Minutes of the Regular Meeting

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

**March 20, 2012**

**8:35 a.m. – 12:15 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

**Beverly Holmes**, Vice Chair, Springfield

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**James DiTullio**, Designee for Secretary of Education Paul Reville

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**David Roach**, Sutton

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

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Matthew Gifford**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

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

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Banta welcomed members and noted the previous evening’s special meeting where the Board heard from state Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz and also heard a presentation on adult basic education. The chair asked for reports from several of the Board’s committees. Vice Chair Holmes reported that the Charter School Committee will meet again prior to the Board’s April 23, 2012 special meeting to continue discussing early warning signals in relation to renewing charters. Mr. Chertavian said the College and Career Readiness Task Force met for the third time to discuss standards around career readiness and how to build those into current standards. Ms. Chernow said the Proficiency Gap Committee has met twice since its last report to the Board. Ms. Chernow said the committee has discussed the No Child Left Behind flexibility waiver and the goal to cut proficiency gaps in half as well as the DART tool and the Progress and Performance Index.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester discussed the recent award of a $12 million Charter School Program grant to the Commonwealth that will support new charters and the dissemination of exemplary practices. The commissioner congratulated the Department’s Charter School Office for its work.

Commissioner Chester said he visited Lawrence a week ago to meet with Receiver Jeff Riley and staff from Education Resource Strategies (ERS) to look at expenditures with an eye towards the district’s turnaround plan. Commissioner Chester said he hopes that ERS’s work in Lawrence will have a carryover effect in other districts. The commissioner said Receiver Riley has convened the local stakeholder group to solicit recommendations and input to the district’s turnaround plan. The commissioner said the receiver has hired Dale Libkin as assistant superintendent for teacher effectiveness.

Commissioner Chester said the state will be participating in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is an international assessment of 15-year-olds’ capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy that is administered every three years. This will be the first time that Massachusetts has participated as a territory. The commissioner said PISA has a reputation of assessing students’ abilities to apply what they know in literacy, math and science to solve problems.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado arrived at 8:50 a.m.

Commissioner Chester introduced Quinton Dale as the Department’s new chief of investigations.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Mr. DiTullio said that since the last Board meeting, Governor Patrick has signed into law the collaborative bill. Mr. DiTullio said Secretary Reville was briefing the Legislature this morning on the Administration’s community colleges proposal. Mr. DiTullio said the secretary congratulates the Department on the recently awarded charter school grant.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Banta asked Dr. Calderón-Rosado to provide an update on the work of the Board’s Committee on the Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation. She said the committee will use the same or similar criteria and process that were set last year. The committee expects to make its recommendations at the June meeting.

**Public Comment**

1. Jon Clark, Co-Executive Director of the Edward W. Brooke Charter School, addressed the Board on the school’s renewal with a condition.
2. Kathy Egmont, Executive Director of the Lowell Community Charter Public School, addressed the Board on the school’s request to modify its conditions.
3. Tyrone Mowatt, a member of the board of trustees of Lowell Community Charter Public School, addressed the Board on the school’s request to modify its conditions.
4. Richard Chavez, a parent of Lowell Community Charter Public School, addressed the Board on the school’s request to modify its conditions.

# 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 27, 2012 special meeting and February 28, 2012 regular meeting.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Adult Basic Education: Update on Programs, Priorities, and Competitive RFP Process**

Chair Banta recapped the previous evening’s special meeting on adult basic education (ABE). The chair said the highlights of the excellent discussion were the commissioner’s framing of the issues of access and quality and the goal of adult basic education as preparation for college and careers. The chair noted that the commissioner said demand exceeds supply, and the Department must invest resources where the best providers are operating.

Ms. Kaplan asked what control the state has over the GED, the requirement that students pass the GED within a year, and the cost. Ms. Kaplan also asked if teachers of adults who are English language learners need training similar to what K-12 teachers need. Commissioner Chester said the cost of the GED is set nationally, and at the state level we decide how much we can subsidize or underwrite the cost. The commissioner said demand for the programs is outstripping supply.

Anne Serino, the Department’s state director of adult basic education, said a student can prepare as long as necessary, but has only a year to take the 5 tests for the GED. Ms. Serino said passing rates improve when there is a beginning and an end to the test, and students can retake the test. Ms Serino said the Department has an ABE license available for teachers but it is not required. Ms. Serino said the state is working on developing professional content standards for ABE teachers and professional development to help them meet the standards.

Dr. Howard said he was struck by the magnitude of the wait list. Ms. Serino said a year is the average wait, and it depends on location and program of interest. Ms. Serino said about 50 percent of students stay on the list into the next year. Dr. Howard asked about program outcomes. Ms. Serino said the state negotiates performance measures with the U.S. Department of Education on six different measures and we meet our targets. She said 75 percent of students complete a level or continue next year in that level. Ms. Serino said the state gathers data through standardized testing and data matching. Ms. Chernow said it might be useful to have additional information to show outcomes.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said many students who go through ABE are at the 7th grade level. Mr. DiTullio said that while 16,000 adults are on the wait list, the fact that there is no advertisement of services suggests that the actual number of adults interested in services could be greater. Ms. Kaplan said with additional resources we could ensure that parents of young pre-school children can better support their children’s education. Ms. Serino said the Department of Early Education and Care has included family literacy in its Race to the Top grant. Commissioner Chester said family literacy is also part of ESE’s program.

**Education Collaboratives: Overview of New Legislation and Next Steps**

Chair Banta said that the Board’s Committee on Educational Collaboratives was instrumental in the process to provide new oversight over collaboratives. He introduced Christine Lynch, the Department’s director of school governance, and Chris Scott, the executive director of the Merrimack Special Education Collaborative (MSEC). The commissioner said the work was prompted by the findings of the Inspector General and Auditor on MSEC that raised serious concerns.

The commissioner said the Board convened a committee to develop recommendations that formed the backbone of the legislation that has now been signed into law. Commissioner Chester said that legislation will tighten oversight and control of collaboratives with respect to finance and governance. The commissioner said the law also establishes a special legislative commission to rethink the role of collaboratives in Massachusetts. Commissioner Chester said that compared to many states, in Massachusetts collaboratives are a lost opportunity. He said in most other states there is some intermediary unit between the state and local school districts that serves a state function as well as being responsive to local entities.

Ms. Scott thanked the commissioner for his support, and acknowledged the interim leadership team at the collaborative as well as key Department staff who helped guide MSEC through a transition period. Ms. Scott said the collaborative welcomes the new law, noting that it encourages high quality programming in a cost effective manner. Ms. Scott said the divorce between MSEC and its nonprofit, the Merrimack Education Center, is a work in progress. She said a memorandum of understanding between the Department and the collaborative has been very helpful. Ms. Scott said MSEC also looks forward to working with other collaboratives.

Ms. Lynch gave a PowerPoint presentation on collaboratives and the new legislation. Ms. Lynch said that among the major provisions of the legislation were the creation of a legislative commission to study the role of collaboratives, new accountability requirements, authority to the Board to adopt regulations regarding oversight, and the Department’s role to train new board members. Ms. Lynch said there will be a substantial change in the makeup of collaborative boards. She said each collaborative must amend its collaborative agreement to comply with the new law by March 2013.

Chair Banta asked about adult services provided by some collaboratives. Ms. Lynch said these programs are for adults who are developmentally disabled and aged out of the special education system. Ms. Lynch said the law provides for grandfathering those programs and the legislative commission will review the issue further. In answer to a question from Mr. Chertavian, Ms. Lynch said there are currently 30 collaboratives. Commissioner Chester said the commission will likely consider whether 30 is an appropriate number. Ms. Scott said that although MSEC has 10 school districts on its board, it serves students from over 80 school districts. Commissioner Chester said the capacity of collaboratives varies greatly.

Vice Chair Holmes asked about the six-year cycle of program reviews, the qualifications of collaborative board members, and whether Massachusetts students attend collaboratives outside of the state. Ms. Lynch said the six-year review coincides with the Coordinated Program Review conducted by the Department’s Program Quality Assurance unit. She said the Department does have authority to go into collaboratives on an annual basis to review fiscal matters and the program. Ms. Lynch said the legislation directs the Department to develop training for all board members of collaboratives. That training will include familiarity with public records, the open meeting law, confidentiality and budgetary matters. Ms. Scott said collaboratives will be under review for years to come. Ms. Scott said her collaborative is close to the New Hampshire border, and the program provides services not available in New Hampshire to some New Hampshire students. Commissioner Chester said districts can make agreements to tuition students regardless of state boundary.

Mr. DiTullio said this Board will have a much larger role to play in overseeing collaboratives under the new law. He thanked the Department for working on the legislation. Ms. Kaplan requested more information on collaboratives and what they do. Ms. Chernow asked how many collaboratives are affiliated with a for-profit or non-profit organization.

**Lowell Community Charter Public School: Report on Conditions and Request to Modify Conditions**

Commissioner Chester provided an overview on the history of this school. The commissioner said it is a large school that has had poor academic outcomes. He said the district expressed concerns when he proposed revoking the school’s charter two years ago and stated it could not absorb the 900 students back into the district’s schools. In light of this, the commissioner said he changed his recommendation to placing the school on probation with a number of conditions. Those conditions included the charter school bringing in experienced management, revamping its governing board, and moving its academic program forward. The commissioner said the first year’s results show progress, though not stellar, and the school is moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Chester said this is the second year in a row that the school has requested a delay in its enrollment reduction. The Board did vote last year to delay the reduction for a year. Commissioner Chester said while the school is showing some good signs, we should stay the course to get the school to a place where the majority of students are performing well. Alison Bagg, the Charter School Office’s accountability coordinator, said the school is making strides, particularly in math, but needs additional time to show a track record of success. Ms. Bagg indicated that the school had reconsidered its request and is asking for 645 students in the upcoming school year, which would be 35 additional seats. Mr. Chertavian asked what the intent of the 35 additional seats would be. Ms. Bagg said based on Ms. Egmont’s testimony during public comment, it would be to preserve the kindergarten readiness class. Commissioner Chester said this is the first time the Department was hearing of the school’s revised proposal, and he would like to have a better understanding of what the school is asking for. Chair Banta said the Board could revisit this issue at a future meeting.

**ESEA Flexibility Waiver Request Granted: Overview and Next Steps**

Commissioner Chester said the strength of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has been its message that student results matter but the law’s requirement that 100 percent of students score at the Proficient level or higher made “perfect the enemy of good.” The commissioner noted that last year in Massachusetts, 80 percent of schools and 90 percent of districts were deemed failing under the federal accountability measure – despite the fact that most schools are making gains.

Commissioner Chester said state’s waiver request requires school districts to set a trajectory that effectively cuts the performance gap in half over the next six years in the aggregate and for each subgroup. The commissioner acknowledged the work of Department staff, led by Matt Pakos, Rob Curtin and Ken Klau, in developing the state’s waiver request that was ultimately approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

Mr. Pakos provided an overview of the flexibility waiver and the six aspects of the school and district accountability system. First, Mr. Pakos said the new goal for the state would be to cut proficiency gaps in half over a six year period. Progress toward that goal would be measured using the state’s Composite Performance Index (CPI). Mr. Pakos said the goal for everyone is the same but the targets are differentiated depending on a group’s starting point. Second, the waiver eliminates the NCLB accountability status labels. Schools and districts will be labeled only according to one of the 5 levels under the state accountability system. Third, Mr. Pakos described the state’s new progress and performance index in English language arts, mathematics and science. The use of science in the accountability system is new. Mr. Pakos said credit would be assigned for student growth, and the index would incentivize the reduction of the percent of students in the warning or failing categories. Mr. Pakos said at the high school level, graduation rates would also be incorporated.

Fourth, Mr. Pakos said the state would continue to identify schools needing the most assistance and to commend high performing schools. Mr. Pakos said the state proposed no change to how it identifies Level 4 and 5 schools. Schools identified at Level 3 would have the largest, most persistent gaps. Schools at Level 2 would be those that have not yet met their gap closing targets. Schools at Level 1 would be meeting their goals. Fifth, Mr. Pakos said there would be an enhanced focus on subgroup performance. Sixth, Mr. Pakos said rather than a flat set aside of Title I dollars, there would be a sliding scale depending on the problem. Districts would assess their needs and propose intervention that is in response to the gap.

Mr. Pakos said as a result of the waiver, the state will need to make some technical changes to its accountability regulations. Dr. Howard called this waiver positively exciting. Dr. Howard asked if a very high performing school with a very low performing subgroup would be a Level 3 school. Mr. Curtin said it might, depending on the performance of the super subgroup (“high needs”). Mr. Curtin said the Department will continue to report on all subgroups as well as the super subgroup. Commissioner Chester said every school has a duty to close the gap in half by school year 2017.

Chair Banta asked about the reaction from the field to the waiver. Mr. Pakos said there has been a lot of support, as well as some confusion. Commissioner Chester said with limited exceptions, most school officials are celebrating an end to Adequate Yearly Progress, whether or not they are celebrating what will replace it. Ms. Kaplan asked if districts as well as schools receive levels. Mr. Pakos said each district is assigned a level based on the level of its lowest performing school.

**Update on RETELL Initiative and on Possible Expansion to Vocational-Technical Education Teachers**

Commissioner Chester said the Department is now receiving public comment on the proposed regulations that the Board voted to solicit comment on at its February 28, 2012 meeting. The commissioner said the Department is also drafting a syllabus for the new educator course for Sheltered English Immersion, and has released an RFP for instructors who would teach the course. Commissioner Chester said the Department continues to have discussions with the Department of Justice. He said the Department is looking at whether to include vocational educators and has reached out to the board of directors of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA). The commissioner said he does not anticipate any regulations on this until the fall. Commissioner Chester said he would likely bring proposed changes to the Board’s regulations on the English as a Second Language license in April.

In response to a question from Ms. Chernow, Commissioner Chester said the Board’s February vote covers all teachers of core academic subjects to English language learners, including academic teachers in vocational-technical schools. The further extension would be to include teachers of vocational subjects as well. Ms. Kaplan asked if there had been any reaction from MAVA. The commissioner said the MAVA group was open to the idea but is awaiting further details.

**Report on ESE Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Commissioner Chester said that shortly after he arrived in May 2008, the Department conducted an initial survey of school and district leaders. Much of the feedback was critical about the Department, and there was a perception that the agency was too focused on compliance and provided limited assistance. The commissioner said the intent was to continue the survey moving forward. The Department conducted another survey in November 2011 which shows some real gains, although there is still a lot of work to do to reach the goal of adding value around curriculum and instruction.

Carrie Conaway, the Department’s director of Planning, Research and Evaluation to Close Proficiency Gaps, presented an overview of the survey results. Ms. Conaway said customer service quality was rated very high, and the Department was seen as having a clearly articulated vision. Ms. Conaway said the state’s Race to the Top application helped to convey a clear vision.

Mr. Chertavian commended Commissioner Chester and the Department for confronting the facts. He said this is a fundamental building block for improvement. Mr. Chertavian said the trend data is going in the right direction although the results in the management brief show that not one group rated the Department above 50 percent, and we need to challenge ourselves to do better. The commissioner noted that many items on that part of the survey are dependent on resources and, for example, the state provided zero funding for bullying prevention.

Mr. Roach commended the commissioner for the survey results. He said the attitude of the Department and its respectful relationship with school and district leaders are trending in positive ways, and that is a testament to the leadership of the commissioner and the Department despite real capacity issues. Mr. Roach expressed concern that we have a lot of initiatives out there and we need to be sure that principals are not overburdened. Mr. Roach said he remains concerned about the capacity of the Department as well as school leaders to deliver on all these initiatives.

Ms. Chernow said she was interested in the TELL survey and the perspective of teachers and principals. Dr. Howard commended the commissioner and the Department for results on this year’s satisfaction survey that are really impressive.

**Update on FY2013 Education Budget**

Commissioner Chester said the Department is waiting for the House Ways & Means Committee to release its budget in a couple of weeks. The commissioner said he continues to have conversations with the leadership of the House, and is advocating for the priorities of the Board. Department CFO Bill Bell said there is still uncertainty about revenues and cost pressures exist across multiple areas.

Mr. DiTullio provided information on the new state email addresses for Board members, and said within a week or two, that will be the only account for Board business.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:15 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 19, 2012**

**5:10 p.m. – 7:05 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

**Beverly Holmes**, Vice Chair, Springfield

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**James DiTullio**, Designee for the Secretary of Education

**Jeff Howard**, Reading

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

**David Roach**, Sutton

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

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Matthew Gifford**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline

**Dana Mohler-Faria**, Bridgewater

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Chair Banta welcomed Board members to the special meeting on adult basic education (ABE) and a discussion with Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Education.

**Adult Basic Education**

Commissioner Chester said that ABE is part of the Department’s portfolio. The commissioner introduced Pati Gregson, associate commissioner for vocational, workforce and college readiness programs; Anne Serino, state director of adult basic education; Helen Jones, assistant director in the Adult & Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit; and Steve Ultrino, a member of the Board’s ABE Advisory Council and the education coordinator at the Middlesex County House of Correction. The commissioner also recognized additional members of the ABE advisory council who were in attendance.

Commissioner Chester said this presentation was timely as the Department is currently in the process of rebidding contractors for ABE, which happens every five to six years. The commissioner said there are several tensions at play. He said the purpose of adult basic education is to provide workforce development and training to adults without a high school diploma and who want a GED, and adults who are not proficient in English. He said the demand for seats in ABE programs far exceeds our ability to provide seats, and we need to open more seats but strengthen program quality. The commissioner said the Department wants to recognize high quality providers but also open up this process competitively.

Ms. Serino said ABE is more than a collection of programs, it is a system. She said the system has three goals: (1) to ensure access to services; (2) to provide quality and efficient services; and (3) to support students in their next steps, particularly around college and career readiness. Ms. Serino said ABE also aims to close the skills gap.

Ms. Serino provided an overview of ABE in Massachusetts. She said 20,000 adults receive services each year, with an additional 16,000 adults on wait lists. Ms. Serino said ABE is the dropout recovery program for recent high school graduates. She said the six major program types are Direct Services, Community Adult Learning Centers, Career Pathways, ABE in Correctional Facilities, ABE Transition to Community College, and Distance Learning. Ms. Serino also described the strategic framework for ABE, called “Facing the Future,” which reflects the voices of over 4,000 students, 600 practitioners, and hundreds of stakeholders.

**Senator Chang-Diaz**

Chair Banta introduced Senator Chang-Diaz. Commissioner Chester welcomed Senator Chang-Diaz and called her a valued and engaged partner with us in support of education. Senator Chang-Diaz thanked the Board for their service to the Commonwealth. The Senator said her biggest priority is to close the achievement gap. Senator Chang-Diaz discussed the dropout prevention and intervention legislation, which she said takes a holistic approach to dropout prevention and recovery. The Senator acknowledged that funding needs to accompany this bill.

Senator Chang-Diaz said there needs to be additional funding for the Department and municipalities to execute the mission we send to you. She said there needs to be a look at the revenue side. The Senator said the Joint Committee on Education, which she co-chairs, aspires to be as efficient and effective as possible, and is watching the implementation of the Achievement Gap Act and educator evaluation.

Vice Chair Holmes asked about the creation of a commission on collaboratives. Senator Chang-Diaz said she would get an update and share it with the Board. The Senator said she is open to a broader role for the state. Dr. Howard asked about the prospects for a serious look at generating revenues for additional budget items. Senator Chang-Diaz said a lot of organizing work and communication work needs to take place first.

Mr. Chertavian asked what tipped the Legislature’s thinking about raising the high school dropout age, and what supports will be provided. Senator Chang-Diaz said the bill outlines the key components, including the coach initiative modeled on the program in Georgia. She said an at-risk rate of 10 percent or greater would make resources available from the state to put coaches in place. Senator Chang-Diaz said the early warning system should be expanded so districts can get data earlier. She said schools should reduce the use of suspensions and expulsions and look to alternative education.

Ms. Chernow asked about virtual schools. Senator Chang-Diaz said the virtual schools bill would prescribe greater state oversight and a robust set of criteria for the Board’s approval of virtual schools. She said the Legislature is taking a cautious approach and is thinking about students whose needs are not met by the current system. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked if the Legislature might raise the cap on charter schools again. Senator Chang-Diaz said the first challenge is one of appetite, and there was some fatigue after the landmark legislation two years ago. Ms. Kaplan asked about the whole child approach, including behavioral health and arts education. The Senator said behavioral health and arts education are compelling issues.

Chair Banta thanked Senator Chang-Diaz for her leadership and wisdom.

**Adult Basic Education**

Resuming her presentation, Ms. Serino said priorities around ABE are reflected in the current Request for Proposals (RFP), including quality, effectiveness, and access. Ms. Serino said ABE works closely with its partners in workforce development, higher education and private foundations. Ms. Serino said the RFP process for FY13-17 is a regional competition in the 16 workforce development areas.

Mr. Ultrino discussed the advisory council’s priorities, including advising ACLS on how to increase the number of ABE students who enter and succeed, creating a plan to develop strategies in ABE that are most effective, and evaluating outcomes.

Chair Banta said the system suffers from an underpaid teacher workforce. The chair cited the influence of a group like Strategies for Children in Massachusetts for K-12 education, and asked if there were similar organizations that bring together a body of knowledge on ABE. Ms. Serino said the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education provides programs and does a lot of this work, as well as a national organization on adult education, but neither packs the punch of Strategies for Children. Ms. Chernow said Massachusetts is known for not having a singular delivery system, and people view it as a successful model. Ms. Chernow asked where adult education ends and community college begins. Ms. Serino said that most adult students go to community college and we do not want them to land in developmental education classes.

Mr. Chertavian asked how many providers of ABE there are. Ms. Serino said 150, and more than half offer GEDs. Mr. Chertavian asked how volunteers are funded. Ms. Serino said we fund Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts and Eastern Massachusetts Literacy Council, which serve 1,000 students per year. Ms. Serino said they provide less intensive instruction, but it is 1-1. Ms. Serino said volunteers add a lot of value, and those volunteers become a program’s best advocate.

Dr. Howard had to leave at 6:45 p.m.

Ms. Serino said for many years, the GED was owned by a nonprofit entity. Now Pearson has purchased the GED. Ms. Serino said we expect a fee increase of $240 per student and it is unclear what the role of the states will be.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about alignment between ABE, the Common Core, and the community college system. Ms. Serino said ABE is aligned with Common Core, and the adult basic education frameworks are pretty close to the K-12 frameworks. Ms. Serino said ABE uses the Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test, which measures effectiveness by looking at learning gains. Ms. Serino said the goal is for students not to have to take development education courses in college. Ms. Serino said we support child care and transportation as well. Mr. DiTullio said Secretary Reville has called greater coordination across systems one of the great motivating factors in the push to reform the community college system.

Ms. Kaplan asked how people find out about ABE programs. Ms. Serino said students find out through word of mouth; because of the size of the wait list, there is not much recruitment. Ms. Serino said programs are free of charge, and typically it takes about 150 hours for a grade level equivalent gain. Ms. Serino said a student has to be 16 or older and signed out of school to participate in ABE. Ms. Serino said most people are on the wait list for about a year. Chair Banta said the power of distance learning could reduce some of the gaps.

Commissioner Chester said the median age of students in ABE is 30, which reflects the fact that students may drop out of high school and then years later decide they have to get this done. He said the challenge is how to reach that population more effectively. Commissioner Chester said we should explore the use of collaboratives and the services they provide. The commissioner also said community colleges are a locus for under- educated students between the ages of 18 and 22.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education