Minutes of the Regular Meeting

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

**March 22, 2011**

**8:35 a.m. – 1:20 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**Michael D'Ortenzio Jr.**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Wellesley

**Beverly Holmes**, Springfield

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**James McDermott**, Eastham

**Paul Reville**, Secretary of Education, Worcester

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Harneen Chernow**, Vice Chair, Jamaica Plain

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Banta said she had the pleasure of attending President Obama's March 8, 2011 visit to TechBoston Academy in Dorchester. The chair said the Board had a special meeting last night on college and career readiness. Chair Banta said the Board heard excellent presentations from Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus and Keith Westrich from the Office of College & Career Readiness at the Department and Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland and Deputy Commissioner Aundrea Kelley.

Chair Banta asked Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. to report on his recent trip to Washington, D.C. for a national youth summit sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Chair Banta asked the following members to provide an update on the work of three Board committees: Dr. McDermott on the Cross-Board Committee (members: Dr. McDermott, Dr. Mohler-Faria, and Chair Banta, with Commissioner Chester); Beverly Holmes on the Committee on the Annual Performance Evaluation of the Commissioner (members: Ms. Holmes, Vice Chair Chernow, Mr. Chertavian, and Chair Banta); and Jeff Howard on the Proficiency Gap Committee (members: Vice Chair Chernow, Dr. Howard, Dr. Calderón-Rosado).

Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado arrived at 8:40 a.m.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester updated the Board on the Department's activities around family and community engagement. The commissioner said he attended a recent White House conference on bullying and a Worcester event on the award of Innovation School planning grants. The commissioner also said the Department has been in touch with legislative leadership about the Board’s priorities for the FY12 budget.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Reville updated the Board on the FY12 budget, the announcement of Innovation School planning grants, and the work of the Cross-Board Committee. The secretary said he visited a number of schools recently and delivered a message around instructional improvement and building a healthy platform to support student achievement. Secretary Reville said he participated in a meeting with Charles Fadel from Cisco Systems around reinventing the curriculum for the 21st century international economy. The secretary also updated the Board on dropout prevention efforts.

**Public Comment**

* Tom Fortmann addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Will Poff-Webster from the Boston Student Advisory Council addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Don Baldini, a board member of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Amanda Green from the Federation for Children with Special Needs addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Jason Williams, executive director of Stand for Children, addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Trisha Kennealy, a parent with Stand for Children, addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Paul Toner from the Massachusetts Teachers Association, Dan Murphy from the American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts, and Dave Thompson from the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Administrators Association addressed the Board on educator evaluation.
* Wendell Bourne from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies addressed the Board on the MCAS History and Social Science test.
* Beth Anderson, executive director of Phoenix Academy Charter School, and Elvira Diaz, a student, addressed the Board on Phoenix Academy Charter School.

**Recognition for Jeff Nellhaus**

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus is leaving the Department after 25 years to direct the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) in Washington, D.C. Chair Banta presented Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus with a citation from the Board and Secretary Reville presented him with a Governor's citation.

# Approval of the Minutes

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the February 28, 2011 special and regular meetings.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Report and Recommendations from Educator Evaluation Task Force and Commissioner's Initial Response**

Commissioner Chester said the Board will today hear the recommendations of the Task Force on Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators. The commissioner said he will bring his recommendations for changes to the regulations on educator evaluation to the April 27, 2011 regular meeting. Associate Commissioner Haselkorn thanked the Task Force, introduced representatives from the Task Force, and said the Board now has the opportunity to review its recommendations.

Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr made a presentation on the Task Force's work. She said the goals of the Task Force were to: (1) link teaching with learning; (2) ensure an active role for educators in their own evaluation; and (3) incorporate multiple measures of student growth and learning as a significant part of the evaluation process for everyone; (4) provide more meaningful feedback on performance; (5) differentiate the evaluation process for career stage and performance; and (6) develop a shared, statewide understanding of effective leadership and teaching practice.

Deputy Commissioner Baehr reviewed the key design features for the new system, which would include 4 standards with indicators; 4 performance ratings; 3 categories of evidence that would include multiple measures of student learning and growth and feedback from staff, students and parents; a 5-step evaluation cycle, starting with educator self-reflection and goal setting; and 4 paths and plans. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Board directed the Department to develop a model or default system for evaluation, and that work is underway and will be presented first to the Level 4 schools.

Dr. Howard asked what would happen if there is a discrepancy between a performance rating and student learning evidence. Kathie Skinner from the Massachusetts Teachers Association said if an evaluation indicated a teacher was exemplary, but the evidence suggested otherwise, it could be that the measures were not accurate or the evaluator was not correct. Dr. Howard asked if the Task Force had a view on the proportion of student outcomes in the rating, or if it deferred to the commissioner to make a recommendation. Linda Noonan from the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education said there is no definition of "significant factor" in the report and it is left up to the commissioner's discretion. Ms. Skinner said the Task Force rejected any formulaic use of student learning. Tom Scott from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents said the panel struggled with this and rejected a quantitative approach that dismissed human judgment. Mr. Scott said the superintendent should be checking on cases where there is a discrepancy between the principal’s rating of a teacher and student results, to be sure the principal is accountable. John D'Auria from Teachers21 said the teacher's evaluation should be based on student results, and the key question is how to measure student results. He agreed with Mr. Scott that human judgment has to be part of the equation.

Secretary Reville said it is revolutionary to place student learning at the center of educator evaluation, and the debate over percentages or weights seems unnecessary. The secretary said there is general agreement that student performance is relevant and should be part of a teacher's evaluation, and that there should be multiple measures of student learning. Secretary Reville said we should honor student performance results and observation of practice and the student voice. He suggested emulating good evaluation models from other sectors including health care. Dr. McDermott said he hopes the learning outcomes would focus on students’ deep understanding.

Mr. Chertavian said the report's rhetoric is right but the reality is not yet sufficient. He said this is an implementation challenge as well as a content challenge, and the Department has to fight for resources to make it happen. Mr. Chertavian said making student learning a “significant” part of evaluation means it must be of consequence, and the Board and Department have to determine what is of consequence. He suggested that positive incentives and data reporting would be useful tools in implementing the new system. Mr. Chertavian said the system would need statewide consistency to ensure that it is fair; it would not succeed if it is totally decentralized.

Secretary Reville said evaluation has always been an important responsibility for school a leaders, but it is appalling to hear from teachers how seldom they are evaluated. He said since 80% of education funding goes to people, we should aim to repurpose existing dollars to support the new approach.

Chair Banta asked about the state's role. Dan Murphy from American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts said we can trust the field on this and it does not all have to be prescribed by the Department. Bob Fraser, a school attorney and member of the Mass. Association of School Personnel Administrators, said it is the responsibility of the evaluator and evaluatee to look at data and reconcile discrepancies. Mr. Fraser recommended rethinking the current statutory framework and taking evaluation out of collective bargaining, along the lines of some other states. He urged the Board to use student outcome data across all the standards, not as a stand-alone factor, and to allow the evaluator to use any relevant information as long as it is shared with the evaluatee. Ms. Skinner said you have to trust people in the field to make this work, but the Board must also be purposeful and a little tighter than the report would suggest. She said common definitions and a common language for evaluation would be helpful. Marianne Burns from UMass Boston said that for educators who teach students with disabilities, educational progress needs to be measured on a number of fronts, not just academics. Linda Hayes said administrators will pay attention to the Department’s model plan but need some flexibility to allow for different circumstances.

Secretary Reville said this discussion is not about trust; it is about striking a balance in the dynamic tension between results and observation, state and local roles, and fairness for children and for adults. In education reform, Secretary Reville noted, the state did strike a balance: tight on what students should know and be able to do, loose on how to teach them. Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. said that including student reviews is a huge step forward. He advocated making student reviews an explicit component. Mr. Scott said if all of this is left to the collective bargaining process, it will get watered down and lack consistency. He recommended reviewing the statutes to determine if changes are needed, for example, to require dismissal after no more than one year of unsatisfactory and unimproved performance.

Commissioner Chester thanked the members of the Task Force and said he will use the Task Force's report as a touchstone as he brings his recommendations forward next month. The commissioner said he sees three key areas: (1) how to make student performance a significant, consequential factor without eclipsing judgment; (2) the tight-loose question; and (3) linking evaluation to key personnel decisions. The commissioner said while the Task Force did not fully address and resolve these issues, their work has provided a starting point of great value.

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

The Board voted to correct a typographical error in the maximum enrollment as written in the February 28, 2011 motion to grant a charter to Alma del Mar Charter School.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the conditions set forth below, hereby grants a charter to the following school as recommended by the Commissioner:**

 **Commonwealth Charter:**

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

**Location: New Bedford**

**Maximum Enrollment: ~~320~~ 360**

**Grade Levels: K-8**

**Opening Year: 2011**

**The charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Level 4 District Review Reports and Next Steps**

**And**

**Monitoring Report on Fall River Public Schools**

Commissioner Chester said he is concerned about these districts, and we need to prepare for the possibility of designating districts as Level 5 districts. Deputy Commissioner Baehr presented an overview of the Level 4 districts. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said Fall River has been under its recovery plan for the past 18 months. The Department's monitor in Fall River, Joan Connolly, has been providing an update every 6 months. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said there are deep problems in the district, and while there has been recent progress, there is continuing concern. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Department met with the Fall River School Committee on March 14, 2011.

Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the next six months are critical for Fall River, and the district must meet benchmarks to stay in Level 4 or it could be considered for Level 5. Ms. Holmes asked about the Level 5 designation. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Department is working with the School and District Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council on a Level 5 manual, which will be brought to the Board later this spring. She said Level 5 is a co-governance model. Dr. Howard asked whether local attitude plays into decisions about Level 4 or 5. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said it does.

Chair Banta said she is impressed with how far the process has come. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the Department has learned from Fall River what it takes to accelerate progress and is now applying that to other districts. Eva Mitchell, the Department's Director of School and District Accountability, reviewed the summary of findings for the Level 4 districts.

Deputy Commissioner Baehr noted that relatively little progress has been made in Holyoke over the past 7 years since the Board declared it an underperforming district. Secretary Reville said this reflects on our own performance as a Board and Department. He noted that the Peck School shows promise. The secretary said we have to use this to show the limits of our intervention and how to proceed.

Dr. Howard asked whether we are looking at the performance of students who have been in Holyoke two or more years, and suggested doing so. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said even reviewing those data, Holyoke has weak systems. Dr. Howard asked if Holyoke was a candidate for Level 5 designation. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said it is. Commissioner Chester said we need a game plan if we declare a district to be Level 5 and must have confidence that schools would improve as a result.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed findings for Gill-Montague, Southbridge and Randolph. She said many issues in the turnaround plan for Gill-Montague have been addressed, and Gill-Montague has the highest performance of all districts in Level 4. Ms. Mitchell said the district has a high number of central office staff, but they are not well deployed, and the district also does not have a good grasp of how well it is spending its money. Deputy Commissioner Baehr said the district is a good candidate for the focused planning process.

Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy said three superintendents are enrolled in the New Superintendent Induction Program and the Department has provided a coach or consultant for the other two superintendents.

**Proposed Amendment to Competency Determination Requirement in History and Social Science, 603 CMR 30.03(4)**

Commissioner Chester said the budget situation poses an ongoing concern about the ability to pay for history assessments – plus, as we add new graduation requirements for students, we have a concurrent obligation to provide additional support for those students to be successful by providing academic intervention. Commissioner Chester said his recommendation is to amend the regulation that is currently waived, to provide clarity for schools and students. Instead of putting a date or class certain, he has outlined a sequence of years after funding is provided to reestablish the history and social science exam and the competency determination requirement.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus provided an overview of the history of the MCAS History and Social Science test development and implementation. Associate Commissioner Robert Bickerton described the current regulation on the Competency Determination requirement in history and social science. Associate Commissioner Julia Phelps said the state's Race to the Top application includes development of model curriculum units in four areas, including social studies. She said those units will have curriculum-embedded performance assessments. Ms. Phelps said these could be part of a statewide system for students to demonstrate skills and knowledge in this area. Commissioner Chester said the timeline allows the Department to include new kinds of assessment, including those advocated by the 21st Century Skills Task Force. He said the question is the extent to which you leave this to local assessment versus statewide, standardized assessment. The commissioner said without funding the Department is not able to do any further large-scale assessment development, but he is committed to promoting the teaching of history and social science with or without assessment.

Secretary Reville said more school time would help mitigate the perception that some subjects are devalued. The secretary said the Board had concerns about the assessment as it was to be implemented and he hopes the goal is to bring it back online with significant improvements to the test.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendment to the Competency Determination Regulations, 603 CMR 30.03(4), as presented by the Commissioner.**

# The proposed amendment would revise section 30.03(4) of the regulations, deleting the obsolete reference to the classes of 2012 and 2013 and stating that the Competency Determination requirement for history and social science would take effect in the third consecutive year that the history and social science high school assessment is administered, in order to provide fair notice to students and schools about performance levels and expectations before the assessment counts towards the Competency Determination required for high school graduation.

**Provided, further, that the Board states its intent to implement the history and social science Competency Determination requirement contingent on the appropriation of funding necessary for the assessment program and for academic support services for students.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Request for Review: Conservatory Lab Charter School**

Commissioner Chester said the additional seat request made by Conservatory Lab Charter School last month had to be considered under the standard in the new law for proven providers, and the school did not meet proven provider status. Since the February 2011 meeting, the Department has been talking with the school leaders and they are now presenting a more modest proposal.

Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the school is eager to extend the program into the middle grades for the continuity of music education it provides to students and to bridge the gap to high school. Mr. Wulfson said the school’s revised proposal would allow current 5th graders to continue in the 6th grade. He said this can be done under the existing 9 percent cap on net school spending. Mr. Wulfson said the school would have another year to prove performance, but there are no guarantees about future expansion.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter previously granted to Conservatory Lab Charter School as follows:**

 **Location: Boston**

 **Maximum Enrollment: 169 (previously 154)**

 **Grade Levels: K1-6 (previously K1-5)**

 **Effective Year: 2011-12**

The vote was unanimous.

**Virtual Innovation Schools: Waiver Request from Hadley Public Schools**

Commissioner Chester said this request parallels the waiver that Greenfield requested and received in the summer of 2010 to start a virtual school. The commissioner said Hadley requests the same type of waiver of the regulation requiring one-quarter of the virtual school’s enrollment to come from the sponsoring district. Commissioner Chester said the Board will devote its special meeting in April to the topic of virtual schools.

Mr. Chertavian asked what responsibility the Hadley Public Schools would have for the proposed virtual school. Commissioner Chester said it would be part of their portfolio of schools, and as a participant in school choice, the district could open its enrollment to students beyond its borders. The commissioner said the district would be responsible for the quality of education, delivery of the curriculum, for following regulations concerning special populations, and for outcome measures. Mr. Chertavian asked about the geographic area from which the school would draw students. Associate Commissioner Wulfson said there is slightly more interest in the immediate area than was the case for Greenfield, which has attracted students from around the state. Mr. Chertavian said he is a proponent of the use of technology in the educational process, and while this is an interesting proposal, he would like more time for the Board to discuss this thoughtfully.

Secretary Reville expressed similar concerns, and noted this would be the second waiver to a regulation that has not yet been enforced. The secretary said Greenfield made the case that they were going after students with specialized needs. Secretary Reville said he is concerned about the direction of virtual education and whether we are defaulting to an individual school district to do this. The secretary recommended a reexamination of the regulations to consider the state’s leadership role.

Chair Banta asked if officials from Hadley were talking to officials in Greenfield, and also if these virtual schools require a minimum number of enrollees. Mr. Wulfson said Hadley has been in contact with Greenfield and has tried to learn from their experience. Mr. Wulfson said there is an emerging consensus that you need a critical mass of students. He said under the statute there is no direct oversight over innovation schools other than the normal oversight over public schools. Mr. Wulfson said the only real tools are those we have through the normal accountability system.

Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. asked if particular districts have a motivation to start virtual schools. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about Hadley’s motivation. Mr. Wulfson said there are a number of motivators, including raising some additional revenue and providing programs that can serve students who are underserved or not served at all. Mr. Wulfson said the Hadley proposal involves high school grades, which Greenfield's school does not serve. Mr. Wulfson said enrollment is open, and regarding students with IEPs, the IEP team needs to be consulted to ensure that it is an appropriate placement.

Commissioner Chester said the Board is somewhat constrained by the innovation schools statute. He said the consequence of not approving this waiver request would be to eliminate Hadley's ability to run a virtual school, leaving Greenfield the only provider. The commissioner also said it would not be a surprise to see legislators take it upon themselves to override the Board and vote on this legislatively. Secretary Reville asked if we could postpone the vote to give it further consideration. Commissioner Chester said that is an option, though Hadley would view a delay as diminishing their success at opening a school next fall.

Ms. Holmes asked about vendors. Commissioner Chester said Hadley would use Kaplan, while Greenfield uses K-12, Inc. Secretary Reville asked when the Department would be ready to revisit the virtual school regulations. Commissioner Chester said May 2011 at the earliest. Mr. Wulfson said Greenfield's waiver is for one year only, so that district will have to come back to the Board as well.

Commissioner Chester said given the consensus of the Board to defer action on this waiver request, he was pulling his recommendation from the March 22, 2011 agenda, to be considered at a later date.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:20 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board

Minutes of the Special Meeting

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

**March 21, 2011**

**5:05 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Harneen Chernow**, Vice Chair, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**James DiTullio** (designee for Secretary of Education Paul Reville)

**Michael D'Ortenzio Jr.**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Wellesley

**Beverly Holmes**, Springfield

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**James McDermott**, Eastham

**Mitchell D. Chester**, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Commissioner Chester said tonight's special meeting is one of a series of evening-before sessions on key policy topics. The commissioner said he was pleased to welcome Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland and Deputy Commissioner Aundrea Kelley to tonight's discussion on college and career readiness.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus made a presentation on college and career readiness. He said that being college and career ready means that an individual has the knowledge and skills necessary for success in postsecondary education and economically viable career pathways in a 21st century economy. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said two short-terms measures are the 5-year graduation rate and the MassCore completion rate. Deputy Commissioner identified seven strategies and initiatives, including: (1) School to Career connecting activities; (2) Mass Model for School Counseling; (3) MassCore Policy and Implementation; (4) High School Turnaround; (5) High School Graduation Initiative; (6) Early Warning Indicator System; and (7) Academic Support grants. Keith Westrich from the Department's Office of College & Career Readiness said if we are successful, we will see an increase in the 5-year graduation rate to 88.3 percent in 2014, up from 84 percent. By 2014, more high needs students will show a faster increase in the 5-year graduation rate. The projected MassCore completion rate in 2014 would be 82.5 percent, up from 70.3 percent. Commissioner Chester said we are looking at moving MassCore to be a default course of study for students.

Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said the Department will let schools use their Race to the Top funds to improve science labs and buy more math materials. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said we know that some high schools now cannot offer 4 years of math. Chair Banta asked if the Department is also looking at content. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said that is where we need a performance measure. Chair Banta asked how early the Early Warning Indictor system starts. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said in middle school, but the Department is looking to modify it so it can begin in elementary school.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked what the requirements are for MassCore. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said four years of English and math, three years of lab science, three years of history and social science, one year of arts, and two years of foreign language. By adding in electives, that adds up to 22 credits. Dr. McDermott asked about the knowledge and skills that are necessary. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said the Common Core standards were written to define college and career readiness.

Mr. Chertavian said that MassCore seems fairly traditional, and it may not actually produce career readiness in terms of skills and knowledge. He said the average student in the public higher education system works 20-25 hours per week and the average age of a graduate is 28. Mr. Chertavian said we must provide students with skills and knowledge so they can earn more than the minimum wage. Mr. Chertavian said this is an opportunity to look at policy for MassCore, with education and work as intertwined systems. Mr. Westrich said the Department is serious about broadening the definition. He said 11,000+ students were in internships last year through Connecting Activities, and the Mass. Work Based Learning Assessment measures skills employers are looking for in those areas. Mr. Chertavian said experiential learning is important, but asked if there is a role for other forms of learning. Deputy Commissioner Nellhaus said that 20 percent of high school students participate in vocational-technical education, and the Department is examining to what extent we can incorporate voc-tech into academics. Mr. Chertavian offered his assistance to the Department.

*Delivery*

Commissioner Chester said the Department received funding from the Gates Foundation to work with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute. He said Sir Michael Barber developed the methodology around "delivery." Carrie Conaway, director of the Office of Planning and Research to Close Proficiency Gaps, said delivery is a systematic process through which system leaders can drive results. For each goal, there are measures and trajectories, activities, and plans to address weak links in the delivery chain. Ms. Conaway said the routines we put into place once we develop the plan are critical, and that closing proficiency gaps is the core focus of all delivery plans within the Department.

*Higher Education*

Commissioner Freeland said he is deeply convinced that stronger cross sector collaboration is critical for accomplishing our goals. He said our agendas are converging and highly synergistic. Commissioner Freeland described the Vision Project, which embodies initiatives in the Department of Higher Education related to this topic. He said he shares the goals with respect to college and career readiness, and what we have seen in K-12 education reform is remarkable and a great success story. Commissioner Freeland said his concern is that as a state, we have focused in an admirable way on the need for excellence in K-12, but there has not been the same focus on public higher education. Commissioner Freeland said we need to draw attention to the need for excellence in public higher education and to achieve higher levels of performance within our system.

Commissioner Freeland said the statement of the Vision Project is: "We will produce the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the nation. We will be a national leader in research that drives economic development." Commissioner Freeland said there will be seven measurable outcomes, including sending more young people to college who are ready for college level work. The commissioner said DHE will issue an annual report card to compare Massachusetts to other states on five indicators.

In the College Participation area, the two large policy areas are college readiness and the college going rate. Commissioner Freeland talked about the formation of a College Participation Advisory Group that was jointly appointed by Commissioner Chester and himself. The advisory group has equal representation from K-12 and higher education and serves in an advisory role to BESE and BHE. This year's agenda includes alignment of MassCore with the admission requirements to our four-year institutions, discussing how to do better with early assessment, and increasing the college going rates of young people of color. Commissioner Chester said it is refreshing to work with Commissioner Freeland and applauded the spirit of collaboration and the urgency to move the agenda. Commissioner Chester said one of the greatest levers in K-12 education is the signals from workforce and higher education around expectations and an incentive structure.

Ms. Chernow said there is a funding challenge where students end up in so many semesters of developmental education. Commissioner Freeland said we have to do a better job getting students to college who are ready, and providing remediation for those who are not. Commissioner Freeland said that of the students who are in remedial education, only 1 in 4 will earn any kind of college degree ever. Commissioner Freeland said 60 percent of students in community college are in remedial education. He said the good news is there is some very good thinking around the developmental piece.

Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. said public higher education deserves more credit, and he would like to see all students want to go to these schools. Commissioner Freeland said Massachusetts has traditionally not seen a need to demand excellence in public higher education. He said Massachusetts ranks #1 in the percent of jobs that require a college degree, and we must raise aspirations of the system to demand excellence.

Chair Banta asked about potential obstacles to the Vision Project. Higher Education Deputy Commissioner Kelley said there has to be collaboration between K-12 and higher education, but also within higher education. She said a number of approaches include bringing together groups by segment and expertise. Commissioner Freeland said nothing moves unless the faculty members want it to move at an individual level. He said the Vision Project goals have to become personal goals across the system.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about requiring four years of high school mathematics. Commissioner Freeland said the BHE will vote tomorrow to make effective for the fall of 2016 that public higher education in Massachusetts will not accept any admissions policies that do not include four years of math. The commissioner said typically the top private colleges require four years of math. Deputy Commissioner Kelley said Massachusetts will be the 11th state to require four years of math. Commissioner Freeland said there is a demonstrable connection between high school math taking and success in college. Commissioner Chester said most states through statute outline the minimum number of credits or courses, but in Massachusetts we require only two courses: physical education and U.S. history.

Mr. Chertavian asked about federal student aid in connection with reported dates of student enrollment. Commissioner Freeland responded that Massachusetts could emulate other states that incentivize keeping students enrolled. Dr. McDermott notes Commissioner Freeland’s statement that two-thirds of students who graduate from Massachusetts public schools and go to college in Massachusetts are in public higher education. Dr. McDermott said this shows the need for a synergistic relationship between the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education. Chair Banta thanked Commissioner Freeland and Deputy Commissioner Kelley for a stimulating and informative discussion and pledged continued collaboration.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board