*****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:**  | August 10, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | District and School Accountability System for 2022: Changes to Align with Regulatory Amendments |

At the August 15, 2022 meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board), I will recommend that the Board vote to approve changes to the Department’s district and school accountability system. The modifications incorporate the changes allowed by our approved addendum to the ESEA Consolidated State Plan, which grants temporary flexibility around certain federal accountability reporting requirements for the 2021-2022 school year. The modifications also align with the amendment to state accountability regulations[[1]](#footnote-2) that the Board approved at the [June 28, 2022](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2022/2022-06/item4.docx) meeting.

**Proposed Changes**

In the fall of 2022, the Department proposes to produce some, but not all, of the information associated with annual district and school accountability determinations. Under this “accountability lite” model, we intend to publish district, school, and student group-level performance data for each of the approved accountability indicators, as well as certain normative measures (e.g., school percentiles) that will help districts, schools, the Department, and the public assess the performance of all districts and schools using common measures. The availability of this information will also continue to help communities and the state decide how to assign resources and other assistance.

Under the “accountability lite” model, we would not publish indicator targets, points for progress towards targets, progress ratings, or determinations of each district’s and school’s need for assistance or intervention. These aspects of the traditional accountability system would be reconsidered for future accountability reporting cycles.

**Public Comment**

As required by state regulation[[2]](#footnote-3), the Department invited the public to comment on the changes to the district and school accountability system during the period from July 1, 2022 to July 15, 2022. The Department received 6 written comments during the public comment period. The most commented-on issue was the use of chronic absenteeism as an accountability indicator. Attached is a document summarizing the comments that were received, the individuals who submitted them, and the Department’s responses.

Additionally, the Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council (AAAC) discussed the proposed changes to the system at their [March 2, 2022](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/councils/sda/2022-0302notes.docx) and [June 1, 2022](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/councils/sda/2022-0601notes.docx) meetings. In general, Council members signaled their support for the changes, given the many challenges that districts and schools continue to face as a result of the pandemic. At least one Council member encouraged the Department to maintain its regular accountability reporting practices and provide additional context and explanatory materials to stakeholders to use when interpreting the results.

**Future System Changes**

At the June meeting of the Board, members asked about the weighting of the achievement and growth indicators within the accountability system. As described in the attached summary document, the 2022 accountability results maintain a 3 to 1 ratio of achievement and growth. However, in response to comments from Board members regarding the weighting of these indicators, I intend to direct Department staff to conduct a study and present options for an alternative weighting of the achievement and growth indicators, which, if approved by the Board, would be implemented for the 2023 accountability determinations.

Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability, will be at the Board meeting on August 15 to answer your questions.

**Attachments:**

* Summary of the District and School Accountability System
* Summary of Public Comment Received
* Motion
1. 603 CMR 2.03(11): **Commissioner's authority to suspend the reporting of measures and annual performance determinations for districts and schools** The Commissioner may, for good cause arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, direct the Department to suspend the reporting of any or all of the reported measures and annual performance determinations, as described in 603 CMR 2.03 (2)–(3), for school year 2021-2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. 603 CMR 2.03(10) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)