**Minutes of the Special Meeting**

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

**January 3, 2023, 1:35 p.m. – 2:56 p.m.**

**Via Remote Participation**

The January 3, 2023 special meeting was held via remote participation, per Chapters 22 and 107 of the Acts of 2022, to discuss one agenda item carried over from the regular meeting on December 20, 2022 due to time constraints.

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

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

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

**Tricia Canavan,** South Hadley

**Farzana Mohamed,** Newton

**Michael Moriarty,** Holyoke

**James Peyser,** Secretary of Education**,** Milton

**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:**

**Darlene Lombos,** Boston

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

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Chair Craven called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.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). She noted that only one discussion item is on the agenda, deferred from the December 20 meeting due to time constraints.

**Goal Setting Process for Accountability System and Student Opportunity Act**

Commissioner Riley introduced Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability and Associate Commissioner Erica Gonzales, to discuss the approach of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department or DESE) to setting ambitious, yet attainable district and school accountability targets for 2023 and beyond.

Mr. Curtin explained that the target setting process stems from two requirements. The first is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires states to establish state-level ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for all students and for each student group in the areas of academic achievement, graduation rates, and progress toward English language proficiency; targets for schools must be based on the long-term goals established for the state. The second stems from the state Student Opportunity Act (SOA): the Commissioner must establish statewide targets for addressing persistent disparities in achievement among student groups and each district must establish targets for addressing persistent disparities in achievement among student groups consistent with the targets established by DESE.

Mr. Curtin said DESE has set targets in the accountability system for years and the methodology has been posted on DESE’s website. Given the wide variance in achievement losses over the course of the pandemic, DESE is reassessing its target-setting methodology to set ambitious and attainable targets that reflect a path to recovery for each district, school, and student group and also move everyone forward.

Mr. Curtin said a path to recovery would provide each district/school/student group a "full

recovery target" reflecting their 2019 scaled scores and the amount of the decline between 2019 and

2022 will determine the group's "time to recovery" quartile. He added that groups in the bottom

quartiles (largest declines) will have a longer timeline to reach recovery than those with smaller

declines and annual targets will be calculated by dividing the difference between full recovery and 2022 scores by the number of years to reach full recovery as determined by the quartile in which each group falls.

Mr. Curtin described the path to move forward, explaining that districts, schools, and student groups are starting from different places in relation to 2019. Mr. Curtin noted that once a school or group recovers, it moves to the path forward and receives targets beyond their full recovery point focused on closing achievement gaps; all would be expected to make continuous improvement.

Chair Craven thanked Mr. Curtin for the presentation and invited comments and questions from Board members. Mr. Curtin responded to the questions. Ms. Canavan said she appreciates the work and care DESE has put into this and expressed concern the approach could solidify the effects of the pandemic; she asked if schools might need different strategies and if SOA plans could be a stronger lever for effective interventions. Dr. West said he agrees with the Commissioner that goals need to be both ambitious and attainable and advocated for high expectations and accelerated progress. Vice-Chair Hills agreed with Ms. Canavan and Dr. West and suggested that addressing achievement gaps should be in parallel with academic recovery. Mr. Plankey asked about support DESE is providing to districts. Mr. Curtin said the Commissioner will be reporting to the Board about DESE’s assistance efforts. Ms. Mohamed said she favors aspirational targets that convey high expectations, coupled with ongoing support to accelerate progress.

Mr. Curtin noted that the Board’s Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council reviewed the approach and believes the targets are ambitious. Mr. Moriarty commented that recovering to 2019 achievement levels does not seem ambitious enough. He asked what can be learned from the schools and districts that did not lose ground during the pandemic. Ms. Stewart asked about family engagement and student attendance as factors. Mr. Curtin responded, noting the adjustment last year on chronic absenteeism. Secretary Peyser said the ramp to recovery may make sense for the accountability system but would seem too long to a parent concerned about their child’s progress. He suggested considering separate targets for the accountability system and for individual student acceleration plans, especially around reading. Dr. West observed that all are interested in the broader questions about strategies to promote recovery.

Chair Craven asked Mr. Curtin to consider the comments and plan a further discussion at the January 24 Board meeting. Mr. Curtin said he appreciates the thoughtful feedback and he and the Commissioner will follow up with the Board, adding that DESE needs to notify districts soon about their targets.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 2:56 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