# **MEMORANDUM**

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  |
| **From:**  | Pedro Martinez, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | September 23, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Report on Commissioner Approval of Education Collaborative Amendments  |

At its meeting on February 26, 2013, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) voted to authorize the commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on its behalf in approving education collaborative agreements and any subsequent amendments to such agreements; provided that the commissioner shall report to the Board periodically on all collaborative agreements, including any subsequent amendments, that have been so approved.

This memorandum provides background information about education collaboratives, an overview of the process for amending collaborative agreements, and a summary of amendments that were approved during the 2024-25 school year.

## **Background**

Education collaboratives have operated in Massachusetts for over 50 years and there are currently 24 in the Commonwealth. Formed through an agreement among two or more school committees and/or charter school boards under [General Laws c. 40, § 4E](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40/Section4E), education collaboratives provide programming that supplements and strengthens the programs and services offered by school districts and charter schools. Information about Massachusetts education collaboratives is on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE’s) website at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edcollaboratives/> as are the Board regulations on education collaboratives at [603 CMR 50.00](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr50.html).

All education collaborative agreements and amendments must be approved by the relevant school committees and/or charter school boards as well as the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education through the commissioner, as stated above. Once approved, the school committees and/or charter school boards are recognized as members of the collaborative.

The written agreement forms the basis of the education collaborative setting forth:

* the mission, purpose and focus of the collaborative;
* the programs or services to be offered by the collaborative;
* the financial terms and conditions of membership of the education collaborative, including a limit on the amount of cumulative surplus revenue that may be held by the collaborative at the end of a fiscal year;
* the procedure for the preparation and adoption of an annual budget;
* the method of termination of the education collaborative and of the withdrawal of member school committees and charter school boards;
* the procedure for admitting new members and for amending the collaborative agreement;
* the powers and duties of the board of directors of the education collaborative to operate and manage the education collaborative; and
* any other matter not incompatible with law which the member school committees and charter school boards consider advisable.

## **Overview of the Amendment Process**

From time to time, collaborative agreements may need revision due to a proposed change in district membership or collaborative governance procedures as outlined in the collaborative agreement, or to ensure that the agreement is consistent with current legal requirements or practices.

DESE staff manages the annual review process for collaborative agreements or amendments to collaborative agreements. The [Guidance for Amending a Collaborative Agreement](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edcollaboratives/governance-guidance/amending-agreement-guidance.docx) on DESE’s website provides for the orderly and transparent approval process. All proposed amendments are submitted to DESE and are reviewed for compliance with regulations and guidance. Once the proposed amendment is finalized, the collaborative board votes its approval of the request, obtains approval from member school committees, and submits the final proposed amendment to DESE for the commissioner’s approval.

A collaborative that is proposing to add or withdraw a member district must comply with the following timeline:

A school committee or charter school board may be admitted to, or an existing member district may withdraw from an education collaborative as of July 1st of any fiscal year, provided that all **requisite approvals** for such admission or withdrawal, including the commissioner’s or BESE’s approval, shall be obtained no later than the preceding April 30th (603 CMR 50.03(3)).

## **Summary of Approved Amendments**

In 2025, and in accordance with the review process outlined above, the commissioner approved amendments to four collaborative agreements. This memo informs the Board about these approvals that became effective on July 1, 2025.

| **Name** | **Original Agreement** | **Last Amended** | **Proposed Changes** | **Approval Date** | **Effective Date** |
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| **Cape Cod Collaborative**  | 1975 | 2016 | * Added Plymouth as a member district.
* Updated language to be consistent with statutory changes since the last approval.
 | 4/15/25 | 7/1/25 |

**Membership:** Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical School District, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District, Eastham, Falmouth, Mashpee, Martha’s Vineyard Regional School District, Monomoy Regional School District, Nantucket, Nauset Regional School District, Orleans, Plymouth, Provincetown, Sandwich, Truro, Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School District, Wareham, and Wellfleet.

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| **Central Area Programs and Services Education Collaborative (CAPS)** | 1991 | 2024 | * Added Wachusett Regional as a member district
* Expanded the mission to include programming and services for adults with developmental disabilities who are over the age of 22.
 | 4/29/25 | 7/1/25 |

**Membership:** Ashburnham/Westminster Regional, Ayer-Shirley Regional, Athol/Royalston Regional, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, R.C. Mahar Regional, Narragansett Regional, Orange, Petersham, Quabbin Regional, Wachusett Regional, and Winchendon.

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| **The Education Cooperative (TEC)** | 1979 | 2020 | * Added King Philip Regional and Sharon as member districts.
* Updated the timeline for the required notice of withdrawal by member districts.
 | 3/14/25 | 7/1/25 |

**Membership:** Canton, Dedham, Dover, Dover/Sherborn, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, King Philip Regional, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norwood, Sharon, Sherborn, Walpole, Wayland, and Westwood

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| **Collaborative for Regional Educational Services and Training (CREST)** | 1998 | 2015 | * Updated language to be consistent with statutory changes. Removed the limitation requiring non-member district tuition to be set at not more than 20 percent of member district tuition.
 | 6/30/25 | 7/1/25 |

**Membership:** Amesbury, Andover, Boxford, Dracut, Georgetown, Greater Lawrence Tech, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lowell, Masconomet Regional, Methuen, Middleton, Newburyport, North Andover, Pentucket Regional, Topsfield, and Triton Regional.

If you have any questions regarding this matter or require additional information, please contact Lauren Secatore, Chief of Staff, at Lauren.Secatore@mass.gov, or me.