**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

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

**Methuen High School**

**1 Ranger Road, Methuen, MA 01844**
**Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 9:15 a.m. – 12:34 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, *participated remotely*

**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 9:15 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.

Chair Craven introduced Methuen High School students from the Junior ROTC program who presented the colors and another student who performed the National Anthem to begin the meeting.

**Statements from the Public**

* **Senator John J. Cronin,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Jacqueline Monterroso, Director of Policy and Advocacy – Latinos for Education**, addressed the Board on Educator Licensure regulations
* **Traci Griffin, Director, Racial Justice Program – American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts**, addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Aaron Polansky, Superintendent, Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical School, and Ian Keefe, Attorney,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Barbara Fields, Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts**, addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Amanda Fernandez, Latinos for Education,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Scott Keeler, Nashoba Valley Technical High School,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Charlie Ellis, Chair, Nashoba Valley Technical High School,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Derik Roshon, Teacher, Nashoba Valley Technical High School,** addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations
* **Mary Tamer, Mass Potential**, addressed the Board on Competency Determination regulations
* **Karen Minster, Director of Admissions, Bristol County Agricultural High School**, addressed the Board on Career Technical Education (CTE) regulations

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven thanked the public comment presenters and reminded Board members that they had received the proposed meeting schedule for next year.

**Comments from the Secretary/Interim Commissioner**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler began by thanking Superintendent Kwong, Principal Curet, Lieutenant Colonel O’Flaherty, Media/Technology Director Derrik Kane, and the entire team at Methuen High School for their role in hosting the Board meeting at Methuen High School.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler highlighted events he attended during Teacher Appreciation Week, which occurred earlier in May. He highlighted a visit to Nipmuc Regional High School in Upton, attendance at the STEM Summit at Gillette Stadium, and participation in the annual “aMAzing Educators” event at the Devens Common Center.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler shared an update related to the Commissioner search. He stated that Pedro Martinez will begin his service as Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education on July 1, 2025.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler provided an update on the Statewide Graduation Council, noting that the council had their monthly meeting on May 19 and will continue to hold regional listening sessions to gather input on the work. He encouraged the public to attend the remaining upcoming sessions in May and June.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler announced that DESE recently launched the third annual Catalog of Aligned Supports.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler stated that DESE recently released student attendance data for the 24-25 school year. He stated that though the data shows some improvement, the rates remain higher than pre-pandemic chronic absenteeism rates. He urged districts to use the student attendance data to continue implementing strategies to improve chronic absenteeism rates.

Lastly, Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reminded the Board that at the June 24 meeting, the Board will vote to adopt permanent regulations for Time-Out Practices.

**Welcome from Student Board Member and Methuen Public Schools**

Member Asikis introduced the panel of representatives from Methuen to welcome the Board to Methuen High School. Superintendent Kwong, Principal Curet, Tayyab Afzal, a senior at Methuen High School, and Sandra Themistocle, an adult education student at Methuen, and a parent of a Methuen Public School student, welcomed Board members to Methuen High School.

**Career Technical Education: Amendments to Regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.00 (Recruitment and Admissions) – Discussion and Vote**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the agenda item and noted that CTE schools and programs open doors to real-world skills and meaningful careers. He invited the Board to send a powerful message to make sure those doors are open to all. He then welcomed DESE colleagues Liz Bennett, Associate Commissioner of College, Career, and Technical Education, and Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability to the table.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed the proposed changes to the regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.00, that were presented to the Board in March. Those changes included modernizing language, strengthening CTE access to sending middle schools, and the required implementation of a non-weighted or weighted lottery when there are more applicants than seats.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed the weighted lottery proposal from March in more detail stating that when there are more applicants than seats, schools must run a lottery. That lottery may include student interest as a required part of a completed application, and student attendance and discipline may be used as additional weights in the lottery. Schools maintain local control in determining which combination of criteria to use, including opting to use none of the criteria and running a non-weighted lottery. In the March version of the weighted lottery, students could earn three opportunities in the lottery: one for a completed application that may include student interest as a required component, one for attendance, and one for discipline.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed a summary of the public comment received in response to the proposed amendments. He stated that during the public comment period, DESE received a total of 1,295 comments via email and mail, and 782 comments via an online survey. He thanked Liz Bennett, her team, and other DESE staff for the efforts they put into reviewing and compiling the public comment entries.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed a summary of public comment received on the weighted lottery overall. He reviewed a summary of the public comment received on thestudent interest component of the weighted lottery. He stated that, based on the public comment received, DESE recommended a change to the student interest section of the regulations. DESE is recommending a distinction between student awareness and student interest. He stated that student awareness may be required as a component of a completed application when a lottery is used and student interest may be used as an additional weight in the lottery. He stated that student awareness activities in the proposed regulations include attendance at an open house or virtual or in person information session, participation in a tour, completion of a video module, or other measure approved by the Department. He stated that student interest activities in the proposed regulations include a non-evaluative interview, an audio/video presentation, a personal essay, a letter of recommendation, or other measure approved by the Department. Lastly, on student interest, he stated that the updated regulation proposal reduces the type and amount of required information sessions that CTE schools must implement in order to require awareness as a part of the application.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed a summary of public comment received on thestudent attendance section of the weighted lottery. He stated that, based on the public comment received, DESE recommended a change to the student attendance section that adds language to make it clear that the attendance weight may not include data before a student's seventh grade year.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler reviewed a summary of public comment received on thestudent disciplinesection of the weighted lottery. He stated that, based on the public comment received, DESE recommended a change to the student discipline section that removes the consideration of 10 days of suspension under G.L. c. 71, s37H3/4 and adds language to make it clear that the discipline weight may not include data before a student's seventh grade year.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler summarized the changes to the weighted lottery made in response to public comment and stated that in the updated May version of the weighted lottery, when there are more applicants than seats; schools must run a lottery. That lottery may include student awareness as a required part of the completed application. Student interest, attendance, and discipline may be used as additional weights in the lottery. Schools still maintain local control to determine which combination of criteria to use, including opting to use none of the criteria and running a non-weighted lottery. In the May version of the weighted lottery, students can earn four opportunities in the lottery: one for a completed application that may include student awareness as a required component, one for student interest, one for attendance, and one for discipline.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler highlighted one additional change made in response to public comment that is to require all districts to sign an annual attestation that the Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy is implemented. Lastly, Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler described a list of steps DESE has taken, and will take, to respond to public comment on a non-regulatory level. Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler encouraged the Board to adopt the regulations.

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler, Ms. Bennett, and Mr. Curtin responded to questions and comments from Board members.

**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 and 1F, and M.G.L. c. 74, §2, and having solicited public**  **comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter**  **30A, § 3, hereby adopts the Vocational Technical Education regulations, 603**  **CMR 4.00, as presented by the Interim Commissioner.**

**The vote, by roll call, was 8-2-1.**

At 11:25 a.m., Chair Craven called for a brief recess.

At 11:25 a.m., Member Moriarty left the meeting.

**Competency Determination: Amendments to Regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00 (Addressing Changes in Statute) – Discussion and Vote**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the agenda item and welcomed DESE colleague Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability to the table. He thanked Mr. Curtin and his team for the efforts to summarize the public comment received. He stated that based on the public comment received, he is recommending two additional changes to the regulations.

Mr. Curtin began the presentation by stating that the proposed regulations are related to the Competency Determination (CD) and are not a broader set of statewide graduation requirements. He reminded the Board that the current statutory language for CD only covers through grade 10 and that the proposed regulations are meant to serve as a bridge to a longer-term solution from the Statewide Graduation Council and Legislature.

Mr. Curtin reviewed the proposed changes to the regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00, that were presented to the Board in February. Proposed changes at that time included removing obsolete language, defining terms, specifying minimum requirements to earn the CD, adding United States history beginning with the class of 2027, offering a narrow option for students in exceptional circumstances to earn the CD through the MCAS, requiring that districts adopt a CD policy, and allowing for DESE to audit the quality of the CD policies.

Mr. Curtin reviewed a summary of the public comment received in response to the proposed amendments. He stated that during the public comment period, DESE received a total of 30 comments via email and mail, and 146 comments via an online survey.

Mr. Curtin stated that based on the public comment received, DESE is recommending two additional changes. First, to address that some courses may cover required materials in a shorter or longer period than “one year”, DESE has clarified that students must satisfactorily complete coursework in “the equivalent of one year” of the required course. Second, he stated that the regulations currently include a section on the rights of students with disabilities and, in response to public comment received, DESE has added parallel language for English learners.

Mr. Curtin then discussed the additional question included in the solicitation of public comment on the inclusion of an alternate pathway using MCAS. He stated that the majority of respondents were against the inclusion of an alternate pathway and/or using MCAS as a part of the CD. Mr. Curtin stated again that individual districts are allowed to use a qualifying score on the MCAS as a local graduation requirement and that the Statewide Graduation Council will consider the use of assessments as part of its recommendations. Lastly, Mr. Curtin reviewed potential non-regulatory responses to the public comment received. Mr. Curtin then responded to comments and questions from Board members.

**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 and 1D; St. 2003, c.140, §119, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the MCAS and Competency Determination regulations, 603 CMR 30.00, as presented by the Interim Commissioner.**

**The vote, by roll call, was 8-1-1.**

Chair Craven called for a motion and vote to approve meeting minutes from the April 17 special meeting, the April 22 special meeting, and the April 29 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 April 17, 2025 special meeting, the April 22, 2025 special meeting, and the April 29, 2025 regular meeting.**

**The vote, by roll call, was unanimous.**

**Educator Licensure: Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00 (MTEL Alternatives and Other Updates) – Discussion and Vote**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the agenda item and welcomed DESE colleagues Claire Abbott, Director of Educator Effectiveness, Allison Balter, Director of the Office of Language Acquisitions, Brian Devine, Director of Licensure, Liz Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy, and Lucy Wall, Legal Counsel. Mr. Tutwiler thanked the team for their efforts in summarizing the public comment received. He stated that based on the public comment received, he is recommending one additional change to the regulations.

Ms. Abbott reviewed the proposed changes to the regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, that were presented to the Board in February. Proposed changes at that time included the permanent authorization of alternative licensure assessments, a new media arts endorsement, a new name and level for the comprehensive health license, flexibility to allow for the bilingual education endorsement to serve as an alternative to the sheltered English immersion endorsement, increased flexibility for the “12-credit” option and general provisions around the emergency license and removal of outdated language.

Ms. Losee reviewed a summary of the public comment received in response to the proposed amendments. She stated that during the public comment period, DESE received a total of nine comments via email and mail, and 89 comments via an online survey. She stated that the comments received were mostly supportive of the proposed revisions. Ms. Losee stated that in response to public comment around the media arts endorsement, DESE is proposing to expand the list of vocation/career technical license options. DESE staff responded to questions and comments from Board members.

**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; c. 69, §§ 1J and 1K; c. 12, § 3; c. 71, § 38G, as amended by St. 2022, c. 154, § 10; c. 71, 38G ½; c. 71A, § 10; c. 76, § 19, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Interim Commissioner.**

**The vote, by roll call, was 9-0-1.**

**Education Budget Update**

Secretary/Interim Commissioner Tutwiler introduced the agenda item and invited Bill Bell, Chief Financial Officer, to the table to provide an update on the budget. Mr. Bell updated the Board on both state and federal financial resources for the K-12 education sector. He stated that the Senate is currently engaged in debate on the Senate Ways and Means budget that was released in early May. He provided a summary of the Senate Ways and Means budget. Mr. Bell updated Board members on the receipt of federal entitlement awards.

Chair Craven thanked the Methuen team again for hosting the Board meeting and congratulated Member Asikis on his recent graduation.

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

**VOTED:**  **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns the meeting at 12:34 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

**The vote was unanimous.**