*****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:**  | May 22, 2022 *(updated with new meeting location)* |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the May 24, 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, May 24, 2022**, at the John W. McCormack Building, Ashburton Cafe Conference Room, 1 Ashburton Place, Plaza Level, Boston, MA 02108. The meeting will start at **9:30 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 across the Commonwealth. The Board will hear from Tama Lang, school counselor at Sgt. Robert R. Litwin Elementary School in Chicopee, who has been selected as the 2022 School Counselor of the Year by the Massachusetts School Counselor Association. I will provide an update on the status of the Department’s recent follow-up district review of the Boston Public Schools. We will have a presentation on the Department’s initiatives to help schools and districts support students’ mental health and wellbeing. Eleni Carris Livingston will present the State Student Advisory Council’s 2021-22 end-of-year report. The Board will get a progress report on the [IEP Improvement Project](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ImproveIEP/default.html), a collaborative, multi-stage initiative to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. We will conclude the meeting with an update on education budget matters and an initial look at the proposed meeting schedule for 2022-23.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will report on current issues and activities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

1. **Statewide education job fair on June 15.** The Department is collaborating with MassHire to host a virtual statewide education job fair on June 15, featuring the full range of job openings in our schools and programs – from bus driver to guidance counselor, from teacher to business analyst, from IT specialist to direct care provider. According to the pre-registration survey, over 330 districts or programs have indicated that they will participate in the event. Over 2,300 MassHire job seekers have shown interest in attending. This is part of our continuing effort to help school districts address staffing challenges.
2. **May 10 celebration honoring excellence in teaching.** On May 10, Secretary Peyser, Board member Mary Ann Stewart, and close to 200 people from districts across the Commonwealth joined us at the Devens Common Center to celebrate 28 teachers we have recognized over the past year. They included the 2022 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and the finalists and semifinalists for that award, the History Teacher of the Year, the Milken Educator Award winner, and winners and finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. It was the first time we have held this ceremony since 2019. I would like to thank everyone who attended and the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Madrigal Singers, who performed that night.

**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 April 26, 2022 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

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

I will update the Board on the Department’s recent and ongoing actions to provide support for schools, students, and families across the Commonwealth.

1. **School Counselor of the Year: Tama Lang – Presentation and Discussion**

Tama Lang, school counselor at Sgt. Robert R. Litwin Elementary School in Chicopee, has been selected as the 2022 School Counselor of the Year by the Massachusetts School Counselor Association, and I am delighted she will join us at the Board meeting to speak about her experience. Please see the memorandum under Tab 2 for more information about Ms. Lang.

1. **Update on Boston Public Schools – Discussion**

I will update the Board on the status of the Department’s spring 2022 follow-up district review of the Boston Public Schools.

1. **Supporting Students’ Mental Health and Wellness – Discussion**

Students’ mental health and wellness has been a priority for the Board and Department, especially in light of the effects of the pandemic. At the April 26 meeting, the Board heard from a panel of superintendents about work they are doing to address social-emotional health and school climate. This month, staff from the Department’s Office of Student and Family Support will present an overview of DESE initiatives to help schools and districts build and expand comprehensive, multi-tiered systems of support for students’ mental health and wellbeing.

1. **State Student Advisory Council End of Year Report for 2021-2022 – Discussion**

Eleni Carris Livingston has served with distinction as the elected chair of the State Student Advisory Council and as a member of this Board. She will present the SSAC’s 2021-22 end-of-year report.

1. **Special Education Update: IEP Improvement Project – Discussion**

Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston and Jamie Camacho, Director of Special Education Planning and Policy, will present a progress report on the [IEP Improvement Project](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ImproveIEP/default.html), a collaborative, multi-stage initiative to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Through the IEP Improvement Project, the Department is working with schools, families, and other stakeholders to update all aspects of the IEP (Individualized Education Program) process from initial student referral for evaluation through the development and implementation of the IEP.

1. **Update on FY2023 State Education Budget – Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell, Senior Associate Commissioner Komal Bhasin, and Matt Deninger, our Chief Strategy and Research Officer, will update the Board on state and federal funding for K-12 education in the Commonwealth.

1. **Proposed Schedule for Regular Board Meetings through June 2023 – Discussion**

Enclosed for your review is a list of proposed Board meeting dates for the upcoming school year. The Board will vote on the schedule at the June meeting.

**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.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you at the John W. McCormack Building in Boston on May 24.