**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

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

**135 Santilli Highway**

**Everett, Massachusetts 02149**  
**Tuesday, April 29, 2025, 9:10 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.**

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

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

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

**Ioannis Asikis,** Brookline, Student Member

**Ericka Fisher,** Worcester

**Christina Grant**, Cambridge

**Farzana Mohamed,** Newton, *participated remotely*

**Michael Moriarty,** Holyoke

**Dálida Rocha,** Worcester

**Mary Ann Stewart,** Lexington

**Patrick Tutwiler**, Secretary of Education, Andover

**Martin West,** Newton

**Patrick Tutwiler,** Interim Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Chair Craven called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., and members introduced themselves. Chair Craven announced that today’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting, like all open meetings of the Board, is being livestreamed and recorded.

**Statements from the Public**

* **Tim Murray, President and CEO - Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce**, addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Gerry Mroz**, addressed the Board on the Commissioner Search
* **Kahris Mclaughlin**, addressed the Board on the Commissioner Search
* **Sky Kochenour, Legal Director - Center for Law and Education**, addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Tracy Stewart, Member, Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School Committee**, addressed the Board on the Proposed Amendments to Regional School District Regulations 603 CMR 41.00
* **Christopher Prehl, Member, Nashoba Valley Technical School District School Committee,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Brenda Turner, Parent,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Tim D. Norris, Attorney, Norris, Murray & Peloquin, LLC,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent, Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Kevin McCaskill, Principal, Brockton High School,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions
* **Max Castellon, Student,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven thanked the public comment presenters. Chair Craven discussed the public comment responses related to the CTE regulations and stated that the Board would have a chance to review the public comment at the May 12th special meeting of the Board dedicated to this topic.

**Comments from the Secretary/Interim Commissioner**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler began by providing an update on the state’s response to recent federal actions including the abrupt termination of COVID relief payments, the requirement to certify compliance with antidiscrimination obligations, and other harmful federal funding cuts and policy changes.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner provided an update on the recent Commissioner search. He stated that he accepts the Board’s recommendation of Pedro Martinez and that the next step in the process is the negotiation of a formal contract and starting date.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner also provided an update on the Statewide Graduation Council noting that the council continues to meet and will be hosting regional listening sessions around the state in the coming weeks.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner provided an update on Holyoke Public Schools. He stated that Holyoke’s transition out of state receivership is still anticipated for July 1, 2025. He explained that the receivership statute allows the Commissioner to determine exit assurances and that exit assurances have been developed in consultation with district and union leadership, Mayor Joshua Garcia, and the Holyoke School Committee.

Lastly, Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler highlighted upcoming National Teacher Appreciation Week. He shared his own appreciation for educators across the Commonwealth and shared a DESE initiative where current high school seniors who are pursuing careers in education attend “Future Teacher Signing Days.”

Chair Craven called for a motion and vote to approve meeting minutes from the March 25, 2025 regular meeting.

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

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes**  **of the March 25,** **2025 regular meeting****.**

The vote, by roll call, was unanimous.

**Educational Vision and Advancing Student Learning Update**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the two agenda items underneath the Education Vision and their alignment to the Strategic Objectives.

**Milken Educator Award – Discussion**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced Milken Award Winner Jillian Levreault and invited her to present to the Board. Mrs. Levreault, a sixth-grade science teacher at Southbridge Middle School, presented to the Board. Interim Commissioner Tutwiler then publicly recognized Dr. Jeffrey Villar, who has been receiver for Southbridge Public Schools since 2018 and who will end his tenure in the district on April 30. Dr. Villar expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve in that role. The Board then gathered to take a photo with Mrs. Levreault.

**Science/OpenSciEd – Discussion**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced Nicole Scola, Assistant Director of Science and Technology/Engineering; Casandra Gonzalez, Science and Technology/Engineering Content Specialist; and Kim Laliberte, Director of Science for Fall River, to present an overview of OpenSciEd to the Board.

Ms. Scola shared that OpenSciEd is a K-12 high-quality national science curriculum that is a researched-based, free open-source educational resource (OER), and includes authentic, real-world situations and problems. In the curriculum, students are able to ask questions, conduct investigations, analyze data, and design solutions to unpack and address the focal issue. Ms. Scola presented on the implementation of OpenSciEd in Massachusetts to date that includes:

* Over 250 K-12 educators who piloted, attended professional development, and provided feedback on the materials to support alignment to the MA Curriculum Frameworks
* Over 15,000 K-12 students who provided feedback on the materials
* Over 90 districts that have adopted OpenSciEd

Ms. Laliberte then shared Fall River’s experience in implementing OpenSciEd including their timeline of adoption and the impact they have seen thus far. The presenters then responded to questions and comments from Board members.

**Massachusetts K12 Artificial Intelligence Task Force Recommendations – Discussion**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the topic of Artificial Intelligence in K12 Schools and invited Jackie Gantzer, Director of School Support and EdTech, A.J. Coté, Assistant Director of EdTech, Paula Moore, Digital Literacy & Computer Science Support Lead, and Greg Kulowiec, a contracted AI leader to the table to present on the AI Task Force recommendations.

Ms. Gantzer reviewed early approaches to AI in Massachusetts schools, the launch of the K12 task force, and the charge of the task force to provide recommendations for ways the state can support schools and districts as they address the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence. Ms. Gantzer then described the recommendations from the task force that include:

* Resource Creation and Curation
  + Develop a set of materials for varied stakeholder groups (students, educators, caregivers, etc.) that outlines foundational understandings of AI.
  + Curate and maintain a repository of recommended AI tools.
  + Explore options for a secure, enterprise-level AI tool for K–12 use.
* Professional Development
  + Offer differentiated, no-cost training opportunities for educators and administrators.
  + Provide turnkey training materials on student data privacy.
* Policy Supports
  + Develop sample policies and guidelines for district use.
  + Integrate AI literacy into curriculum frameworks.
  + Update educator preparation programs to include emerging technologies and ethical considerations.

Ms. Gantzer and the presenters then responded to questions and comments from Board members.

**Proposed Amendments to Regional School District Regulations 603 CMR 41.00 – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler invited John J. Sullivan, Associate Commissioner for District and School Finance, Lucy Wall DESE Legal Counsel, and Michelle Griffin, Regional Governance Coordinator, to the table to present on the proposed amendments to the Regional School District (RSD) regulations.

Ms. Griffin reviewed the Regional School District (RSD) law and regulations and gave an overview of the existing RSDs in Massachusetts. She then presented the proposed changes to RSD regulations that include:

* Streamlining the approval of RSD agreements and amendments to RSD agreements,
* Clarifying provisions surrounding the creation and approval of RSD budgets,
* Clarifying provisions related to Commissioner Fiscal Oversight, when required by RSD law,
* Addition of new provisions for waiver and severability, and
* Technical Updates.

The presenters then responded to questions and comments from Board members. The Board engaged in a discussion around the process for soliciting public comment, and Board members agreed that public comment should be extended until June 28, 2025.

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

**VOTED:**  **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with  M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment until June 28, 2025 on the proposed amendments to 603 CMR 41.00, the regulations for Regional School Districts, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote, by roll call, was unanimous.

**Education Budget Update – Discussion**

Interim Commissioner Tutwiler highlighted components of the FY26 House Ways and Means Budget and then introduced Bill Bell, Chief Financial Officer, to provide further details on the FY26 budget. Mr. Bell discussed the state House Ways and Means budget proposal and provided updates on the federal budget. Mr. Bill then responded to comments and questions from Board members.

At approximately 12:15pm, Member West left the meeting.

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

**VOTED:**  **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns the meeting at 12:40 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.