**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

**of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street, Malden MA**

**December 20, 2022, 9:05 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.**

**1:15 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.**

**Members of the** **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:**

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

**Matthew Hills**, Vice-Chair, Newton

**Darlene Lombos,** Boston

**Farzana Mohamed,** Newton (via remote participation)

**Michael Moriarty,** Holyoke

**James Peyser,** Secretary of Education**,** Milton (via remote participation)

**Eric Plankey,** Westford, Student Member

**Paymon Rouhanifard,** Brookline

**Mary Ann Stewart,** Lexington

**Martin West,** Newton

**Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:**

**Tricia Canavan,** South Hadley

**Jeffrey C. Riley,** Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Chair Craven called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., and members introduced themselves. She stated that today’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting, like all open meetings of the Board, is being [livestreamed and recorded](https://livestream.com/accounts/22459134).

**Public Comment**

* **Gerry Mroz,** Melrose,addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Kamilla Souze,** sophomore, Revere High School, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Franklin Chen,** sophomore, Easton High School, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Monserrat Diaz,** sophomore, Brockton High School, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Riley Howard,** junior, Foxborough Regional Charter School, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Enobong Anako,** junior, Phillips Academy Andover, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Isha Hassan,** sophomore, Revere High School, Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council member, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Sashoy Bailey,** chemistry teacher, Discovery High School in Springfield, addressed the Board on Item 1: Gifted and Talented Education
* **Senator Nick Collins** addressed the Board on school safety measures
* **Max Page,** Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) President, addressed the Board on K-12 budget and legislative priorities

Chair Craven called for a brief break for Board members to gather for a photograph with the students who provided comments. The meeting resumed at 9:55 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven asked Vice-Chair Hills to provide a brief update on the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee. Vice-Chair Hills handed out his December 16 memorandum summarizing the committee’s discussions around the structure of the performance evaluation and goals for school year 2022-2023. He said the committee met twice in November, discussed the framework and process for evaluating the Commissioner, and decided to continue to use the four categories used in the past, weighting them as follows: Student Achievement 50 percent, and the three categories of Community, Management, and Board 50 percent combined. Vice-Chair Hills said the Commissioner has set meaningful, substantive goals and the committee looks forward to further discussion about targets and expectations in connection with the upcoming presentation by Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE or Department).

Chair Craven asked Mr. Moriarty, chair of the Pandemic Recovery and Literacy Committee, to update the Board. Mr. Moriarty said the committee held a meeting on December 19 and received a data overview from DESE on students’ literacy, pre- and post-pandemic and heard a presentation by Dr. Kymyona Burk, Senior Policy Fellow, Early Literacy Foundation for Excellence in Education. Mr. Moriarty said he expects the committee will discuss process at its next meeting and then focus on policy issues. He thanked committee members, Commissioner Riley and DESE staff, and Dr. Burk for their participation and support.

Chair Craven noted this is Secretary Peyser’s last regular meeting in his role as Secretary and Board member. She commended Secretary Peyser for his years of service on behalf of the students of the Commonwealth and thanked him for his friendship and guidance.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Peyser thanked Chair Craven. He reviewed some of the major accomplishments of the Board, the Department, and the Baker/Polito administration over the past eight years regarding elementary and secondary education, career vocational technical education, and early college. He said it is an impressive track record of achievement and he is confident this Board will continue to have a positive impact. Secretary Peyser said his successor, Patrick Tutwiler, will do a great job as Secretary and as a member of the Board. Secretary Peyser closed with thanks, saying that serving on this Board has been an honor and privilege.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Riley thanked Secretary Peyser for his service to the Commonwealth. The Commissioner provided an update on the Boston Public Schools (BPS) implementation of its Systemic Improvement Plan. He noted continuing concerns about school bus transportation, special education, and other matters and said he hopes the elected officials who said they would take personal responsibility for these matters will follow through. Commissioner Riley said on a positive note, Superintendent Skipper is now on the job, and he has confidence in her ability to address the issues. He said BPS is to deliver a safety audit report in January, and he expects EY Parthenon to issue a report in February about BPS data. Commissioner Riley answered Board members’ questions. On a question relating to contracting for school bus transportation, Chair Craven commented that procurements under Chapter 30B are in the purview of the Inspector General, not DESE.

The Commissioner said DESE is continuing to review data on vocational technical school admissions and he will have more to report later in 2023. Commissioner Riley commented that he was shocked that the MTA president stated to the Board today that the MTA would seek legislation allowing teachers to strike, adding that while he supports collective bargaining rights, the focus should be on students and their need to be in school. Noting DESE’s ongoing work with schools and community organizations to support recovery efforts after the pandemic, the Commissioner thanked Mr. Moriarty for chairing the Pandemic Recovery and Literacy Committee. He commended Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, who leads DESE’s Adult and Community Learning Services team, for their work on the new five-year contracts to deliver adult basic education around the Commonwealth. He concluded by thanking Mr. Moriarty and Ms. Mohamed for joining him on a recent visit to observe an early literacy program in Worcester.

**Approval of the Minutes of the November 15, 2022 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 Regular Meeting.**

The vote, by roll call, was unanimous.

**Gifted and Talented Education**

Commissioner Riley said in response to the Board’s request, he is reporting on DESE’s ongoing work to support gifted and talented students and has invited several program representatives to join for the presentation. He said DESE’s goal is to maximize the potential of each and every student, starting with equity in mind and expanding outward. The Commissioner said DESE will be hiring a dedicated staff person this spring to oversee this work, as part of our broader initiative to reimagine K-12 education.

The Commissioner introduced students of the Lawrence High School Theater program, who will be representing Massachusetts in a national competition in Florida. He said they remind us that students are gifted and talented in many ways. The Lawrence High School Theater students performed excerpts from “The Wiz,” to great appreciation from the Board and others in attendance.

After the performance, the Commissioner introduced Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson and Thomas Zorich, Director of DESE’s Center for Strategic Initiatives and liaison for the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC), who gave an overview of DESE’s current work to support gifted and talented education. Deputy Commissioner Robinson said equity is at the center of this work and DESE is exploring best practices across the U.S. Commissioner Riley reminded the Board that in 2018, the Legislature directed DESE to produce a report on advanced learners and said today’s presenters include the author of that report (issued in 2019), Dr. Dana Ansel, Chief Academic Officer at LearnLaunch. In addition to Dr. Ansel, presenters included Abbott Lawrence Academy (ALA) Principal Stacey Ciprich; Cambre Santos-Tavares, ALA alumna and current ALA staff member; Myah Salazar, ALA Class of 2024 Junior Class Vice President; Ciara Sem, ALA Class of 2024; and Eric Calvert and Susan Corwith from the Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University, who joined via Zoom. The ALA representatives described the ALA program, reviewed results, and responded to questions. Chair Craven commended Commissioner Riley for creating the ALA when he was superintendent/receiver in Lawrence and credited the district receivership for making it possible.

Dr. Ansel summarized points from her 2019 report, reviewing longitudinal data on academically advanced third graders and noting the excellence gap for low-income students. Mr. Zorich said the full report is on DESE’s website. Commissioner Riley added that DESE will be doing more analysis going forward. Chair Craven thanked Dr. Ansel for her presentation.

Mr. Rouhanifard left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Eric Calvert and Susan Corwith from the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University presented on the continuum of services for advanced learners and how the talent development framework centers equity. They noted the continuum of services for talent development aligns with the multi-tiered system of support and uses an evidence-based approach. The presenters addressed questions from Board members. At the conclusion of the Northwestern University presentation, Chair Craven thanked the panel and announced a recess.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:20 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

**Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools, 603 CMR 52.00**

Chair Craven explained this is a proposed amendment to 603 CMR 52.00, the regulations for Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools, for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. She said the Board will take a final vote in the spring of 2023, following the public comment period.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and G.L. c. 71, § 94, hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools, 603 CMR 52.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-0.

Chair Craven said she will be leaving early and will pass the gavel to Vice-Chair Hills. She said due to time constraints, the Board would defer the discussion of the Goal Setting Process for Accountability System and Student Opportunity Act and asked the Commissioner to schedule a special meeting on that topic after the holidays.

Chair Craven left the meeting at 1:25 p.m. Vice-Chair Hills chaired the rest of the meeting.

**Gifted and Talented Education, continued**

Mr. Zorich introduced Tyrone Mowatt, Managing Director, Ed Inquiry, who presented on exploring strategies to close the excellence gap. Mr. Zorich thanked Mr. Mowatt for his leadership and service on the GTAC, and thanked the current GTAC Chairs, Meena Bharath and Donna Astion, for their work.

Mr. Mowatt reviewed the objectives of the pilot project designed at the Commissioner’s request as part of DESE’s response to the 2019 *Policy and Practice Review on Gifted Education in Massachusetts.* Mr. Mowatt said the innovative pilot project, the Biggest Winner Math Challenge, was based on prior work in other states to to address the excellence gap.  He reviewed the phases of the program design and strategies around student engagement, deeper learning, teacher recruitment, and leadership development.

Ms. Mohamed left the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Mr. Mowatt described elements of the Biggest Winner Math Challenge program, which served about 500 students in Gateway Cities last summer. He responded to questions from Board members. Deputy Commissioner Robinson concluded the presentation, stating DESE will continue to review successful programs and practices, work with the Center for Talent Development, engage stakeholders including the GTAC, and map out a longer-term plan.

Dr. West left the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

**Receivership School Districts Update: Southbridge Public Schools**

Commissioner Riley introduced Southbridge Superintendent/Receiver Jeffrey Villar and Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston, who presented an update on Southbridge Public Schools (SPS) and answered questions. Superintendent Villar’s presentation reviewed ongoing investments in systems and structures to build the district’s capacity, work on climate and culture and strengthening curriculum in literacy/ELA and mathematics, and response to the pandemic and shifting needs. He noted some district outcomes and a few key challenges, including local investment and staff recruitment. In response to a question, Superintendent Villar said the district’s turnaround plan was recently renewed for three years and that his goal is to show lasting improvement on all indicators. Secretary Peyser commented that SPS students are better served today as a result of the state’s partnership. Board members thanked Superintendent Villar for his presentation and his service.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 2:50 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board