*****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:** | October 8, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the October 19, 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, October 21, 2021**, at the Department’s offices in Malden. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m.** The Board will meet in person, following the Commonwealth’s current health and safety guidelines, 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.

**OVERVIEW**

Our business agenda leads off with a presentation from the 2022 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Marta García. I will update the Board on actions the Department has taken and is taking to support schools, students, and families with in-person learning. I will present my goals for the 2021-2022 school year. We will hear from the Board’s Budget Committee and have an initial discussion about priorities for the FY2023 state education budget. The Board will receive a report on the Department’s initiatives to support implementation of the 2018 History and Social Science Framework and the student-led civics project requirement. The Board will discuss and vote on a waiver request from Mystic Valley Regional Charter School. Following these business items, the Board will conclude its meeting with an executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.

**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 delighted to introduce Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson, who joined the Department on September 2. Ms. Robinson has experience as a college administrator, instructor, K-12 parent, policy maker, and district leader. Among other accomplishments, she served as the Dean of Student Affairs at Cambridge College since 2011 and also served as an appointed member of the Boston School Committee for one term. Ms. Robinson has joined our newly constituted DESE leadership cabinet:

* Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell
* Chief School Officer Komal Bhasin
* Chief of Staff Leldamy Correa
* Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability Rob Curtin
* Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston
* Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson
* General Counsel Rhoda Schneider

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Peyser will report on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the September 21, 2021 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **2022 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Marta García – Presentation and Discussion**

Each year, the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year program honors a Massachusetts teacher who exemplifies excellent teaching in the Commonwealth. On October 6, Governor Baker, Secretary Peyser, and I joined Salem municipal and school officials to announce that Marta García, a second and third grade English as a second language (ESL) teacher at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School in Salem, is the 2022 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. I look forward to introducing Ms. García to the Board on October 19.

1. **Update on School Reopening and Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**

I will update the Board on the reopening of schools across the Commonwealth for in-person learning in this new school year and review the Department’s recent and ongoing actions to provide support. Your materials include a brief report on what school districts are doing to improve air quality and ventilation in school buildings, responding to a question from Board member Mike Moriarty at last month’s meeting.

1. **Commissioner Riley’s Goals for 2021-2022 – Discussion**

I have outlined key goals that will guide my work, and the work of the Department, in 2021-2022. I look forward to discussing my goals with the Board.

1. **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY2023 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board’s Budget Committee – Initial 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. Board member Matt Hills, who chairs the Board’s Budget Committee, will discuss the committee’s process and possible priorities and program initiatives that the Board may wish to propose for the FY2023 state education budget. It is customary for the Board to discuss and vote on its budget priorities at the November meeting.

1. **History, Social Science, and Civics Implementation Updates – Discussion**

The Board is receiving an update this month on the Department’s work to support the implementation of the 2018 History and Social Science Framework and the student-led civics project requirement. The memorandum in your materials provides details. Heather Peske, Senior Associate Commissioner; Katherine Tarca, Director of Literacy and Humanities; Reuben Henriques, History/Social Science Content Support Lead; and N’Dia Riegler, history teacher at the Eliot School in Boston, will be present at the October 19 Board meeting to present the overview and answer your questions.

1. **Mystic Valley Regional Charter School Request for Waiver – Discussion and Vote**

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School requests a waiver of 603 CMR 1.11(2), the regulation requiring that “[a]ll charter schools will be evaluated on the same performance criteria as provided in the guidelines, provided, however, that the criteria will take into account each school's charter and accountability plan.” The Board may grant a waiver of a regulation under exceptional circumstances. In this case, I recommend that the Board deny the requested waiver because it is unnecessary and because a waiver would require evaluation of this school on a basis different from every other charter school in Massachusetts. Your materials include the school’s waiver request and my memorandum explaining my recommendation.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **Progress Report on Alternative Assessment Pilot for Educator Licensure**

In October 2020, the Board approved a regulatory amendment to allow for the piloting of alternative assessments for educator licensure through June 30, 2024. The Department committed to providing annual progress reports to the Board on this pilot program. The first annual progress report is included in your materials this month.

1. **Report on Grants Approved by the Commissioner**

Enclosed is information on grants I have approved since our last meeting, under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

1. **Chronically Underperforming Schools Quarter 1 Reports**

Your materials include the first of four FY2022 quarterly progress updates to the Board on the four chronically underperforming schools’ implementation of their school turnaround plans, focusing on activities from July-October 2021. The schools are Paul A. Dever Elementary School and John P. Holland Elementary School (UP Academy Holland) in Boston, Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke, and John Avery Parker Elementary School in New Bedford.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. **Executive Session to Discuss Litigation Strategy**

At the conclusion of the business agenda, Chair Craven will ask for a vote to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to pending litigation. The Board will adjourn the meeting following the executive session.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on October 19.