*****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:**  | November 15, 2023  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the November 21, 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, November 21, 2023**. The meeting will be held virtually and will be live-streamed and recorded. It will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m**. 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 a report and recommendation from the Board’s Budget Committee on priorities for the FY2025 state education budget, for discussion and vote. I will present proposed statewide measures of progress relating to my 2023-2024 goals and outline the process I will be undertaking to propose increasing the weight of chronic absenteeism in the district and school accountability system. We will have updates on early literacy and on the public adult education system. The final item on our business agenda is a presentation on the Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub.

**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 October 24, 2023 Regular Meeting and November 1, 2023 Special Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

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

The Board’s Budget Committee, chaired by Farzana Mohamed, will report at our meeting. Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will provide context about the FY2025 budget process. Based on the Budget Committee’s recommended priorities, the Board will discuss and vote on its FY2025 education budget proposal. Consistent with Mass. General Laws c. 69, § 1A, I will transmit the Board’s recommendations to the Secretary of Education, who “shall then prepare and submit a budget request on behalf of the department to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education, and the secretary of administration and finance.”

1. **Statewide Measures of Progress and Commissioner’s Goals** **– Discussion and Vote**

At the October meeting, I presented an outline of goals that will guide my work, and the work of the Department, in 2023-2024. Based on comments that Board members offered, I am now proposing five statewide measures of progress that are aligned to our [Educational Vision](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2023/2023-05/item7.1-educational-vision.pdf) and strategic objectives. These proposed measures were developed with the Board’s input and are supported by the initiatives and strategies outlined in my 2023-2024 goals document.

1. **Chronic Absenteeism and Accountability Reporting – Discussion**

As we discussed last month, [recent attendance data](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2024/2023-10/item1-powerpoint.pptx) shows that while student attendance has improved since the pandemic’s peak, chronic absenteeism rates are well above pre-pandemic rates across all grade spans. This month I will update the Board on the process I will undertake to propose increasing the weight of chronic absenteeism in the district and school accountability system, to highlight the importance and urgency of this issue.  Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability, will explain the process and timeline for bringing forth a recommendation to the Board.

1. **Early Literacy Update – Discussion**

Carrying forward our continuing focus on early literacy, we will update the Board about curricular materials in use across the Commonwealth for early literacy instruction, as well as the funding DESE is providing to assist schools and districts in adopting and/or implementing high-quality curricular materials. Katherine Tarca, our Director of Literacy and Humanities, will present the report. She will be joined by other DESE staff as well as district representatives who will describe their experiences with high-quality literacy instructional materials.

1. **Public Adult Education System Update – Discussion**

DESE’s Office of Adult and Community Learning Services will provide an overview of the newly branded Public Adult Education System of Massachusetts, describe initiatives to promote equitable access and focus on student outcomes, and preview videos highlighting students’ experience in adult education. Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, Adult Education State Director, will present the overview and respond to your questions.

1. **Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub – Presentation and Discussion**

I will update the Board on DESE’s work to build on our existing longitudinal data system to strengthen evidence-based policy making through the [Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub](https://mass.gov/e2c) (E2C Hub). The E2C Hub recently launched a website to improve access to data for policymakers, educators, researchers, and students and families. At our meeting, Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability, and Sam Ribnick, E2C Hub Executive Director, will present an overview of the project and demonstrate some of the new features of the E2C Hub.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**7. 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. **Report on Scheduling of Comprehensive District Reviews**

The enclosed memorandum explains how DESE is addressing the provisions of [M.G.L. c. 15, § 55A](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section55A), regarding the scheduling of major reviews to reduce administrative burdens on schools and districts. The Board voted in December 2010 to delegate this scheduling task to the Commissioner, and I am submitting this report for FY2024 comprehensive district reviews in accordance with that vote.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on November 21.