*****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:** | September 18, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the September 29, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on **Tuesday, September 29, 2020**, at the Department ofElementary and Secondary Education’s office in Malden. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **12 noon.** This will be the Board’s first in-person meeting since February. We will follow the Commonwealth’s health and safety guidelines, including limiting the number of people in our meeting room. As always, the meeting will be live-streamed. Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements; please email or call them if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

Our business agenda leads off with the Board’s annual election of the vice-chair, followed by an update on actions the Department has taken over the past three months to support schools, students, and families during the pandemic as well as our ongoing work around school reopening. The Board will hear a presentation by the Quincy Public Schools on their summer 2020 education program. The Board will take final action on two regulations: the amendments to the Student Learning Time regulations that the Board adopted in June on an emergency basis, and the amendments to the Education Collaborative regulations on which the Board took initial action in April. Our business agenda concludes with an update on education budget matters.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will report on current issues and activities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

I am very pleased to report on two significant federal education grants that the Department recently secured. These grants will provide support to schools and students in Massachusetts in two high-priority areas: literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

1. **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant**. The Department has been awarded the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant from the US Department of Education. We received the full amount requested: $19.98 million over five years, starting this year. Working in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), our Department will be able to use this funding to improve literacy outcomes, particularly for Black and Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities.

The grant supports literacy for students in grades preK-12. About 95% of the nearly $20 million will flow to local educational agencies in the form of subgrants. The main aspects of the programming will include:

* Expansion of preK seats through grants to districts and community partners (we will issue these in partnership with EEC) and increased quality of English language arts (ELA)/Literacy instruction in preK programs;
* Grants for districts to evaluate, select, purchase, and adopt high-quality instructional materials to support ELA/Literacy in grades K-12; and
* Grants for districts to strengthen the multi-tiered system of support, which covers a range of activities including adoption of improved screening assessments, professional development for teachers and school leaders, and adding staff such as literacy coaches and reading specialists.

Districts that are involved in our statewide system of support will get priority for all these subgrants. The Department retains a small portion of the funding, which we will use to bring on a coordinator for the program and to offer professional development for subgrantees through periodic convenings.

1. **STEM Advanced Placement Access Expansion Grant.** The Department has been awarded the STEM Advanced Placement Access Expansion Opportunity grantfrom the US Department of Education. The grant totals $9 million over five years. It will expand access for students, particularly students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities, to Advanced Placement (AP) coursework in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and particularly Computer Science. The goal is for more students to participate and succeed in rigorous courses, pursue postsecondary education, and be well prepared to enter STEM professions that are vital to the Commonwealth’s economy.

In particular, the grant will enable the Department to identify “AP deserts” – high schools where low numbers of students engage in AP STEM courses despite having the skills to participate in this advanced coursework – and to provide a statewide virtual platform so these students can engage in the coursework at no additional cost to the student, family, or school district. It is our aspiration that these students will go on to complete postsecondary education in STEM and ultimately join and fully participate in the Massachusetts STEM economy.

I look forward to updating the Board periodically on each of these important initiatives.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Peyser will report on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the June 30, 2020 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes of the June meeting.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Election of Board Vice-Chair – Discussion and Vote**

Under the Board’s by-laws, the September meeting is the annual meeting of the Board, at which the Board elects its vice-chair. Chair Craven will call for nominations from members and then conduct the election. The vice-chair presides over meetings when the chair is not available.

1. **Update on COVID-19 Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**

The public health emergency continues to dominate our lives and our work. The Department is continuing to work energetically with the Administration, the Legislature, and education stakeholders to support schools, students, and families through this crisis. Under Tab 1 are some of the guidance documents and resources that we have produced and disseminated widely in the past three months. At our meeting on September 29, I will review key actions the Department has taken, update you on new information, and answer your questions. Other members of our senior leadership team will join the discussion.

1. **Quincy Public Schools: Presentation on Summer 2020 Education Program – Discussion**

The guidance that the Department issued to school districts in June and early July about summer school and special education services stressed the importance of prioritizing in-person services for students with the highest needs and using summer school as an opportunity to develop readiness to implement health and safety protocols for the new school year. At the September 29 meeting, we will highlight the work of Quincy Public Schools as an example of a district that provided extensive in-person and remote summer services. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston will start with a brief overview of data on summer special education services, and Quincy Public Schools Interim Superintendent Kevin Mulvey and Assistant Superintendent Erin Perkins will present on Quincy’s model and how their summer programs served as a pilot to inform the reopening of schools.

1. **Amendments to Student Learning Time Regulations, 603 CMR 27.00 Re: Health and Safety Standards During a Declared State of Emergency or Other Exigent Circumstances – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Permanent Regulations**

In June, the Board voted to adopt amendments to the Student Learning Time regulations, 603 CMR 27.00, that establish health and safety standards for providing structured learning time to students during a declared state of emergency or other exigent circumstances that adversely affect the safe environment of schools. The Board adopted the regulations on an emergency basis as provided by the Massachusetts Administrative Procedure Act, enabling the Department and school districts to use the amended regulations in planning for the reopening of school this fall.

The Department solicited public comment on the regulation as required. I am recommending several modifications to the amendments based on the public comment we received. The memo under Tab 4 provides an overview. Copies of all the public comment, along with a summary, are included. I recommend that the Board vote this month on final adoption of the regulations as presented.Deputy General Counsel Deb Steenland will be at the meeting to answer your questions.

1. **Amendments to Education Collaboratives Regulations, 603 CMR 50.00 – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Permanent Regulations**

In April the Board voted to send out for public comment proposed amendments to the Education Collaboratives regulations, addressing changes resulting from 2019 amendments to the state law. We received only one comment and it was in support of the amendments. I recommend that the Board vote on September 29 to adopt the regulations as presented. The memo under Tab 5 provides an overview, and Department staff will be available at the September 29 meeting to answer your questions.

1. **Update on Education Budget Matters – Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will update the Board on the latest information we have about federal and state funding for K-12 education in the Commonwealth.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **Report on Matters Approved by the Commissioner under Delegated Authority**
   1. **Grants**
   2. **Charter School Matters**
   3. **Amendments to Educator Licensure Regulations**

Enclosed is information on grants and charter school matters I have approved since the June meeting under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner. Item 7c reports on the two amendments to the Educator Licensure regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, that I approved on behalf of the Board earlier this month. The Board will take final action on the regulatory amendments later this fall.

1. **Charter School Authorizing Activities for 2020-2021**

Each year, the Board votes on various matters under its statutory role as charter school authorizer. The enclosed memo summarizes the statutory framework for charter schools and the Board’s responsibilities as the state’s sole charter school authorizer. It includes a tentative schedule of agenda items related to charter school authorizing for 2020-2021.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you in person on September 29.