# **MEMORANDUM**

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | May 17, 2024  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the May 21, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold its **regular meeting** on **Tuesday, May 21, 2024**. The meeting will be held in person at the office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149. It will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m**. Helene Bettencourt will assist with all arrangements; please email or call her if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

Our business agenda leads off with an update from Chair Craven on the Commissioner search process. The second item is an update on the Boston Public Schools. Following that presentation and discussion, Vice Chair Hills will present a recommendation from the Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation Committee. We will have reports on work underway at DESE on the Communication and Literacy Skills MTEL, district standards and indicators, and an update on the MCAS contract. Two charter school items are on the agenda for discussion and vote: an amendment request for Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School, and the recommendation to place Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy Charter Public School on probation. The final item for discussion on our business agenda is the Senate Ways and Means Committee’s education budget proposal for FY25.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Secretary**

* Teacher Appreciation Week
* End-of-school-year Celebrations

**Comments from the Acting Commissioner**

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

* Receiverships (Lawrence, Southbridge, Holyoke)
* Felix Commonwealth Virtual School
* Brockton
* Chronic Absenteeism Data
* ESSA Plan
* School Nutrition
* Amazing Educators Event

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the April 30, 2024 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Update on Commissioner Search Process – Discussion**

Chair Craven will update the Board on the search process.

1. **Update on Boston Public Schools – Discussion**

At our meeting on May 21, the Chair of the Boston School Committee, Jeri Robinson, and Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Mary Skipper will join DESE senior leaders to present an update on the district’s progress on its Systemic Improvement Plan. The City and BPS agreed to the plan in June 2022; DESE accepted the plan and committed to providing targeted financial support and other technical assistance to the district. The plan is in effect through June 30, 2025. The enclosed memorandum provides information from DESE regarding areas of progress and areas for improvement organized by each key area of the Systemic Improvement Plan.

1. **Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation Committee: Summary Goals – Discussion and Vote**

Chair Craven will ask Vice Chair Hills, who chairs the Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation Committee, to report on the committee’s May 14, 2024 meeting and present the committee’s recommendations for a discussion and vote by the Board.

1. **Update on DESE’s** [**Educational Vision**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/)

This month, we will update the Board on three aspects of DESE’s work advancing our Educational Vision.

* 1. **Communication and Literacy Skills MTEL – Discussion**

We will report on the work DESE has underway to develop a Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Communication and Literacy Skills Framework that will guide future revisions to the Communication and Literacy Skills Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL). The enclosed memorandum provides details about this important new initiative to continue to foster a diverse and effective educator workforce. Claire Abbott, Director, Office of Educator Effectiveness, Liz Losee, Director, Educator Effectiveness Policy, Claire Smithney, Senior Educator Assessment and Policy Coordinator, and Malika Ali, Chief Innovation Officer, Throughline Learning will provide an update and be available to answer your questions.

* 1. **Updates to the District Standards and Indicators – Discussion**

The District Standards and Indicators serve as the framework for all district reviews conducted by DESE’s Office of District Reviews and Monitoring. At our meeting, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability Rob Curtin, Associate Commissioner of Data and Accountability Erica Gonzales, and Director of District and School Accountability Robbie Havdala will discuss the process for revising the District Standards and Indicators, gather your feedback, and respond to your questions.

* 1. **Update on MCAS Contract – Discussion**

We will update the Board on the contract for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). This contract covers all aspects of the statewide MCAS tests, including items and test development, test production and administration, scoring, and reporting. Rob Curtin will join us for the discussion.

1. **Charter Schools: Amendment Request for Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School – Discussion and Vote**

I am recommending that the Board approve an amendment requested by a Cambridge charter school, Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School, to become a regional charter school serving the districts of Cambridge and Somerville. The enclosed memorandum provides details. Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson and Alison Bagg, Director of DESE’s Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, will join us for the discussion of this item and the next charter school item.

1. **Charter Schools: Recommendation to Place Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy Charter Public School on Probation – Discussion and Vote**

As is explained in detail in the enclosed memorandum, I am recommending that the Board place the Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy Charter Public School on probation with specific conditions outlined. Placing the school on probation signals DESE’s grave concerns regarding the school’s viability and ability to continue operating. I will review and report to the Board on the school’s success or lack of success in meeting the terms of probation.

1. **Education Budget Update: FY25 Senate Ways and Means Budget Proposal – Discussion**

On May 7, the Senate Ways and Means Committee released its FY25 budget proposal. Your materials include information about the items relating to elementary and secondary education in the Senate Ways and Means budget. At our May 21 meeting, Senior Associate Commissioner/Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell will review the proposals and next steps in the state budget process.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **Proposed Schedule for Regular Board Meetings through June 2025**

Enclosed for your review is a list of proposed Board meeting dates for the upcoming school year. The Board typically votes on the schedule at the June meeting.

1. **Revision of Massachusetts 2017 ESSA Plan**

We are preparing to file an updated state plan with the U.S. Department of Education as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The enclosed memorandum provides background information, explains the process, and summarizes the revisions to the 2017 Massachusetts ESSA state plan.

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