*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | January 17, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | Evidence-Based Policy Making |

The enclosed memo, dated December 13, 2019, provides information from the Department of Higher Education and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about recent work in the area of evidence-based policy making and strategic data use. This topic was on the agenda for the December 17, 2019 joint meeting of the Board of Higher Education and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. We had to cancel that meeting due to an ice storm.

The December 13 memo includes a proposed motion for each board to vote on a common vision of evidence-based policy making. Because we are not able to reschedule the joint meeting anytime soon, each board will vote on the motion at one of its regular meetings. I recommend that the Board vote on the motion at our meeting on January 28. It reads as follows:

**Context:** Massachusetts is acclaimed for its rich history in education dating back to the first public school and college in America and continuing today with the highest levels of achievement in K-12 and postsecondary attainment in the country. Effective policy making is important to ensure continued state leadership, particularly in promoting equitable opportunities and outcomes for underserved students.

**MOVED:** Therefore, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) hereby resolves to make a broad-based commitment to collect, review, and act on high-quality evidence to inform ongoing and new initiatives intended to strengthen K-12 education in Massachusetts. The BESE, through its department (DESE), working with schools, districts, and other partners from early education through workforce and beyond, will collect, integrate, and analyze the data needed to understand the students and adults served by our systems, their needs, and the impact of various policies and initiatives. This commitment also includes proactively designing and testing new initiatives to continually build and refine the evidence-based set of policies supporting postsecondary success across the Commonwealth. Finally, the BESE commitment reflects that data about learners and best practices will be securely held, readily available, and user-friendly, with an explicit emphasis on responsible and accountable data sharing with stakeholders, including end-users in our schools and institutions, research partners, and more broadly with the students, families, and communities that we serve.