Minutes of the Regular Meeting

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

**October 23, 2012**

**8:35 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street**

**Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Beverly Holmes**, Vice Chair, Springfield

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Ryan Casey**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Franklin

**Harneen Chernow**, Jamaica Plain

**Gerald Chertavian**, Cambridge

**Ruth Kaplan**, Brookline

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

**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:

**Maura Banta**, Chair, Melrose

Vice-Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Vice-Chair Holmes said that Chair Banta was unable to attend this month's meeting, and in accordance with the Board's by-laws, she would chair the meeting. Vice-Chair Holmes said two Board committees would report out later in the meeting. The vice-chair asked Ms. Chernow to report on the work of the Proficiency Gap Committee. Ms. Chernow said the committee met yesterday to look at the statewide picture as a result of the release of 2012 MCAS results and the new Progress and Proficiency Index (PPI). Ms. Chernow said at its next meeting, the committee would look at the 40 Level 4 schools and try to understand the interventions that have been working in some of these schools.

Vice-Chair Holmes asked Dr. Calderón-Rosado to provide an update on the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said the committee discussed the performance criteria that were developed two years ago. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said on behalf of the committee she will discuss the criteria with Commissioner Chester, and bring them back to the committee for further review at its next meeting in December. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said the evaluation process would be similar to the one used in years past.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester said he was very pleased that with the support of 200 educators, the Department has developed the first 35 of 100 model curriculum units in four subject area – English language arts, math, science and technology/engineering, and history/social studies. The commissioner said this is part of a broad curriculum initiative, and eventually there will be about two model curriculum units per grade. The commissioner said the units track the new Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and represent aspirational curriculum and instruction. Commissioner Chester said educators are trying them out and providing feedback to the Department.

Commissioner Chester said he was part of a Massachusetts team that participated in a convening by the U.S. Department of Education of states that received Race to the Top grants. The commissioner said that along with Chair Banta, the team including district teams (Springfield, Brockton), Massachusetts Teachers Association President Paul Toner, and Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland. The commissioner said the convening allowed states to compare notes, discuss where there is room for improvement, and identify opportunities to share resources.

Commissioner Chester said he attended a recent Harvard Graduate School of Education event around the Pathways to Prosperity report. That report looked at the designs in other nations for linking education from early education to secondary and postsecondary education and the workforce. The commissioner said the Pathways to Prosperity initiative is supporting half a dozen states, including Massachusetts, in implementing proof points to build a systematically linked education system.

The commissioner shared a copy of a report by the Commission to Develop an Index of Creative and Innovative Education in the Public Schools, a state initiative to encourage opportunities for students to experience the arts, creativity, innovation, and teamwork. The report offers seven recommendations. Commissioner Chester also noted several legislative reports that the Department recently filed.

Commissioner Chester introduced Tom Moreau, the Department’s new director of school and district resource planning. The commissioner said he looks forward to introducing Cliff Chuang, the new director of charter schools and school redesign, at the next Board meeting. Commissioner Chester also noted the recent passing of two former chairs of the Board, John Silber and Mary Ellen Smith.

Secretary Reville arrived at 9:00 a.m.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Reville said Governor Patrick has appointed Penny Noyce to the Board. The secretary Reville said Dr. Noyce has been active in public elementary and secondary education for years, and was the principal investigator of the Projects PALMS National Science Foundation grant in Massachusetts. Secretary Reville said she is a physician, heads the Noyce Foundation, and will be a wonderful Board member.

Secretary Reville said the Commonwealth's budget predicament is tighter than expected, and the Administration will take a close look at projections for the rest of the year and consider cost control measures. The secretary also reported that the Administration has been busy implementing the Governor's community college reforms and Gateway Cities initiatives. He noted the ongoing work among the three education boards on teacher preparation.

Mr. Chertavian arrived at 9:05 a.m.

**Public Comment**

1. Paula Evans from Community Charter School of Cambridge addressed the Board on the school's proposed charter amendment.
2. Caleb Hurst-Hiller from Community Charter School of Cambridge addressed the Board on the school's proposed charter amendment.
3. Dan Klatz from Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School addressed the Board on the school's proposed charter amendment.
4. Erica Brown from City on a Hill Charter Public High School addressed the Board on charter school applications.

# 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 September 24, 2012 special meeting and September 25, 2012 regular meeting.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Commissioner’s Response to Task Force Report on Integrating College and Career Readiness**

Vice-Chair Holmes acknowledged the work of the Integrated College and Career Readiness Task Force, chaired by Mr. Chertavian. Commissioner Chester said the Department took the recommendations from the task force's report very seriously. He introduced Associate Commissioner for Vocational, Workforce, and College Readiness Programs Pati Gregson and Keith Westrich, College and Career Readiness Director, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Department's follow-up on the task force recommendations and how they fit into the broad goals and targets for college and career readiness. Associate Commissioner Gregson went through the recommendations, goals, and strategies in six areas.

Secretary Reville asked how this will integrate with our current work in schools. Mr. Westrich said Connecting Activities is the only statewide program charged to prepare and place students and do outreach to employers. He said the program is funded at $2.8 million now, down from $7.1 million in 2007, so we need to leverage resources and think outside of traditional boundaries. Commissioner Chester said we need to identify a range of options for embedding career readiness into the curriculum within existing resources and programs. Secretary Reville said one other resource we have is time, and we should be imaginative about how we use school time and out-of-school hours.

Ms. Kaplan commented that students need skills such as resilience, flexibility, and creativity. Mr. Westrich said a lot of development is in the social-emotional domain. Mr. Westrich said 39 districts have been early adopters of the Massachusetts Model for School Counseling. Mr. Roach said the report is excellent but we have to be realistic about capacity; for example, there are not enough guidance counselors to do all the good things called for in the report. The commissioner said the current guidance counselor model has to be transformed.

Ms. Chernow expressed concern about how this bright vision becomes a reality at a time of limited resources. Mr. Roach said everything here is consistent with the broad goals of schools and what we want to achieve, and our challenge is to convince schools and others that this is not simply “one more thing” they have to do.

Mr. Chertavian commended the commissioner, Associate Commissioner Gregson, and Mr. Westrich for their work. He said he was pleased and impressed with the progress to date. Mr. Chertavian said Mr. Roach's comments about capacity are very real and we have to set priorities. Mr. Chertavian said post-secondary education is changing dramatically, costs are unsustainable, fewer than 25% of students go to a four-year college and graduate in four years, and we need multiple pathways to success. He said this is a leadership opportunity for the Board and commissioner. Secretary Reville said we are trying to invent a 21st century system of education to deliver on our expectations of preparing all students for success, and while schooling is at the core, we have to modify the status quo.

**Related State Initiatives on College and Career Readiness**

Commissioner Chester said the Department has collaborated with the Executive Office of Education on several college and career readiness related issues. The commissioner introduced Marybeth Campbell and Saeyun Lee from the Executive Office of Education. Ms. Campbell said EOE has worked with Jobs for the Future and the Harvard Graduate School of Education since early 2012 to develop a six-year career pathway for students starting in grade 9, aiming for job placement with employment partners. Ms. Campbell said three labor markets are involved: Boston (health care focus), MetroWest (IT focus), and Hampden County (advanced manufacturing focus). In response to a question from Ms. Chernow, Ms. Campbell said the career pathways work is connected to the community college grant and reorganization as well as adult education.

Ms. Lee discussed the career academies grant program that is part of the Administration's Gateway Cities Education agenda. Mr. Chertavian asked about the role of the National Academy Foundation. Ms. Lee said the NAF has established hundreds of career academies and is a source of good ideas.

Mr. Roach asked if these initiatives will address the large number of students who need remedial education at community colleges. Ms. Lee said the adoption of the Common Core State Standards is one step, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will help as well.

**Update from Charter School Committee**

Mr. Roach provided an update on the October 15 meeting of the Board's Charter School Committee. The committee reviewed the schedule for charter authorizing actions, and raised the issue of capacity at the Department. Mr. Roach said the Charter School Office is doing its job very well and the demands are increasing. He said the Mass. Charter School Association intends to present a plan to eliminate the charter school cap entirely.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the Department is aware of and respectful of the demands placed on Board members' time. He said he believes the delegation of certain decisions to Commissioner Chester has worked well. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the commissioner has notified seven charter applicants that they qualify for proven provider status.

**Amendments Proposed for Charter Schools**

Commissioner Chester said the Department received 19 charter amendment requests, and he is bringing forward three requests today. The commissioner said a number of requests were from schools going through renewals or in communities where charter applicants are proposing new schools. Commissioner Chester said he was recommending approval of the expansion requests from these three schools.

*Community Charter School of Cambridge*

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said this high performing school is seeking to add grade 6 to align its grades with the evolving middle school model in Cambridge

**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 amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

### Community Charter School of Cambridge (grades served changed from 7-12 to 6-12)

**Location: Cambridge**

**Maximum Enrollment: 360**

**Grades Served: 6-12**

**Effective school year: 2013-2014**

The vote was unanimous.

*Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School*

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said this is a K-8 school requesting a small increase in enrollment. The deputy commissioner said one comment was received from the Greenfield superintendent who said given the low enrollment in area communities, the Department should consider establishing a policy on limiting school choice options in general before allowing expansion of a 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, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

### Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (maximum enrollment increase from 180 to 218 students)

**Location: Haydenville (regional)**

**Maximum Enrollment: 218**

**Grades Served: K-8**

**Effective school year: 2013-2014**

The vote was 7-0-1. Ms. Chernow abstained.

*South Shore Charter Public School*

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said this is a Level 1 school, and no comments were submitted. Mr. Roach asked about the demographic data. Alyssa Hopkins from the Charter School Office said the demographics do compare reasonably, although this is a regional school covering several districts and cannot give preference to any one district.

**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 amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

### South Shore Charter Public School (maximum enrollment increase from 540 to 610 students)

**Location: Norwell (regional)**

**Maximum Enrollment: 610**

**Grades Served: K-12**

**Effective school year: 2013-2014**

#### The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Kaplan left the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

**Charter School Enrollment Report**

Commissioner Chester presented an overview of the memo and data on charter school enrollment demographics for the six Commonwealth charter schools that opened in September 2011. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the statute and regulations require charter schools to develop and implement recruitment and retention plans focusing on students from under-represented populations. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson noted that charter schools must use a lottery system for admissions and they cannot ask during the recruitment process if students are in special education. He said neither the statute nor the Board’s regulations set numerical enrollment goals or quotas.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said we are looking for active efforts and some increase in the number of these students served in charter schools, and we see some evidence of increases in the 2011 data for the Commonwealth charter schools that opened last year.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said the numbers look promising. Secretary Reville said there is substantial improvement in these new schools and commended their progress.

**Charter School Authorizing Activities**

Commissioner Chester went over the memo on charter school authorizing activities and the schedule that were provided to the Board. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the Department is required to hold public hearings in each of the proposed locations for the charter school finalists; this year we expect 12 applications in 8 locations. Mr. Wulfson said the Department is reviewing the charter school accountability framework in light of the new accountability framework under the No Child Left Behind waiver, with the goal of creating a unified system.

**Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY14 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board’s Budget Committee**

Dr. Calderón-Rosado reviewed the Budget Committee's October 15 meeting, at which the committee discussed the Department's key priorities. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said the committee also discussed staffing concerns at the Department, where 56 percent of staff are funded through federal dollars. Commissioner Chester said the Executive Office of Administration and Finance just instituted some cost controls over hiring. Mr. Chertavian asked whether the college and career recommendations fit into the committee’s budget discussions. Commissioner Chester said they are found in various activities, but the most important need is staffing, and 27 positions are in limbo, including two new positions to support career readiness initiatives.

Commissioner Chester said the Department's IT budget rests with the Executive Office of Education, and we would advocate for it as well. The commissioner said the state is closely watching what happens at the federal level with the prospect of sequestration. Mr. Roach said that so much positive work has been identified, and it is crucial to maintain the Department's capacity and credibility with districts. Ms. Chernow asked whether training for teachers of English language learner students would be a separate line item. Commissioner Chester said it is included in the targeted request at just under $3 million for FY2014.

**Update on Level 4 Schools**

Commissioner Chester introduced a PowerPoint presentation on the Department’s work with Level 4 (underperforming) schools. He said the Department continues to examine the Level 4 schools to determine what differentiates the schools that are making significant gains from others. Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram said the Department has instituted a good balance between accountability and assistance. Jesse Dixon from the Office of School Turnaround said turnaround efforts nationally and in the Commonwealth in the past had about a 10 percent success rate, and our system is trying to change that. Mr. Dixon said the targets for Level 4 schools are rigorous but realistic. Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy noted that the commissioner placed six more schools in Level 4 status in September 2012.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Secretary Reville commended the comprehensive and thoughtful presentation. He asked about effective practices. Deputy Commissioner Ingram said the Department plans to do another study this year on what factors we are seeing in Level 4 schools that are making progress. Mr. Dixon said this year’s report will include an analysis of how money was spent in these schools.

Mr. Roach said six middle schools appear in the bottom ten in terms of performance of all Level 4 schools, and asked if there is a particular issue around middle schools. Deputy Commissioner Ingram said one structural issue is that some of the middle schools are large. Ms. Foisy said we are still looking for the answers; she noted that in Springfield, the elementary schools are making good progress, while middle schools continue to struggle. Mr. Roach suggested leadership plays a big part, including how schools exercise distributed leadership, and that sustainability is also a critical issue. Deputy Commissioner Ingram said a lot of technical assistance is centered on the instructional leadership team in totality. Ms. Foisy said the Department is using some Race to the Top funds to prepare turnaround leaders for schools.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:40 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