*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

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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 15, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Educator Workforce Diversity |

This memorandum updates the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on the development and release of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (Department/DESE) “Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce (Guidebook).” At our January 26, 2021 meeting, the Board will hear about the development of the Guidebook and how it will be used to support school district efforts to strengthen and diversify teacher recruitment and retention programs.

**Background Context**

In September 2019, the Board received updates on current initiatives the Department is leading to diversify the educator workforce in the Commonwealth. The updates included a description of Influence 100, the InSPIRED Fellowship program, the Commissioner's college visits, and the Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant.

**Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce**

The purpose of the Guidebook is to support district and school leaders to design and implement a teacher diversification strategy in service of achievement and equitable outcomes for students. Engaging more staff of color requires intentional, reflective, and open-minded practices that are grounded in both the *technical work* of revising talent activities and the *adaptive work* of exploring individual identity and the manifestation of biases. As the Guidebook outlines, a talent diversification strategy requires an approach to both reevaluating and revising current practices around recruitment and selection while also taking steps to create a more inclusive culture through ongoing cultural proficiency work across the district.

In order to support districts to engage a more racially and ethnically diverse group of teachers, the Department implemented a three-year Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant in the spring of 2019 (FY19) and distributed approximately $2,000,000 to fourteen school districts to support their efforts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment and retention programs. In the fall of 2019 (FY20), an additional $1,800,000 was awarded to the initial fourteen school districts along with six new districts. In the fall of 2020 (FY21) an additional $1,900,000 was awarded to fourteen current grant recipients. The FY21 Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant will be funded through August 31, 2021. As a reminder, eligibility to apply for the grant was limited to districts identified as requiring assistance or intervention in the Massachusetts Accountability System.

TNTP has partnered with DESE since the beginning of the Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant. Through this partnership, TNTP has supported school districts as they design and implement teacher diversification strategies ranging from facilitating training around identity and bias to collaborating on updated recruitment and selection models. The Guidebook reflects the collective learnings that have emerged from the work of these districts, guided by national experts, research, and best practices.

Ventura Rodriguez, Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives; Shay Edmond, Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives; and Christina Brown, Partner at TNTP, will be at the January 2021 Board meeting to discuss the Guidebook and to answer any questions.

Enclosure: DESE Teacher Diversification Guidebook