*****`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:**  | October 17, 2023 **REVISED October 20, 2023 to add new item 1**  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the October 24, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold its **regular meeting** on **Tuesday, October 24, 2023**, 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, 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**

This will be the last regular meeting of the Board to be held in our Malden office. Our business agenda leads off with an update and call to action on chronic absenteeism, followed by a presentation and discussion on civics education. I will present my 2023-2024 goals as Commissioner. The Board will have an initial discussion on education budget priorities for FY2025, to be continued at the November meeting. Department staff and our outside evaluator will present the third annual report on the pilot of alternative assessments for educator licensure.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Secretary**

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Chair Craven, Secretary Tutwiler, and I will update the Board on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the September 19, 2023 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Update on Chronic Absenteeism – Discussion**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently posted [districts’ and schools’ chronic absenteeism rates](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/attendance.aspx) for the 2022-23 school year. The Commonwealth is not immune from the struggles with chronic absenteeism that have affected schools throughout the country. This problem affects almost three quarters of the schools in Massachusetts, and the impact on students is significant. I believe we can effectively partner with districts, schools, families, and students to address this problem, and I am issuing a call to action. I look forward to sharing more information and discussing this subject with you on October 24.

1. **Civics Update – Presentation and Discussion**

The importance of high-quality, equitable civics education is widely recognized. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has been active in a range of initiatives to strengthen civics education for students across the Commonwealth. The memorandum in your materials provides an overview. At the meeting on October 24, DESE staff including Erin Hashimoto-Martell, Associate Commissioner of Instructional Support, Katherine Tarca, Director of Literacy and Humanities, and Reuben Henriques, History and Social Science Content Support Lead, joined by Dave Buchanan of the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition, will present on civics education in Massachusetts and answer your questions.

1. **Commissioner Riley’s Goals for 2023-2024 – Discussion**

I have outlined key goals that will guide my work, and the work of the Department, in 2023-2024. I look forward to discussing my goals with the Board.

1. **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY2025 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board’s Budget Committee – Initial Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell will update the Board on the latest information we have about federal and state funding for K-12 education in the Commonwealth. Board member Farzana Mohamed, who chairs the Board’s Budget Committee, will discuss the committee’s process and possible priorities and program initiatives that the Board may wish to propose for the FY2025 state budget. The discussion will continue in November.

1. **Educator Licensure: Progress Report on MTEL Pilot – Discussion**

This month we are presenting the third annual progress update on the Pilot of Alternative Assessments for Educator Licensure that the Board authorized in October 2020. Representatives from our evaluation partner, National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER), American Institutes for Research, will join Department staff to share the high-level findings in the report and answer questions.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

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

1. **Chronically Underperforming Schools: Quarter 1 Reports**

Your materials include the first FY2024 quarterly progress update to the Board on the chronically underperforming schools’ implementation of their school turnaround plans.

1. **Annual Reports from 2022-2023 Advisory Councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Enclosed are the 2022-2023 annual reports from the Board’s statutory advisory councils. The councils advise the Commissioner and Board on matters relating to K-12 education in the Commonwealth and offer programmatic recommendations. Each report summarizes the council’s work in the past year and presents the council’s recommendations on various issues. The reports and recommendations are those of the councils and not of the Department. We thank the council members for their time, efforts, and constructive feedback.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on October 24.