*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

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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:** | September 16, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the September 20, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold its regular meeting on **Tuesday, September 20, 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**

Our business agenda leads off with the Board’s annual election of the vice-chair, followed by a presentation and discussion on the Department’s initiatives to help schools and districts support students’ mental health and wellness. The Board will discuss and vote on two regulatory amendments: a vote on adding a section to the special education regulations relating to early literacy screening for all students in kindergarten through third grade, and a vote on updating the regulations on the certificate of mastery/seal of biliteracy. Our business agenda concludes with a report on education budget matters.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Commissioner**

**Comments from the Secretary**

**Statements from the Public**

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the June 28, 2022 Regular Meeting and the June 30, 2022 and August 15, 2022 Special Meetings**

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Election of Board Vice-Chair – Discussion and Vote**

Under the Board’s by-laws, the September meeting is the annual meeting of the Board, at which the Board elects its vice-chair. Chair Craven will call for nominations from members and then conduct the election. The vice-chair presides over meetings when the chair is not available. Details on the process are under Tab 1.

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. In April and May, the Board heard from superintendents and from a team of students from the State Student Advisory Council about work they are doing to address social-emotional health and school climate. This month, staff from our Office of Student and Family Support, joined by representatives from two school districts, will present an overview of initiatives to help schools and districts build and expand comprehensive systems of support for students’ mental health and wellbeing. The Department’s Behavioral and Mental Health Specialist Chris Pond, Student and Family Support Assistant Director Kristen McKinnon, and Associate Commissioner Rachelle Engler Bennett, together with Holliston Public Schools Director of Social Emotional Learning and Equity Jariel Vergne and Chelsea Public Schools District Administrator for Social Work Brenda Pena, will present the overview and respond to your questions.

1. **Amendment to Special Education Regulations, 603 CMR 28.03, on Early Literacy Screening – Discussion and Vote**

In June the Board voted to solicit public comment on a proposed amendment to the special education regulations, presented by Secretary Peyser, concerning early literacy screening and intervention. I am recommending that the Board vote this month to adopt the core aspects of the draft amendment with modifications based on the public comments that the Department received. The enclosed memorandum provides details about the proposed regulation and includes a summary of the public comments and the Department’s responses. Department staff including Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston and Katherine Tarca, our Director of Literacy and Humanities, will join us for the discussion.

1. **Amendment to Regulations on Certificate of Mastery and Seal of Biliteracy, 603 CMR 31.00 – Discussion and Vote**

In April the Board voted to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to the regulations on the certificate of mastery/seal of biliteracy, to align them with proposed amendments to the competency determination (CD) regulations. The Board voted in August to amend the CD regulations, setting the CD standards for the classes of 2026 and beyond. This month I am recommending that the Board adopt amendments to the regulations on the certificate of mastery/ seal of biliteracy to align them with the new CD standards, streamline and simplify the regulations, and remove outdated references. The memorandum in your materials summarizes the public comments the Department received and explains the changes. Erin Hashimoto-Martell and Alexia Cribbs from the Center for Instructional Support, as well as Lucy Wall from our legal staff, will join us for the discussion.

1. **Education Budget Update**

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.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

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

1. **Charter School Authorizing Activities for 2022-2023, with Attachments**

Between now and June 2023, the Board will take a number of votes related to its statutory role as a charter school authorizer. Similar to prior years, the enclosed memorandum summarizes the statutory framework for charter schools and the Board’s responsibilities as the state’s sole charter school authorizer, provides a schedule of charter school items for the year, and includes a link to a charter school fact sheet.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on September 20.