During the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years, Excel hosted groups of teachers and administrators from the Umana Barnes Middle School of East Boston, four Massachusetts charter schools, and two out-of-state charter schools.
- Excel hosted over 500 individuals during the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years.
- Excel guidebooks including its Student-Family Handbook, Classroom Management and Discipline Manual, and Operations Manual were shared with schools and distributed during school visits hosted by Excel.
- Excel served as a training site for the Building Excellent Schools fellowship program and served as a residency site for a participant in the program.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner,

at 781 338-6500, Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781 338-3200, or me.

Enclosure:   Summary of Review

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Charter Renewal - Initial Discussion for Smith Leadership Academy Charter Public School

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This month, the Board will have its initial discussion of the charter renewal application of Smith Leadership Academy Charter Public School (SLA), a Commonwealth charter school located in Dorchester that serves students from Boston. The Board will vote on this renewal at its meeting on January 22, 2008.

Basis of Recommendations Regarding the Renewal of Charters

The charter school regulations state that "[t]he decision by the Board to renew a charter shall be based upon the presentation of affirmative evidence regarding the success of the school's academic program; the viability of the school as an organization; and the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter" 603 CMR 1.12. Consistent with the regulations, recommendations regarding renewal are based upon the Department's evaluation of the school's performance in these areas. In its review, the Department has considered both the school's absolute performance at the time of the application for renewal and the progress the school has made during the first four years of its charter.

The summary document that follows this memorandum was prepared for you as a compilation of the school's record for the term of this charter. The accountability process for charter schools recognizes that in exchange for increased freedom, a school must demonstrate results within the term of its five-year charter or risk non-renewal. I recommend that the Board renew the charter for Smith Leadership Academy Charter Public School based on the evidence gathered in the attached Summary of Review and as further summarized below.

I. Academic Success

- SLA serves students in grades 6-8 with a program focused on five principles: 1) achievement in core academic subjects; 2) cultivation of student character and leadership skills; 3) creation of a supportive, orderly learning environment; 4) strong parental involvement; and 5) partnerships with community organizations and other schools.
- The school uses a variety of instructional modalities, with an emphasis on small group learning stations to differentiate instruction and teach to different modalities. Socratic seminars, cooperative learning techniques, and interdisciplinary instruction are also frequently used.
- The school makes extensive use of data analysis to inform instruction. Results from MCAS examinations, the Stanford 9 test, the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation, the Group Mathematics Assessment, and the Visual-Aural-Read/Write-Kinesthetic Learning Style Inventory are used to create an individual Diagnostic Assessment Profile for each student.
- The school has implemented a number of interventions to improve student performance, including Saturday classes, double math classes, additional teachers for academic classes, and a month long summer program.
- SLA made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in 2005. In 2006, SLA made AYP in the aggregate, but not for African American Students. In 2007, SLA did not make AYP in the aggregate or for subgroups.
- In 2007, SLA made AYP in mathematics in the aggregate, with an increase of 12.4 points, and for subgroups, with an increase of 13.7 points for students in the Low Income subgroup and 11 points for students in the African American subgroup. SLA did not make AYP in mathematics in the aggregate or for subgroups in all years between 2003 and 2006.

II. Organizational Viability

- SLA is fiscally sound and stable.
- The school's founder left at the end of the school's third year, 2005-06, at which time the school's founding principal replaced him as the head of school. The six member administrative leadership team is supported by a Teacher Advisory Council, which gives teachers a role in such managerial functions as community outreach, hiring, and developing daily procedures and school norms.
- Concerns about governance that emerged in the school's early years have been corrected by steps taken by the school's board of trustees to ensure that it plays a proper role in governing the school. The Board consists of nine members, five of whom are founders of the school. Appropriate channels of communication have been established and the board has been proactive in supporting the school.
- Parents have consistently expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school.
- SLA maintains full enrollment and a waiting list.

III. Faithfulness to Charter

- The mission of SLA is to "develop high-achieving students of good character who use problem solving, communication, and interpersonal skills to inspire others and to catalyze educational, economic, and political advancement within their communities and the broader nation." There are many unique practices, events, and rituals incorporated in the school's program that contribute to the development of a distinctive and strong school culture.
- Subsequent to a Coordinated Program Review in February of 2005, SLA developed a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). A Department summary indicated that all critical issues have been satisfactorily addressed. A follow-up mid-cycle CPR is scheduled for June 2008.

IV. Dissemination

- SLA staff presented two workshops at the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association Best Practices Showcase in March 2007.
- SLA has participated in a number of events in collaboration with community partners, including the establishment of a summer evening Teen Café to address issues of neighborhood youth violence.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781 338-6500, Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781 338-3200, or me.

Enclosure:   Summary of Review

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Advisory Council Membership: Proposed Reappointment and New Appointment

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

At the October 30, 2007 Board of Education meeting I presented recommendations for advisory council membership which you approved. Today I have two additional nominations for your consideration:

- Dr. Reza Namin, Superintendent of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District, reappointment to the Mathematics and Science Education Advisory Council
- Professor Carlo Cipollone, Director of the Education Office at the Italian Consulate General of Italy in Boston, appointment to the Global Education Advisory Council

State law (G.L. Chapter 15, Section 1G) establishes a general framework for advisory councils to the Board of Education. There are currently 15 active advisory councils to the Board - Adult and Community Learning Services (Adult Basic Education); Arts Education; Community Service Learning; Educational Personnel; Educational Technology; English Language Learners/Bilingual Education; Gifted and Talented; Global Education; Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services; Life Management and Home Economics; Mathematics and Science; Parent and Community Education and Involvement; Racial Imbalance; Special Education; and Technology/Engineering. 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.

Recruitment efforts resulted in the receipt of applications and resumes from a number of well-qualified new applicants, as well as current members who have applied for renewed membership. Dr. Namin and Professor Cipollone submitted applications and were inadvertently not included in the October 30, 2007 recommendations. I recommend that the Board vote on these additional appointments this month, which would enable the new members to participate fully in the upcoming advisory council meetings.



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Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2008

Notification of FY2008 Competitive Grant Awards: January 22, 2008

To call a Department of Education Program Contact , dial 781-338- and the extension listed below.

TD>3801

PROGRAM NAME	FUND CODE	PROGRAM CONTACT	EXT
Community Adult Learning Centers - Increases (FY2008 - State)	345	Anne Serino aserino@doe.mass.edu	
Perkins IV Leadership Academy Two 2007-2008 (FY2008 - Federal)	410- C	Jeffrey Wheeler jwheeler@doe.mass.edu	3955
Program and Staff Development Regional Support Centers for Adult Basic Education (SABES - System for Adult Basic Education Support) - Increases (FY2008 - Federal)	343	Helen Jones hjones@doe.mass.edu	3871
Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten (FY2008 - State)	702	Emily Caille ecaille@doe.mass.edu	6355

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Update on the Financial Situation in the Randolph Public Schools

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 3, 2007

During last week's Board of Education discussion on the Randolph Public Schools, Dr. Joseph Rappa, Executive Director of the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), indicated that lack of adequate municipal financial support was one of the major problems facing the district. In particular, he stated that the town was improperly including its \$3 million annual assessment for the Blue Hills regional vocational school district in its net school spending for the Randolph Public Schools, thus reducing the funds available for the needs of the local schools. Board members asked whether this situation warranted a referral to either the Attorney General or the Department of Revenue.

I asked the Department's school finance office to review the relevant data, including the most recent financial returns for FY2007, which were filed by the town within the past several weeks. As will be explained in further detail below, our conclusion is that these particular allegations were inaccurate and were based on a misunderstanding of the school finance data. Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson has reviewed and discussed the data with Dr. Rappa and Superintendent Silverman, and they concur. The town of Randolph is fully meeting its legal obligations for the financial support of the Randolph Public Schools.

Background: Net School Spending and Reporting

The concept of "net school spending" was established in the 1993 Education Reform Law to set requirements for municipal school spending, and to measure compliance with those requirements. Each year, the Department sets a "net school spending requirement" for each operating school district in the state. The specific amount for each district is based on two factors: the amount that the state estimates the municipality can afford from its local revenue sources, and the amount of Chapter 70 state school aid that the district will be receiving. The net school spending requirement is always at least equal to the district's foundation budget, which in turn is based on student enrollment levels and demographics. In some cases, the net school spending requirement can exceed the foundation

budget.

After the close of each fiscal year, the Department receives detailed financial reports from each district and municipality, documenting all education-related spending during that year. The Department uses this data to calculate each district's "actual net school spending," which is then compared to the net school spending requirement to determine compliance. Not all education spending is included in the net school spending calculation. Among the items that are excluded are pupil transportation; facility capital costs; adult education and other community programs; federal and state categorical grant programs; and revolving funds. Municipal payments to regional school districts are included in the financial reports but only affect the net school spending for the regional district, not the local district.

Net School Spending in Randolph for FY07

The chart below shows the net school spending calculations for the Randolph Public Schools for FY07:

FY07 Net School Spending	School Committee	City or Town	Total
244 Randolph			
1. Administration (1000)	1,348,708	301,352	1,650,060
2. Instruction (2000)	19,144,104	-	19,144,104
3. Attendance-Health (3100, 3200)	624,856	-	624,856
4. Food Services (3400)	-		-
5. Athletics/Student Activities/ Security (3500,3600)	485,826	-	485,826
6. Maintenance (4000)	2,954,434	93,566	3,048,000
7. Employee Benefits (5100)	-	1,192,378	1,192,378
8. Insurance (5200)	-	3,335,019	3,335,019
9. Retired Employee Insurance (5250)	-	-	-
10. Rentals (5300)	125,809	-	125,809
11. Short Term Interest (5400)	-	-	-
12. Tuition (9000)	3,885,945	1,034,207	4,920,152
13. Total School Spending (1 through 12)	28,569,682	5,956,522	34,526,204
14. School Revenues			
14a) FY07 School Revenues	-	-	-
14b) FY07 Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	1,034,360		1,034,360

14c) FY07 Charter Reimbursement		382,517	382,517
Subtotal, School Revenues (14a+14b+14c)	1,034,360	382,517	1,416,877
15. Total Actual Net School Spending (13 - 14)	27,535,322	5,574,005	33,109,327
16. FY07 Required Net School Spending			32,157,977

The district's total net school spending was \$33.1 million (line 15), of which \$27.5 million was spending from the school district budget and \$5.6 million from other municipal departments. The municipal spending included amounts provided by the town for administrative services (line 1); building maintenance (line 6); pensions, health insurance and other employee benefits (lines 7 and 8); and payments for school choice and charter school tuition (line 12). The charter school tuition cost is partially offset by state reimbursements (line 14c). The \$3.9 million in out-of-district tuition costs reported under the school committee budget (line 12) is for special education programs at private schools and educational collaboratives.

Note that the town's FY07 assessment for the Blue Hills vocational school district (\$3.3 million) is not included anywhere in this calculation, although of course it would be reflected in the separate net school spending calculation for the Blue Hills district. Randolph's net school spending requirement for FY07 was \$32.2 million (line 16), so the district exceeded its requirement by three percent. The erroneous conclusion regarding the reporting of the Blue Hills assessment was apparently the result of a misinterpretation of the data by EQA staff who were unfamiliar with the Department's financial reports.

Monitoring Net School Spending

Board members asked questions at the meeting regarding the Department's activities to ensure compliance with these requirements. We have published regulations (603 CMR 10.06) and technical guidance defining what types of expenditures qualify for net school spending, and we work closely with district officials to resolve any disagreements that might arise at the local level. We review all financial reports submitted by districts for reasonableness and to identify significant changes from prior years that might indicate reporting errors. We also require the financial reports to be reviewed during the annual municipal audit. Finally, it is important to note that the Department provides the software used to calculate net school spending; the calculations are not done by the districts or towns themselves.

If a district does not comply with its net school spending requirement, we can take one of several enforcement actions. If the underspending is less than five percent of the requirement, we can carry over the shortfall and add it to the next year's requirement. If the underspending exceeds five percent, we can also reduce the town's school aid. Finally, where the problem is chronic, we can ask the Department of Revenue to hold up approval of the town's tax rate or we can ask the Attorney General to initiate appropriate legal action. Our school finance office has done an exceptional job over the years in monitoring net school spending, and as a result the rate of compliance is extremely high.

Net School Spending in Randolph over Four Years and Related Data

The chart below summarizes Randolph's net school spending compliance for the last four years; the data for the

current year (FY08) is preliminary, based on the district's approved budget:

	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08
Foundation budget	28,526,425	28,415,668	30,652,226	31,690,386
Required net school spending	29,475,208	30,785,579	32,157,977	32,419,095
Actual net school spending - school committee	27,800,748	28,244,488	27,535,322	28,207,494
Actual net school spending - municipal	4,279,247	4,592,237	5,574,005	6,007,061
Actual net school spending - total	32,079,995	32,836,725	33,109,327	34,214,555
Actual nss as % of foundation - Randolph	112.5	115.6	108.0	108.0
Actual nss as % of foundation - state average	118.0	119.6	118.9	na

It can be seen that Randolph met its legal net school requirement in every year. In each year, the actual net school spending was significantly higher than the district's foundation budget, although the extra spending was below the statewide average. Based on this data, there is no cause for a referral to either the Attorney General or the Department of Revenue for enforcement of the spending requirement.

Of course, the fact that the town has met its legal spending requirement does not necessarily mean that the district is adequately funded to meet all of its educational needs, nor does it necessarily mean that the town is not able to provide additional resources above and beyond the current spending levels. The first question, whether the district has adequate funds to meet its needs, is really a question of whether the state's foundation budget is indeed adequate; as noted earlier, the foundation budget is a key determinant of the net school spending requirement. The foundation budget formula was first developed in the early 1990's and was codified in the 1993 Education Reform Law. Since that time, there have been several minor changes to the formula as well as annual increases for inflation. The Governor's Readiness Project task force is considering whether to recommend a major new study of the foundation budget's adequacy.

The second question - can Randolph (and other towns) afford to spend more on K-12 education - has been extensively studied over the past several years. As a result of this study, the Legislature in FY07 adopted a new formula for calculating the local contribution component of the net school spending requirement. This new measure of municipal fiscal capacity, called the "aggregate wealth" formula, is based on both property values and personal income levels, and it is being phased in over a five-year period. According to this metric, the town of Randolph does not have the fiscal capacity to increase its local spending on education. In fact, the new formula is actually lowering Randolph's required spending from local revenues, while providing a higher level of funding from state aid.

The attachment to this memorandum contains some additional financial statistics related to the Randolph Public Schools, which may help to provide further perspective about the district's financial problems. The statistics are extracted from the data the Department is currently analyzing for the fiscal distress study. We expect to report on

that study in January. Please note that the Department only recently received the data for FY07 and it has not yet been fully edited. Some points to note:

- Randolph's foundation enrollment has declined by more than 13% over the past six years, from 4,055 students to 3,512. Because of this decline, total spending per pupil has actually gone up slightly in the past three years. (The Department changed its method of calculating per pupil expenditures in FY05, so prior years' data would not be comparable.)
- Randolph's instructional spending per pupil has essentially been flat the last three years. Most of the increases in total spending per pupil have undoubtedly been concentrated in non-instructional areas such as employee health insurance.
- In both total spending and instructional spending per pupil, Randolph is below the state average (although, as noted earlier, still above the foundation budget floor).
- Randolph's Chapter 70 aid lost ground to inflation from FY02 through FY06, but the district received sizeable increases in FY07 and FY08, in part because of the formula change described earlier.
- It appears the district has been able to provide reasonable teacher salary increases in recent years while at the same time maintaining a student/teacher ratio fairly close to the state average. (Again, the downturn in both of these measures in FY07 needs to be verified.) The data on student/teacher ratio is somewhat surprising in light of the superintendent's presentation in October about the increase in elementary class sizes and the elimination of many high school class sections. This bears further review.

We will continue to review the spending and staffing patterns in Randolph and other fiscally distressed districts to better understand how budget problems are affecting educational services.

If Board members have any questions about the information contained in this memorandum, please feel free to contact me, associate commissioner Jeff Wulfson (781-338-6500), or school finance programs manager Roger Hatch (781-338-6527).

 Attachment 1: Randolph District Leadership Review - Appointment of Review Team Memorandum

 Attachment 2: Recent Trends in Key Financial Indicators

cc: Superintendent Richard Silverman, Randolph Public Schools
Randolph Board of Selectmen
Dr. Joseph Rappa, Executive Director, EQA
Juliane Dow, Associate Commissioner, ESE
Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, ESE

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School - Progress Report on Renewal Conditions

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This memorandum provides you with an update regarding Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School (Banneker) in Cambridge. In January 2006, the Board of Education imposed three conditions upon the renewal of the charter for Banneker. Below is a summary of information gathered regarding the school since January 2006. The Charter School Office will continue to monitor the school's progress. No further action by the Board is required at this time.

The three conditions imposed on the charter for Benjamin Banneker are as follows.

1. The Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School will make Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and no longer be identified in English language arts and mathematics under the Massachusetts School and District Accountability System when results are reported for the 2007-2008 school year.
2. The Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School will meet or make substantial progress each year towards meeting the goals in its Accountability Plan for 2006-2011 in the area of student academic success.
3. For the 2006-2007 school year, enrollment at the Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School is limited to 325 students. When the school demonstrates that both academic success conditions above have been met, enrollment may increase to a maximum of 350 students.

Condition 1 - Adequate Yearly Progress

While condition 1 cannot be fully assessed at this time and requires assessment by December 2008, Banneker made Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for subgroups in English language arts and mathematics in 2007. The school's accountability data for 2007 can be found at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?fyCode=2007&orgcode=04200205.

Condition 2 - Progress Toward Goals in Accountability Plan

Banneker met Condition 2 for the 2006-2007 school year. The school made significant progress toward meeting its goal for faithfulness to its charter, met most of its academic performance goals, and met or exceeded each of its organizational viability goals. Additional detail can be found in the site visit report for year twelve at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?fyCode=2007&orgcode=04200205.

Condition 3 - Maximum Enrollment

Banneker is meeting Condition 3. The school reduced its enrollment to 325 students and may not increase its enrollment until the Department determines that Conditions 1 and 2 have been met. The earliest Banneker could increase its enrollment to 350 is for the 2009-2010 school year.

If you would like a hard copy of the documents referred to in this memorandum, have any questions, or require additional information regarding Banneker, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781- 338-3200; or me.

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Boston Renaissance Charter Public School - Information Regarding Probationary Status

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This memorandum provides you with an update regarding Boston Renaissance Charter Public School (Renaissance) in Boston. In February 2007, the Board of Education placed Renaissance on probation, imposing four conditions on its charter because the school had failed to meet conditions previously imposed when its charter was renewed. Below is a summary of information gathered regarding the school since February 2007. The Charter School Office will continue to monitor the school's progress. No further action by the Board is required at this time.

The four conditions, one with subparts, imposed on the charter for Renaissance are as follows.

1. By June 30, 2007, Boston Renaissance Charter School shall have submitted to and received approval from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the following items:
 - A school improvement plan, consistent with the Department's standards for a District Plan for School Intervention, including allocation of resources to achieve the goals of the school's plan.
 - A revised charter school Accountability Plan, including goals and annual benchmarks regarding academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of the school's charter. The Accountability Plan must be aligned to the school's plan for improvement as referenced above, and must include the school's plan for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics.
 - A report from the school on actions taken in response to the recommendations of a consultant hired by the school, upon approval by the Commissioner, to review the school's leadership structure and effectiveness.
2. By December of 2008, Boston Renaissance Charter School shall demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting all

- benchmarks in its 2007-2010 Accountability Plan and has made Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics for 2008.
3. By December of 2008, Boston Renaissance Charter School shall have completed the necessary property acquisition and fundraising to permit a relocation of the school no later than September of 2009.
 4. Boston Renaissance Charter School shall reduce its maximum enrollment, without terminating the enrollment of any student currently attending the school, from 1,240 students to 880 students, beginning in the 2009-2010 school year.

Condition 1 - Plans and Report

Renaissance substantially met this condition. There are three components to this condition, all of which were to be completed by June 30, 2007. Renaissance has completed all of the required components but did not submit until August 2007 a report on actions taken in response to the recommendations of a consultant.

The first component, requiring Renaissance to submit a Plan for Charter School Improvement, is completed and the school's plan can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/improveplan.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/improveplan.doc>. Accountability and Targeted Assistance has reviewed this plan and provided the school feedback. The results of this review can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/analysistool.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/analysistool.doc>.

The second component required Renaissance to submit and have approved a new Accountability Plan aligned with the Plan for Charter School Improvement. The school submitted this plan and the Charter School Office approved it in June 2007. The school's Accountability Plan can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/accountabilityplan.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/accountabilityplan.doc>.

The third component required Renaissance to hire a consultant approved by the Commissioner and to submit a report by June 30, 2007 regarding actions taken by the school in response to the consultant's recommendations. Renaissance hired the Education Development Center (EDC) as its consultant. EDC produced two reports, on May 8, 2007 and July 18, 2007, with multiple recommendations for Renaissance. In August 2007, Renaissance submitted its report to the Charter School Office with an action plan and deadlines for implementing the consultant's recommendations. The school's report can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/trusteeresponse.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/brcpc/trusteeresponse.doc> and additional information can be found in the 13th year site visit report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/default.html>.

Condition 2 - Academic Success and Adequate Yearly Progress

Condition 2 cannot be fully assessed at this time. Condition 2 requires assessment in December 2008 of Renaissance's progress toward improving academic performance. With respect to condition 2, Renaissance made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate in English language arts and mathematics in 2007 but did not make AYP for subgroups. The school is Identified for Improvement-Year 2 for subgroups in English language arts and is in Restructuring-Year 1 for subgroups in mathematics. Future site visits conducted by the Charter School

Office will document progress against the benchmarks established in the school's Accountability Plan. Additional information about the school's academic program can be found in the 13th year site visit report.

Condition 3 - Facilities

Condition 3 cannot be fully assessed at this time. Condition 3 requires that the school relocate no later than September 2009. The school is working to sell its current facility in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood and relocate to an identified property. Additional information can be found in the 13th year site visit report.

Condition 4 - Maximum Enrollment

Condition 4 cannot be assessed at this time. Condition 4 requires that the school reduce its enrollment by 360 students, from its current 1,240 students to 880 students, by the 2009-2010 school year. It is unclear how the school plans to accomplish this reduction over the next year.

If you would like a hard copy of the documents referred to in this memorandum, have any questions, or require additional information regarding Renaissance, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 78-338-3200; or me.

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

North Central Charter Essential School - Progress Report on Renewal Conditions

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This memorandum provides you with an update regarding North Central Charter Essential School ("North Central") in Fitchburg. In February 2007, the Board of Education imposed four conditions upon the renewal of the charter for North Central. Below is a summary of information gathered regarding the school since February 2007, including a report on the site visit conducted by the Charter School Office in October (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/default.html>). The Charter School Office will continue to monitor the school's progress. No further action by the Board is required at this time.

The four conditions imposed on the charter for North Central are as follows.

1. By June 30, 2007, the school shall submit a report on actions taken in response to the recommendations of a consultant, who shall be approved by the Commissioner, hired to complete a review of the school's leadership structure and to provide assistance in the hiring process for school leadership.
2. By June 30, 2007, North Central Charter Essential School must submit to the Department's Charter School Office a school improvement plan created through the Department's process for creation of a District Plan for School Intervention.
3. By June 30, 2007, North Central Charter Essential School must have an Accountability Plan approved by the Charter School Office. The Accountability Plan must include annual benchmarks against goals and objectives that align to the school's plan for improvement as referenced in Condition 1. Benchmarks within the Accountability Plan must include the school making Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups on all applicable tests.
4. North Central Charter Essential School must demonstrate that it is an academic success by December of 2008 by providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting benchmarks in its 2007-2012 Accountability Plan and has made Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate

and for all statistically significant subgroups on all applicable tests on the spring 2007 and spring 2008 MCAS test administrations.

Condition 1 - Consultant's Report and Actions Taken

North Central has met Condition 1. Condition 1 required the school to engage a consultant to review its leadership structure and assistance in the hiring process for school leadership. North Central received approval from the Commissioner and engaged a consulting firm, Class Measures. On June 22, 2007, North Central submitted a report in response to the consultant's recommendations. The school's report on Condition 1 can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/renewalcondition.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/renewalcondition.doc>.

Condition 2 - School Improvement Plan

North Central has met Condition 2. The school completed a Plan for Charter School Improvement. The school's plan can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/improveplan.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/improveplan.doc>. Accountability and Targeted Assistance has reviewed this plan and provided the school feedback. The results of this review can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/analysistool.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/analysistool.doc>.

Condition 3 - Accountability Plan

North Central has met Condition 3. North Central submitted a draft Accountability Plan in a timely fashion, received feedback from the Charter School Office, and submitted a final Accountability Plan by June 30, 2007. The Accountability Plan can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/accountabilityplan.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/ncces/accountabilityplan.doc>.

Condition 4 - Academic Success

North Central has partially met Condition 4 and this condition requires further assessment annually. North Central did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate or for subgroups in English language arts in 2007 and has the status of Identified for Improvement, Year 2. North Central made AYP in the aggregate for mathematics, however, the school did not make AYP for subgroups for a fifth year and has the status of Restructuring, Year 1 for subgroups because the Low Income subgroup (n=6) did not meet the graduation rate standard of 55%. The school's accountability data for 2007 can be found at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?fyCode=2007&orgcode=04740505.

If you would like a hard copy of the documents referred to in this memorandum, have any questions, or require additional information regarding North Central, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781-338-3200; or me.



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Uphams Corner Charter School - Progress Report on Renewal Conditions

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

This memorandum provides you with an update regarding Uphams Corner Charter School (Uphams) in Boston. In January 2007, the Board of Education imposed five conditions, one with subparts, upon the renewal of the charter for Uphams. Below is a summary of information gathered regarding the school since January 2007. The Charter School Office will continue to monitor the school's progress. No further action by the Board is required at this time.

The five conditions imposed on the charter for Uphams are as follows.

1. By June 30, 2007, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have submitted to and received approval from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the following items:
 - A school improvement plan, consistent with the Department's standards for a District Plan for School Intervention.
 - A charter school Accountability Plan, including goals and annual benchmarks regarding academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. The Accountability Plan must be aligned to the school's plan for improvement as referenced above, and must include the school's plan for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and Mathematics.
 - All relevant amendments to its charter, in accordance with 603 CMR 1.11.
2. By June 30, 2007, the school shall engage a consultant, who shall be approved by the Commissioner, to review the school's leadership structure and provide training and assistance to strengthen the school's management.
3. By December 2007, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have met or shall be making substantial progress toward the benchmarks set forth in its approved Accountability Plan.
4. By December 2008, Uphams Corner Charter School shall demonstrate that it is an academic success by

providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting all benchmarks in its 2007-2012 Accountability Plan and has made Adequate Yearly Progress in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics for 2008.

5. By December 2008, Uphams Corner Charter School shall have completed the necessary property acquisition and fundraising to permit a relocation of the school to the Uphams Corner area no later than September 2009.

Condition 1 - Planning, Submission, and Approval of Plans

Uphams has partially met Condition 1. There are three components to this condition, all of which were to be completed by June 30, 2007. Uphams has completed two of the three required components.

The first component, requiring Uphams to submit a Plan for Charter School Improvement, was completed. The school's plan can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/uccs/improveplan.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/uccs/improveplan.doc>. Accountability and Targeted Assistance has reviewed this plan and provided the school feedback. The results of this review can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/uccs/analysistool.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/2007/uccs/analysistool.doc>.

The second component required Uphams to submit and have approved a new Accountability Plan aligned with the Plan for Charter School Improvement. Uphams is still working on fulfilling this requirement and submitted the most recent draft to the Charter School Office for its review in late October 2007.

The third component required Uphams to submit and have approved all relevant amendments to its charter. In October 2007, the Board of Education approved amendments to change the school's leadership structure and curriculum model. On November 9, 2007, the Acting Commissioner approved an amendment submitted on October 14, 2007 regarding the school's schedule.

Condition 2 - Consultant Regarding Leadership and Management

Uphams has met Condition 2. Condition 2 required the school to engage a consultant to review its leadership structure and provide training and assistance to strengthen its management. Uphams received approval from the Commissioner and engaged a consultant, Ron Walker, in June 2007. The consultant has reviewed the school's leadership structure and provided training and assistance to strengthen the school's management.

Condition 3 - Progress Toward Benchmarks in Accountability Plan

Uphams has not met Condition 3 because it does not have an approvable Accountability Plan. Condition 3 requires that Uphams meet or be making substantial progress toward meeting the benchmarks set forth in its Accountability Plan by December of 2007. Because Uphams does not yet have an approved Accountability Plan, this condition cannot be assessed as of this date.

Condition 4 - Academic Success and Adequate Yearly Progress

Condition 4 cannot be fully assessed at this time. Condition 4 requires assessment in December 2008 of Uphams' progress toward improving academic performance. With respect to condition 4, Uphams made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and in subgroups for English language arts and mathematics in 2007. Accountability data for 2007 can be found at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?fyCode=2007&orgcode=04900305. Future site visits will document progress against the benchmarks established in the school's Accountability Plan. Additional information about the school's academic program can be found in the Charter School Office 7th year site visit report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/default.html>.

Condition 5 - Facilities

Condition 5 cannot be fully assessed at this time. Condition 5 requires that the school relocate to Uphams Corner by September 2009. In late August, the school moved from its site in South Boston to a temporary site in the YMCA on Huntington Avenue in Boston. Team members on the site visit conducted in October of 2007 learned that the school intends to be at this site for at least the current school year. The school's Board of Trustees is working with a real estate advisor to identify sites in the Uphams Corner neighborhood. At the time of the site visit, no further progress had been made in relocating the school to Uphams Corner and the Board of Trustees has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy for meeting this condition or for raising the funds that will be necessary to meet this condition. Additional information can be found in the report completed by the Charter School Office after a site visit in October (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/default.html>).

If you would like a hard copy of the documents referred to in this memorandum, have any questions, or require additional information regarding Uphams, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781- 338-3200; or me.

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Briefing for the December 18, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: December 11, 2007

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be on Tuesday, December 18, 2007, at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in Malden, starting at 9:00 a.m. Coffee will be available at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will adjourn by 12:00 noon. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Belinda Wilson at (781) 338-3118.

Overview

The first item on our business agenda is a presentation from the legislative co-chairs of the Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time. We have two action items carried over from the November meeting: my recommendations on ten underperforming (Commonwealth Priority) schools and a vote to formally approve the guidelines for the mathematical preparation of elementary teachers. We will hear a presentation from Professor Mary Walsh of Boston College on support for students. We will discuss the report of the Graduation Rate Task Force and have an initial discussion on three charter schools that are up for renewal. Our meeting agenda also includes a vote on two additional advisory council appointments and approval of state and federal grants.

Regular Meeting

Comments from the Chairman

The Chairman will give an update on the commissioner search process. He also will invite members Ruth Kaplan and Tom Fortmann, the Board's ad hoc committee on public comment, to present their recommendations on the public comment process.

Comments from the Commissioner

I will report on current issues and activities.

Items for Discussion and Action

- 1. Report of the Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time - Discussion**
State Representative Marie St. Fleur and State Senator Thomas McGee, co-chairs of the Special Commission on After-School and Out-of-School Time, will present the commission's recommendations to the Board. Commissioner Ann Reale and Associate Commissioner Carole Thomson represented the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on the 36-member commission. Enclosed with your materials is the commission's November 2007 report/executive summary, *Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for our Children and Youth*.
- 2. Commissioner's Recommendations on 10 Underperforming Schools - Discussion and Vote**
At our November meeting, the Board voted to declare that four schools from the 2000-2004 cohort will no longer be identified as Commonwealth Priority Schools in light of the progress they have made. The Board deferred action on ten other schools. I recommend that the Board vote this month to maintain four of those schools in Commonwealth Priority Schools status and declare six schools - four in Springfield and one each in Holyoke and Lawrence - Priority 1 schools. We have invited the superintendents from Springfield (Joseph Burke), Holyoke (Eduardo Carballo), and Lawrence (Wilfredo Laboy) to the meeting to present their views regarding the Priority 1 recommendations.
- 3. Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers - Discussion and Vote**
This item is carried over from the November meeting. In April 2007 the Board voted to approve amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations to strengthen the mathematical preparation and knowledge of elementary and K-8 special education teachers. In August, we distributed *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers*, to explain the scope and depth of knowledge expected in elementary mathematics. Board member Tom Fortmann played a major role in drafting the guidelines. I recommend that the Board vote this month to formally approve the guidelines. This is an important step in strengthening the teaching and learning of mathematics in our schools.
- 4. Support for Students - Continuing Discussion**
In September the Board had an initial discussion with Dr. Rick Weissbourd of the Harvard Graduate School of Education on ways to assist schools and districts in providing the various kinds of emotional, social, physical and mental health support that students need in order to be successful in school. As part of our continuing consideration of this important topic, we have invited Dr. Mary Walsh, the Daniel E. Kearns Professor of Education and Innovative Leadership at Boston College, to talk with the Board this month about "Boston Connects," an innovative school-community-university partnership that serves children and families in Boston.
- 5. Report of Graduation Rate Task Force - Discussion**
In February 2007, the Board voted to set a graduation rate standard for purposes of calculating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for high schools under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The Board also voted to establish a task force, chaired by Board member Harneen Chernow, to review additional data related to the graduation rate and to consider strategies to increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school. The task force is presenting its report this month. At our January 2008 meeting, I expect to make a recommendation on the graduation rate that we will propose to the U.S. Department of Education for AYP purposes in our updated state accountability plan.

6. Charter Renewals for Three Schools: Boston Collegiate, Excel, and Smith Leadership Academy - Initial Discussion

Three charter renewals are presented to the Board this month for initial review and discussion: Boston Collegiate Charter School, Excel Academy Charter School, and Smith Leadership Academy Charter Public School. These three charter schools are all located in Boston. Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson and Charter School Director Mary Street will be at the Board meeting to respond to any questions about charter school matters. The Board will vote in January on these charter renewals.

7. Advisory Council Appointments - Vote on Two Additional Appointments

The Board voted in October on appointments and reappointments of members to various advisory councils. Two names were inadvertently omitted from the lists you received in October. I recommend that the Board vote this month to appoint the two additional members.

8. Approval of Grants - Vote

Presented for your approval this month are grants totaling \$1,886,951 under the following programs:

- Vocational Technical Education Framework in Criminal Justice (\$40,000 - federal funds)
- Gifted and Talented Services, School Year Program (\$430,118 - state funds)
- Gifted and Talented Services, Summer Program (\$87,099 - state funds)
- Gifted and Talented Planning, School Year Program (\$161,077 - state funds)
- Gifted and Talented Planning, Summer Program (\$39,532 - state funds)
- Gifted and Talented, Implementation Support (\$28,446 - state funds)
- Collaborative Partnerships for Student Success, School Year Program (\$175,161 - state funds)
- Collaborative Partnerships for Student Success, Summer Program (\$352,958 - state funds)
- Pathways to Family Success in Literacy (\$20,000 increase - federal funds)
- Pathways to Family Success in Literacy (\$10,992 increase - federal funds)
- Mass. Reading First Targeted Assistance (\$541,568 - federal funds)

I recommend that the Board approve the grants as presented. If you have questions about any of the grants, we will be pleased to respond.

Other Items for Information

9. Education-Related News Clippings

Enclosed for your information are several recent newspaper articles about education.

10. Update on Randolph Public Schools

The Board voted on November 27th to declare Randolph an underperforming school district. Enclosed are copies of two memos dated December 3rd, one updating the Board on the financial situation in the Randolph Public Schools and the other announcing the formation and planned actions of our district leadership review team.

11. Reports on Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School, Boston Renaissance Charter Public School, North Central Charter Essential School, Uphams Corner Charter School

Enclosed under Tab 11 are progress reports on four charter schools, each of which is required to meet certain conditions that the Board imposed on its charter in 2006 or 2007. The memos on each school include links to more detailed information that is available on our website.

12. Directions to the Meeting

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you in Malden on December 18th.

last updated: December 14, 2007

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