*****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:**  | February 12, 2021  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the February 22, 2021 Special Meeting and the February 23, 2021 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, February 23, 2021**, at the Department ofElementary and Secondary Education’s office in Malden. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m.** As in recent months, the Board will meet in person, following the Commonwealth’s health and safety guidelines, including limiting the number of people in our meeting room, and 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.

The Board also will hold a special meeting on **Monday, February 22, 2021**, from **5:00-7:00 p.m.** The special meeting will be held remotely via Zoom, per Governor Baker’s emergency order of March 12, 2020.

**OVERVIEW**

The special meeting on Monday evening is an opportunity for the Board to receive and discuss an update on Career/Vocational Technical Education. No votes will be taken. Our business agenda for the regular meeting on Tuesday leads off with a report on the Department’s recent actions to support schools, students, and families during the pandemic, followed by a brief recap of the Monday evening special meeting. The Board will vote on several charter amendments and a charter renewal. The Student Learning Time regulations (standards for remote and hybrid learning) that the Board adopted on an emergency basis in December 2020 are on the agenda for a final vote. We will conclude the meeting with a review of current education budget matters.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Career and Vocational Technical Education Update – Discussion**

The Department has been working with stakeholders to explore approaches for increasing equitable access to high-quality career and vocational technical education (CVTE) in Massachusetts. As part of our continuing review of vocational school admissions, the Department has collected and analyzed waitlist data from CVTE programs. At the special meeting on Monday evening, February 22, staff will provide an update on this work and the Board will have the opportunity to discuss the issues in depth. We will also present a proposed timeline for amending the current regulations on vocational admissions. Associate Commissioner Elizabeth Bennett, who leads our CVTE work, and Caitlin Looby of our legal team will present to the Board and answer questions. No votes will be taken at the special meeting.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will brief the Board on current issues and activities. She will also invite member Marty West to report on the February 1 meeting of the Board of Higher Education’s task force on evidence-based policy making. Marty West, Mike Moriarty, and Paymon Rouhanifard joined that meeting, as part of our ongoing collaboration with the Board of Higher Education around evidence-based policy making.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

**Mass Literacy.** The Department is in the process of awarding planning grants to 37 districts for the Growing Literacy Equity Across Massachusetts (GLEAM) initiative. We anticipate making another $7.75 million available for FY22 awards, which will support K-12 evidence-based literacy programming aligned with Mass Literacy. To promote this important initiative and expand understanding of evidence-based early literacy practices, the Department recently concluded four webinars that engaged about 650 participants across the state.

**English Learner Parent Advisory Council Leadership Convening.** In mid-February, the Department’s Office of Language Acquisition hosted a two-day English Learner Parent Advisory Council Leadership Convening to provide local English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) parent leaders an opportunity to learn together and connect with parents from districts across the Commonwealth. Over the two days, there were 245 participants in the program, which was translated into 8 languages throughout the event. Our Office of Language Acquisition partnered with the Department’s Office of Student and Family Support, the MA Statewide Family Engagement Center, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and the Department of Early Education and Care to develop the program. We received positive feedback from participants, including this quote: *“Esta reunión me fortalece para seguir adelante como mamá y Leader.” (This meeting gives me strength to keep going, as a mom and leader.)*

**Comments from the Secretary**

The Secretary will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the January 26, 2021 Regular Meeting**

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

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **School Reopening Update and Proposed Next Steps – Discussion**

Since our meeting on January 26, the Department has continued to inform districts of new developments related to COVID-19 and to support schools and districts as they move toward bringing more students into classrooms. The memorandum in your materials summarizes some key actions in the past few weeks. I will update the Board further at our meeting.

1. **Career/Vocational Technical Education Update – Recap of Special Meeting Discussion**

We will recap major points from the Board’s Monday evening discussion of this topic, including the timeline for anticipated next steps.

1. **Charter Schools**

Our agenda includes recommended action on four charter amendments and a charter renewal, as detailed in your materials. Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, will be at the meeting to respond to any questions.

1. **Amendments for Regional Charter Schools (Holyoke Community Charter School and Marblehead Community Charter Public School) and Maximum Enrollment (Lawrence Family Development Charter School and Lowell Community Charter School) – Discussion and Vote**

I recommend that the Board approve the amendment requests of four charter schools. Two schools, Holyoke Community Charter School and Marblehead Community Charter Public School, have requested amendments to become regional schools in accordance with G**.**L. c. 71, § 89(n). Two other schools, Lawrence Family Development Charter School and Lowell Community Charter Public School, have requested amendments to increase their maximum enrollment. Details are set forth in the memorandum and attachments under Tab 3A.

1. **Charter Schools: Charter Schools – Renewal and Report on Probation for Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School – Discussion and Vote**

I recommend that the Board renew the charter for Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School, remove it from probation, and maintain the condition requiring improved academic performance. The memorandum and attachments under Tab 3B provide background information.

1. **Amendments to Student Learning Time Regulations, 603 CMR 27.00 (Standards for Remote Learning and Hybrid Learning) – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Permanent Regulations**

In December 2020, the Board voted to amend the Student Learning Time regulations to establish minimum levels for live instruction and synchronous instruction that districts and schools operating hybrid and remote models must provide. The Board adopted the regulation on an emergency basis, as provided by the Massachusetts Administrative Procedure Act. As required, the Department has solicited public comment on the regulations. Based on the public comment received, I am not recommending any modifications. Copies of all the public comment, along with a summary, are included with the memo under Tab 4. I recommend that the Board vote on final adoption of the regulation at the February 23 meeting. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston, Associate Commissioner Rob Curtin, and Deputy General Counsel Deb Steenland will be available to answer your questions.

1. **Update on Education Budget – 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 Grants and Charter School Matters Approved by the Commissioner**

Enclosed under Tab 6 is information on grants and charter school matters that I have approved since the last meeting, under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on February 22 and 23.