*****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:** | April 9, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Massachusetts World Languages Curriculum Framework – Recommendation to Adopt Revised Academic Standards |

This memorandum updates the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on revisions made to the draft 2021 World Languages Curriculum Framework based on comments received during the public comment period. I am recommending that the Board vote to approve the revised World Languages Framework at the meeting on April 20, 2021.

This revised framework retains the strengths of the 1999 Massachusetts Foreign Languages Framework and includes these improved features:

* organization of content standards by broadly recognized American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) proficiency levels
* alignment to ACTFL’s standards and benchmarks
* alignment to a consistent structure of linguistic components to align with ACTFL and approved Seal of Biliteracy assessments
* addition of implicit social, emotional, and critical consciousness content standards and explicit social, emotional, and critical consciousness practices
* integration of the Seal of Biliteracy into vision and programmatic outcomes
* revised terminology to accurately, intentionally, and respectfully include all human languages
* ambitious standards that highlight the importance of world languages as part of a well-rounded education that prepares students for college, careers, and civic participation
* alignment to the structure of other Massachusetts curriculum frameworks (e.g., Arts and History/Social Sciences frameworks)

**Summary of Review Process and Public Comment**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) launched the review and revision of the 1999 Massachusetts Foreign Languages Framework in August 2019. At the December 15, 2020 Board meeting, the Board received the draft 2021 World Languages Curriculum Framework and voted to release it for public comment. The Department collected public comments between December 18 and February 22, during which time the Department organized two informational webinars and presented to various organizations to increase participation in the feedback. Respondents (educators, administrators, students, parents, and higher education faculty) responded to a statewide survey, and provided feedback through email, virtual meetings, and calls. Subsequently, Department staff reviewed all comments and revised the draft framework to address several emergent themes, described below.

**Theme:** Respondents suggested clarifying the communication content standards and providing further guidance on their measurement and applicability to all languages, specifically classical languages and American Sign Language.

* In response, the Department:
  + Revised content standards to include comprehensibility measurement and revised the introduction to the content standards to explain comprehensibility and related terminology;
  + Revised Guiding Principle 5 to highlight that interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication are measurable;
  + Added a paragraph in the Content Standards Section under “Applying the Standards to Various Languages” to support use of the target language in classical languages;
  + Edited terminology throughout to ensure full inclusivity of American Sign Language;
  + Added graphic organizers to make the document clearer.

**Theme:** Respondents requested that the framework support specific best practices and appropriate content; some commenters wanted more specific support for students with disabilities and heritage language learners.

* In response, the Department added a section entitled “What the Framework Does and Does Not Do” to better designate between the standards in the framework and the implementation resources. This section mirrors other frameworks to:
  + Address how the framework supports high-leverage teaching practices;
  + Provide guidance as to the type of topical content districts should choose to include in their implementation of the standards;
  + Provide language to support heritage language learners and students with disabilities.

**Theme:** Respondents requested that the framework better articulate high outcomes for students.

* In response, the Department:
  + Connected the “Vision of the World-Ready Student” to the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy;
  + Suggested that districts tie programmatic outcomes to the levels of proficiency required for the Seal of Biliteracy.

At the Board meeting on April 20, 2021, Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske and World Language Acquisition Support Specialist Andy McDonie will present a summary of the revised framework and respond to any questions.

Enclosed with this memo are the following documents:

* A detailed summary of feedback received during public comment
* The revised draft of the 2021 Massachusetts World Languages Curriculum Framework
* Redline version of the draft of the 2021 World Languages Curriculum Framework
* Content Standards at a Glance
* Linguistic Components Summary
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