*****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 19, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the April 26, 2022 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, April 26, 2022**, at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 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 and recorded. Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements; please email or call them if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

I will update the Board on actions the Department has taken and is taking to support schools, students, and families and the Board will hear from a panel of superintendents. On the competency determination and related matters, the Board will get an update from Professor John Papay about the ongoing Brown University research study, and I will present proposed amendments to the regulations on the competency determination and the certificate of mastery, for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. The Board will also discuss and vote on my recommendation to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to two regulations relating to educator licensure, simplifying licensure for vocational technical educators and extending certain staffing flexibilities for schools.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will report on current issues and activities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

1. **Taylor Thai, Milken Educator Award winner.** On March 30, Taylor Thai, a kindergarten and first-grade teacher of multilingual students at Donovan Elementary School in Randolph, was presented with the prestigious Milken Educator Award by Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson and Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards. Ms. Thai is the state’s 47th Milken Award winner. She is the only Massachusetts recipient in 2021-22 and is one of more than sixty recipients across the country this school year. You can read more about this exemplary teacher [here](https://www.mass.gov/news/randolph-educator-receives-national-milken-award#:~:text=Taylor%20Thai%2C%20a%20kindergarten%20and,the%20country%20this%20school%20year.) and on her [MEA web profile](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/taylor-thai__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!1XD5_Hromv1dGou2TXr4Zq--chnSD0QlN9xzxh8nBlJoqep7yVo-1wZ99kWfgHl6oAP1Fwwon5PN$), and see a video of her [remarks](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-8mjOS5ESo__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!1XD5_Hromv1dGou2TXr4Zq--chnSD0QlN9xzxh8nBlJoqep7yVo-1wZ99kWfgHl6oAP1Fz-2v50_$) at the ceremony as well as an [interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eohyf_9Oiws).
2. **Addressing hate and bias in school athletics.** The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is collaborating with the Office of the Attorney General, the MA Association of School Superintendents, the MA Interscholastic Athletic Association, and the MA School Administrators Association on a call to action for school administrators, athletic directors, and coaches to address hate and bias in school athletics. A statewide Zoom conference on April 5 launched the initiative, and more programs and trainings will follow. For details, see <https://www.mass.gov/news/ag-healey-hosts-virtual-call-to-action-to-address-hate-and-bias-in-school-athletics>.
3. **Rob Leshin’s honor from Project Bread.** Project Bread [recently announced](https://www.projectbread.org/blog/brittany-mangini-of-dta-robert-leshin-of-dese-receive-patrick-hughes-award-for-social-justice) that Rob Leshin, director of DESE’s Office for Food and Nutrition Programs, and Brittany Mangini, director of food security and nutrition at the Department of Transitional Assistance, will receive the organization’s Patrick Hughes Award for Social Justice in recognition of their work to feed families. Project Bread’s President and CEO, Erin McAleer, wrote that the organization is “grateful to Rob and everyone at DESE for their dedication to ensuring children across the state had reliable access to meals during the pandemic.” This is well deserved recognition for Rob and our school nutrition team.
4. **Advanced Placement success.** With great credit to educators and students throughout the Commonwealth, we are pleased that for the second year in a row, Massachusetts had the highest percentage of the 2021 graduating class scoring a 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam. According to results released by the College Board, Massachusetts ranks first in the nation for the percentage of the graduating high school seniors that scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. In recent years, Massachusetts has increased the number of students who qualify for a subsidy for the exam fee, and a subsidy is available to any low-income student for whom the fee is an obstacle. This school year, the Department is providing Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exam fee subsidies for all low-income public-school students for all subject areas. In addition, DESE has expanded the number of Massachusetts high schools that offer one or more AP courses in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. More information is [here](https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-students-lead-nation-in-advanced-placement-success).

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Peyser will report on current issues and activities.

**Statements from the Public**

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the March 22, 2022 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**
2. **Commissioner’s Update**
3. **Panel of Superintendents**

I will update the Board on the Department’s recent and ongoing actions to provide support for schools, students, and families. We will also hear from a panel of superintendents about issues they are addressing, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion and on social-emotional health in schools.

**Competency Determination and Related Matters**

Matt Deninger, Chief Strategy and Research Officer; Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability; and Associate Commissioner Michol Stapel will be at the meeting for items 2, 3, and 4 to respond to your questions.

1. **Brown University Study Update – Discussion**

In January 2020, the Board heard from Professor John Papay of Brown University about preliminary results from a longitudinal study on student outcomes in relation to the Massachusetts competency determination. Professor Papay will update the Board on the study at our April 26 meeting.

1. **Proposed Amendment to Competency Determination Regulations, 603 CMR 30.00 (Standards for Students in the Classes of 2026-2029) – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

The Board received an update on the competency determination at the February 2022 meeting and heard from Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, Chair of the Competency Determination Advisory Committee. This month, I am presenting proposed regulatory amendments to set the competency determination standard for students in the class of 2026 (this year’s eighth graders) through the class of 2029. I recommend that the Board vote this month to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments. After reviewing comments and determining whether further changes are needed, I plan to bring the amendments back to the Board in June 2022 for final adoption.

1. **Proposed Amendment to Certificate of Mastery Regulations, 603 CMR 31.00 (Standards for Students in the Classes of 2026-2029) – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

The proposed amendments to the regulations on the certificate of mastery would align them with the proposed amendments to the competency determination regulations. Details are in the memorandum. As with the other proposed amendments, I recommend that the Board vote this month to solicit public comment, and after that process I will bring them back to the Board in June 2022 for final adoption.

**Educator Licensure**

Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner, Liz Bennett, Associate Commissioner for College, Career, and Technical Education, and Brian Devine, Director of Educator Licensure, will be at the April 26 meeting to answer your questions on item 5, and Brian Devine will address item 6 as well.

1. **Proposed Amendment to Regulations on Vocational-Technical Teacher Licensure, 603 CMR 4.00 (Option to Meet Subject Matter Knowledge Requirement Through Professional Industry/Trade License Exams) – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

As part of our ongoing work to strengthen and diversify our educator workforce, I am proposing amendments to the Career/Vocational Technical Education educator licensure regulations that would allow applicants to meet the subject matter knowledge requirement through their professional industry/trade licensure exams rather than having to take a separate exam administered by the Department. I am presenting the proposed amendments to the Board this month for initial review and a vote to solicit public comment, and I plan to bring the regulations back to the Board for final approval in June.

1. **Proposed Amendments to Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 (Staffing Flexibilities for 2022-2023) – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

In November 2020, the Board first adopted amendments to the Educator Licensure regulations (603 CMR 7.00) that provided certain staffing flexibilities for the 2020-2021 school year. In June 2021 the Board extended those flexibilities for the 2021-2022 school year.  I am proposing that the Board further amend the regulations to extend those flexibilities through the 2022-2023 school year.  I recommend that the Board vote on April 26 to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments. The memorandum under Tab 6 provides details.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

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

1. **House Ways and Means (HWM) FY23 State Education Budget Recommendations**

The House Ways and Means Committee released its proposed budget for FY2023 on April 13. The memorandum and spreadsheet in your materials summarize key education items.

1. **Chronically Underperforming Schools Quarter 3 Report**

Your materials include the third of four FY2022 quarterly progress reports to the Board on the four chronically underperforming schools’ implementation of their school turnaround plans. 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.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on April 26.