*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | James A. Peyser, Secretary of Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **Date:** | December 6, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | FY2021 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Budget Priorities |

On November 19, 2019, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board), voted to approve its budget priorities for consideration in the development of the FY2021 state education budget. This memo conveys the Board's priorities and we ask for your support in advancing these resource priorities as we jointly work to develop the Governor's House 2 recommendations.

The Board and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) recognize that significant increases in state funding will be required to implement the provisions of the Student Opportunity Act. Understanding that the funding for the Department’s education aid accounts (Chapter 70 and other district reimbursement accounts) will be finalized by the Governor and Legislature, the Board has prioritized funding that the Department can control and allocate to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our public school system. In particular, the FY2021 request seeks to advance resources to support the Commissioner’s priorities and strategic vision for the Department, as articulated in the June 2019 Our Way Forward report, to close achievement gaps and further the advancement of all students.

The Board recommends that the Secretary of Education, Governor, and Legislature work to provide additional state funding in the FY2021 budget to prioritize the following key areas.

* Implementation of the Commissioner’s deeper learning initiative, the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning.
* Targeted intervention strategies to improve instructional practice to accelerate learning, culturally responsive teaching, increased student engagement, enrichment activities, and effective school leadership.
* The Department’s programmatic administrative resources to oversee the expected additional responsibilities likely to be called for in the Student Opportunity Act. Resources would be prioritized for data analytics and school finance work designed to support the oversight of district plans as discussed in the Student Opportunity Act.
* Innovative assessment resources. The Department has several initiatives underway to explore and pilot new, innovative models for student assessment, focusing on deeper learning, broader measures of student skills, and better integration into the classroom. These include a new 8th grade civics assessment to accompany the recently adopted changes to the history and social sciences curriculum standards and a new science assessment to be piloted as part of the Kaleidoscope collective. Funding is needed to support continued development and piloting in FY2021.
* Increased literacy resources focused on early-grade readers, with the goal of funding additional grant opportunities for schools and districts.
* Professional development resources to implement the new Arts framework and Health framework (when finalized). The provision of professional development resources is

consistent with past new framework implementation, providing resources to assist school and district personnel with implementation of the new standards.

The Board and the Department appreciate your ongoing support for our work to strengthen K-12 education throughout the Commonwealth. I look forward to our continued collaboration in the development of House 2.