**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

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

**Tuesday, October 21, 2014**

**8:30 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Margaret McKenna**, Chair, Boston

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

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Katherine Craven**, Brookline

**Karen Daniels**, Milton

**Matthew Malone**, Secretary of Education, by James DiTullio, Designee

**Pendred Noyce**, Boston

**David Roach**, Millbury

**Mary Ann Stewart**, Lexington

**Donald Willyard**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

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

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**James Morton**, Springfield

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair McKenna welcomed members of the Board and the public. She reported on the briefing session that the Board had on Monday afternoon, October 20, on charter schools and the Board’s authorizing role. Chair McKenna recapped the Board’s special meeting on Monday evening, October 20, which focused on early literacy, particularly statewide achievement results, summer learning loss, and intervention strategies. She said the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will continue its focus on early literacy by scheduling a special joint meeting with the Board of Early Education and Care. Chair McKenna noted that she recently spoke at the annual conference of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Chair McKenna asked Mary Ann Stewart to report on her recent visits to private special education schools. Ms. Stewart visited the New England Center for Children and Nashoba Learning Group and viewed their use of restraint and seclusion. Chair McKenna said the Board would hold a hearing in the next few weeks on the proposed amendments to the restraint regulations. The Chair also noted that some people have come to today’s meeting to speak on charter school applicants’ waiver requests, although the Board will not be taking action on that matter today. She said the Board would schedule a separate forum to hear from the public on the waiver requests.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester informed members of the recent National Milken Educator award that went to Anthony Petrelis, a teacher at John J. McGlynn Elementary School in Medford. He noted that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has approved the flexibility waiver extension for Massachusetts under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allows Massachusetts to continue to use its updated school and district accountability system. Commissioner Chester said while USED did not approve the plan for allowing districts to choose either MCAS or PARCC in FY2015, there is no penalty, as the Board will make its decision on a single assessment system in time for FY2016. He reminded the Board of the Department’s upcoming statewide curriculum and instruction summit. The commissioner reported on the October 17 conference he attended on opportunity, equity, and outcomes at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Commissioner Chester updated the Board on the charter school application process and the impact of the calculation of the lowest ten percent of districts, particularly on the charter applicant groups from Brockton and Fitchburg. He said the Board followed an open process and made appropriate decisions, but these two applications are caught in a collision of various requirements. Commissioner Chester said the Board and Department will take the time necessary to review the waiver requests, the comments, and the options under the law, and then he will make a recommendation to the Board.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Mr. DiTullio said the Board’s special meeting on early literacy was a fruitful discussion. Noting the importance of interagency collaboration on early literacy, he commended the plan for a joint ESE-EEC board meeting. He said Governor Patrick is giving his final speech on education this week at Bunker Hill Community College. Mr. DiTullio said the executive office is focused on creating a seamless transition for the incoming governor.

**Comments from the Public**

1. Chris Martes, CEO & President, Strategies for Children, addressed the Board on early literacy.
2. Yvonne Powell, representative of the local stakeholders group, addressed the Board on the Dearborn School, Boston.
3. Carlos Rojas Álvarez, representative of the Boston Student Advisory Council and Youth on Board, addressed the Board on Level 5 schools.
4. Tracy O'Connell Novick, Worcester School Committee Member, addressed the Board on accountability.
5. Matt Holzer, Headmaster of Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School, addressed the Board on the school’s probation.
6. Carl Tillona, Principal of the Greenfield Virtual School, addressed the Board on the school’s probation.
7. Barbara Madeloni, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, addressed the Board on charter schools.
8. Kathleen Smith, Superintendent, Brockton Public Schools, addressed the Board on charter schools.
9. Andre Ravenelle, Superintendent, Fitchburg Public Schools, addressed the Board on charter schools.
10. Beth Anderson, MA Public Charter School Association, addressed the Board on charter schools.
11. Michael Sullivan, representative of the New Heights Charter School of Brockton founding group, addressed the Board on charter schools.
12. Jennifer Jones, representative of the Academy for the Whole Child Charter School founding group, addressed the Board on charter schools.

**Approval of 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 19, 2014 Special Meeting and September 20, 2014 Regular Meeting.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Election of Vice-Chair**

Harneen Chernow nominated David Roach to serve as vice-chair to the Board. Ms. Chernow said Mr. Roach has outstanding knowledge of both education policy and school district administration.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect David Roach to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.**

The vote was 9-0-1. David Roach abstained.

**Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY16 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board's Budget Committee**

David Roach, chair of the budget committee, said the committee had a preliminary discussion on establishing budget priorities, such as school and district turnaround, early literacy, educator evaluation, and curriculum. He said the findings of the Foundation Budget Review Commission will likely have an impact on the budget. Commissioner Chester said the Federal Reserve Bank conference affirmed the correlation between education and future success and income: education is the key to opportunity. He said while it is appropriate for local education agencies to manage and direct local schools, the *McDuffy* and *Hancock* decisions of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court made it clear that the Commonwealth, through its executive and legislative officials, has a fundamental constitutional duty to educate all children to a high standard. Commissioner Chester noted that Department capacity is a continuing challenge; of the $5 billion in state funds appropriated for K-12 education each year, less than 0.5% goes to the Department to fulfill our responsibilities.

Chair McKenna said the Board’s budget should reflect its priorities, especially initiatives vital to closing the achievement gap. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson reminded the Board that federal Race to the Top funding is phasing out this year. Ms. Chernow said during her time on the Board she has seen the contraction of state funding while the Department is expected to play an increased role. Ms. Noyce asked about per pupil expenditures. Mr. Wulfson said the statewide average per pupil expenditure is about $14,000, though generally higher in cities and affluent suburbs. He said districts receive additional funds for low-income students and English language learners through Chapter 70. He added that the state does not currently have a way to track those funds to ensure they are being spent effectively. The Commissioner noted districts have complete discretion in how they spend Chapter 70 funds. In response to a question, Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said over half the staff of the Department is federally funded. Mr. Roach said the state budget must provide adequate funding to protect long term investments and progress in education.

**Update on Level 5 Schools**

Commissioner Chester said this month’s update on Level 5 schools provides information about visits that have been scheduled with the four schools; the Level 5 Quarterly Progress Monitoring plan; and School Site Council/Parent Advisory Council updates. He said he visited the Parker Elementary School and New Bedford High School, and is very encouraged by the work and perspectives of parents and students. Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram updated the Board on the Dearborn Middle School in Boston, which is a Level 4 school. He said the Department has been working with the Boston Public Schools since August to set expectations and assist in the turnaround planning. Ms. Chernow commented on staff turnover at Level 5 schools. Ms. Noyce noted that the Board does not function as the school board for the Level 5 schools; staffing and building level decisions are the responsibility of the receiver.

**Update on PARCC**

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson made a presentation on PARCC including an overview of the organizational structure for the PARCC consortium. He said Commissioner Chester chairs the PARCC governing board, and our staff and Massachusetts educators are deeply engaged in the process. Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts state leadership set a high bar when joining the multi-state PARCC consortium. He said 13 states are currently active members in the consortium, with a couple of states having dropped out due to political and budgetary conditions in their states. Mr. Wulfson reviewed the final data on districts choosing either PARCC or MCAS for spring 2015 administration. He updated the Board on technology pilot funding through the IT Bond Bill and assistance for municipalities through MassIT. Mr. DiTullio said the Commonwealth is promoting school technology upgrades for instruction, not just for assessment. Liz Davis, Associate Commissioner of Assessment, informed Board members that a PARCC training session in Burlington will be provided for over 500 educators.

Chris Malone, Assistant Superintendent of Revere Public Schools, presented to the Board on Revere’s experience piloting PARCC and their use of technology in the classroom. He said students are very positive about the online experience for instruction as well as assessment. Mr. Malone thanked the Department for its assistance in resolving some problems with the PARCC field test, concerning uploading student data, the mathematics equation editor, and Pearson customer service. Mr. Willyard said he has heard from students who are enthusiastic about Revere’s work to bring technology into their classrooms. Chair McKenna asked about the Department’s survey of testing in Massachusetts districts. Mr. Wulfson said the initial information is in the packet distributed to the Board at this meeting, with a more detailed report expected in February.

**Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44): Requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students**

Commissioner Chester said the Board is taking final action today on regulations that went out for public comment in February. He pointed out the summary of comments and the Department’s response on various issues. He noted that the Department worked with various disability groups and educator preparation programs on the regulations. Mr. DiTullio said these regulations are a good example of how the Department reviews and takes into account all the public comments, and the final regulations are improved as a result of the process.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44), as presented by the Commissioner. The amendments relate to the requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School: Probation Recommendation**

Mr. DiTullio presented Chair McKenna with a recusal letter from Secretary Malone (the letter is attached to these minutes). Secretary Malone has recused himself from this matter due to a possible conflict of interest as an applicant for the position of Boston superintendent of schools. Mr. DiTullio said the Governor has assigned this particular matter to him.

Commissioner Chester presented an overview of the concerns about the school, including financial viability, failure to follow regulatory requirements, and academic progress. He said the Department and Board want to signal concerns early, in this case one year before the possible renewal of the charter, so the school can address the problems in timely fashion.

Chair McKenna commended the school and its headmaster for their openness and willingness to move forward and focus on improvement. Ms. Chernow asked if this school is part of the district’s turnaround strategy. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the school was started as an improvement effort, and 40% of the students are continuing to attend the school. He clarified that as a Horace Mann charter school, it is still being measured against the statewide performance criteria.

**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 1.12(2), hereby places the Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School (BGA) on probation and directs the school to meet the following terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner:**

1. **Beginning in October of 2014 and until further notice, BGA must submit to the Department, at** [**charterschools@doe.mass.edu**](mailto:charterschools@doe.mass.edu)**, board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school's board members. Additionally, if board materials do not already include this information, the school must also submit monthly financial statements.**
2. **By December 31, 2014, the school's board of trustees must have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation of its own capacity and must have recruited additional board members with needed expertise, as identified by the board of trustees and the Department.**
3. **By December 31, 2014, the school must establish an escrow account in an amount determined by the Department in consultation with the school to pay for any potential closing, legal, and audit expenses associated with closure, should that occur.**
4. **By February 28, 2015, the school's board of trustees must engage in training conducted by an external consultant, acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees for a charter school.**
5. **By February 28, 2015, all members of the board of trustees of BGA will complete the series of six trainings offered online by the Office of the Attorney General regarding the Open Meeting Law. All board members will sign the required certificate stating that they have received, read, and viewed the following materials: the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25; regulations promulgated by the Attorney General under G.L. c. 30A, § 25; and educational materials available from the Attorney General explaining the Open Meeting Law and its application.**
6. **By November 1, 2015, as documented by the school’s FY15 independent financial audit, the school must remedy all material weaknesses and deficiencies identified in the FY13 financial audit and any subsequent findings in the school’s audit for FY14. The school must have an unqualified opinion on its FY15 audit without any identified material weaknesses.**
7. **By December 31, 2015, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success through evidence of significant academic improvement in mathematics and English language arts.**
8. **The school will submit all documentation required by the Department in accordance with deadlines established by the Department for the remainder of the school’s charter term including, but not limited to, documents for approval and appointment of new board members; financial disclosures of board members; the school’s annual financial audit; the school’s application to renew its charter, if desired; the school’s annual report and end of year financial report; and all required and accompanying documentation.**

**In addition to meeting the terms of probation, Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School, like all charter schools, must comply with the terms of its charter. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School in meeting the terms of probation and its charter and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School: Probation Recommendation**

Commissioner Chester presented an overview. He said in 2010, the Massachusetts Virtual Academy (MAVA) began operations as a virtual innovation school, approved by the Greenfield Public Schools. The commissioner said in 2013, Governor Patrick signed the virtual school law authorizing the Board to adopt regulations and, through the Department, to oversee the establishment and operation of virtual schools. Commissioner Chester said the new statute was responsive to the position the Board adopted in 2011: that there should be a stronger oversight and consumer protection role for the state than the one provided by the innovation school statute. The commissioner noted that the 2013 legislation carved out a continuation for MAVA, now called Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS), with additional oversight.

Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the recommendation of probation is based upon concerns regarding the academic performance and governance of the virtual school. He said the Board attached conditions to GCVS’s virtual school certificate when it was granted, and the school has not met two conditions. The commissioner is recommending probation with additional conditions.

Ms. Noyce noted the additional conditions focus on English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. She said it would be an unfortunate unintended consequence if the school’s science achievement slipped due to a focus on only ELA and mathematics, and suggested the virtual school needs to align its curriculum in all subjects. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked about access and equity with regard to special education students and English language learners. She suggested adding a condition regarding identifying and serving English language learners and special education students, as required by law. Mr. Roach said there have been concerns about the virtual school for some time, and he hopes the school will benefit from the oversight and address the concerns.

Chair McKenna proposed that the main motion as presented in the Board book be amended to include a requirement that the school align its curriculum in all subjects, and to add a condition relating to identifying and serving English language learners and special education students, as required by law.

The main motion was duly made and seconded.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amend the main motion, as follows:**

* **add to the condition relating to alignment of curriculum, the words “all subjects in” so that it reads, “provide evidence that it has completed the alignment of its curriculum to all subjects in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks” and**
* **add a new condition that requires GCVS to provide evidence that it has fully implemented a system to identify and serve English language learners and special education students that is consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.**

The vote was unanimous. The Board then voted on the motion as amended.

**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 94, and 603 CMR 52.12(2), hereby places the Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) on probation and directs the school to meet the following terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner and amended by the Board:**

1. **By October 31, 2014, GCVS will submit to the Department a final draft of a contract with K12, Inc., that addresses all issues already communicated to GCVS by the Department, for approval by the Commissioner.**
2. **By December 31, 2014, GCVS will provide evidence that it has fully implemented a system to identify and serve English language learners and special education students that is consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.**
3. **By December 31, 2014, GCVS will provide evidence that it has completed the alignment of its curriculum to all subjects in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks:** [**http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html)**.**
4. **By December 31, 2014, GCVS will submit to the Department a comprehensive evaluation of the school’s mathematics and English language arts programs and of the school’s instructional practices, such evaluation to be conducted by one or more external consultants acceptable to the Department.**
5. **By January 31, 2015, GCVS will submit an action plan to the Department for approval that specifies strategies to improve mathematics and English language arts performance. The plan must address how the school will utilize and support instructional staff to implement the plan. The plan must include a timetable for the implementation of actions, must set deadlines for the completion of key tasks, and must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks to allow the GCVS board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation.**
6. **By December 31, 2015, GCVS must demonstrate that it is an academic success through evidence of significant academic improvement in mathematics and English language arts.**
7. **Beginning immediately and until further notice, GCVS must submit to the Department, at** [**jgwatkin@doe.mass.edu**](mailto:jgwatkin@doe.mass.edu) **or 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA, 02148, board meeting agendas and materials, prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to GCVS board members. Further, GCVS must submit to the Department the minutes of these proceedings as soon as the GCVS board approves them. The Department reserves the right to require the submission of additional information, such as quarterly or monthly financial statements, if board materials do not already include this information, and the school must provide such additional information within two business days.**

**In addition to meeting the terms of probation, the Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School must also comply with the terms of its certificate. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School in meeting the terms of probation and its certificate and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.**

The vote was unanimous.

**KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School: Removal of Conditions**

Commissioner Chester presented an overview, noting that this matter was brought to the full Board at the request of a member. He said the conditions that had been imposed on the school pertained to compliance and governance issues that surfaced during the school’s renewal process. He recommends that the Board remove the conditions placed on KIPP Lynn’s charter because the school has met all of the conditions imposed.

Ms. Chernow said the school was originally chartered to provide students with 220 school days per year and now offers 185 days, which seems to be a significant change. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said that is what the amendment process is for; the design of the school year has evolved although the school has a longer instructional day. He said the charter amendment process allows for a certain level of change to be approved by the Commissioner, and more significant changes are brought to the Board. Mr. Chuang said the school has an extended instructional day and outstanding results for students. Commissioner Chester noted that the school provides 1375 hours of structured learning time to its students each school year, compared to 990 hours for most traditional public secondary schools. Chair McKenna requested a further discussion on the charter amendment process and delegations.

**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 removes the conditions from the charter of the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School because the school has met the conditions imposed in March 2014.**

**KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote was 9-0-1. Harneen Chernow abstained.

**Timeline and Process for Educator Licensure Policy Review**

Commissioner Chester said the Department is in the very early stages of soliciting feedback from the field on initiatives to upgrade our licensure requirements and the connections to educator preparation programs. He said the Board has responsibility to establish standards for certifying (licensing) educators, principles of educator evaluation, and guidelines for educator preparation programs. He said the Massachusetts system seeks to promote growth and development for educators, place student learning at the center, recognize excellence in teaching and leading, and set a high standard for professional teaching.

Associate Commissioner Heather Peske said the Department engaged with over 300 educators and 25 focus groups on the topic of licensure redesign. She said the next step in the process is holding public forums for educators to weigh in on the draft proposals. Ms. Peske outlined the upcoming engagement opportunities.

Ms. Chernow said the draft policy options provided in the memorandum to the Board look very different from the draft policy options recently given to the field. She said the proposals include linking educator evaluation to licensure decisions, which is a loaded concept in light of a new evaluation system, a new assessment system, and district-determined measures. Ms. Noyce said the system should be designed to produce a diverse and well qualified educator workforce. Chair McKenna said she would not want to see licensure redesign place undue burdens on educator preparation programs. She said a balance must be struck between entry requirements into the field and sufficient experience to have an impact on students, and she would not favor a system that places teachers in a classroom based solely on a test. She added that the system should enable the identification of distinguished or superior teachers. Chair McKenna said the licensure system should not replace the district’s obligation to hire, evaluate, and, when necessary, fire their personnel. Mr. Roach said he has heard concerns from the field about the draft policies. He encouraged the Department and Board to be respectful of the viewpoints of educators and all types of preparation programs. Commissioner Chester said he will keep the Board posted about this initiative.

**Procedures for Superintendency Unions under Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 61; Authorization to Commissioner**

Commissioner Chester said superintendency unions are cooperative arrangements between two or more school committees, typically in small towns, to share the services of a superintendent of schools and central office staff, while allowing each town to keep its own school committee and school buildings. There are currently 49 superintendency unions in the Commonwealth. The Commissioner said the guidelines for the superintendency unions have not been updated since 1983 and he is asking the Board to delegate to the Commissioner the authority to issue and update guidelines and administrative procedures on the formation, reorganization, or dissolution of superintendency unions.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in updating the guidelines and administrative procedures on formation, reorganization, or dissolution of superintendency unions (in particular, the 1983 *Policy on the Dissolution of a School Union*), per General Laws c. 71, §§ 52, 53A, 53B, 59, 59A, 61, 62, 63, and 64; provided that the Commissioner shall report to the Board on the updated guidelines.**

The vote was unanimous.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:55 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**

**Monday, October 20, 2014**

**5:15 p.m. – 6:55 pm**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

**Margaret McKenna**, Chair, Boston

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

**Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Milton

**Katherine Craven**, Brookline

**Karen Daniels**, Milton

**Matthew Malone**, Secretary of Education, Roslindale

**James Morton**, Springfield

**David Roach**, Millbury

**Mary Ann Stewart**, Lexington

**Donald Willyard**, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

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

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

**Pendred Noyce**, Boston

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. She welcomed members to the special meeting on early literacy.

Commissioner Chester provided Board members with background on the current state of early literacy. He said Massachusetts is currently the top in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and has the highest standard for early grade reading – but the concern is that MCAS results for 3rd and 4th grade reading are stagnant. He presented the Massachusetts 3rd and 4th grade results, including disaggregated by subgroup.

Associate Commissioner Jonathan Landman said promising practices in early grade literacy include: skilled leadership, clear expectations for instructional practices, standards-based instruction, strategic use of assessment, and encouraged reading and support. Early Literacy Partnerships with various statewide agencies were reviewed. Mr. Landman said the state budget provides funding for consolidated literacy programs, Bay State Reading Institute, and early intervention tutorial literacy. He said the Department’s District and School Assistance Centers provide literacy support for Level 3 and Level 4 schools and districts. Chair McKenna said many schools and districts change reading programs frequently, thus disrupting learning. She said she would like to see Massachusetts become a leader in early literacy.

Katherine Craven arrived at 5:20 p.m.

Commissioner Chester introduced Tara Christian Clark, principal of the Alfred G. Zanetti Montessori Magnet School in Springfield. Ms. Clark and members of her staff spoke about the school’s progress in reading proficiency. She said the focus was to build the foundation for educators to teach students how to read without using a specific program. In response to Chair McKenna’s question, Ms. Clark said the school at one time had a higher rate of English language learners, who are now integrated into the regular program of instruction. She said enrollment is about 400 students, 65 percent of whom are low-income. Colette Proctor, instructional leader, said literacy crosses subject matters. She said MCAS open response mathematics questions used to be a problem for students, and now the performance gap in that area has closed. Ms. Clark said she believes principals should have a solid background in literacy and not rely solely on a packaged literacy program. Secretary Malone noted that the school has programs for children as young as three years old. He said it is important to build a solid educational base in the early years, to lead to improved results as the child develops. Commissioner Chester said Zanetti was in the first cohort of Level 4 schools and has made remarkable progress.

Secretary Malone introduced Dr. Nonie K. Lesaux, Professor of Education and Society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and co-chair of the Commonwealth's Early Literacy Expert Panel. Dr. Lesaux said the panel is charged with making bold recommendations that better align the work on early literacy across the three educational agencies, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), and the Department of Higher Education (DHE). She said the panel’s framework is composed of four key domains for developing literacy-related policy strategies: assessing learning and development; promoting reading; building language; and building adult capacity. Dr. Lesaux said the panel is specifically looking at the intersection of early intervention, screening, and home visits. She said there is a particular gap in services for children from birth to age five.

Mr. Morton introduced Tiffany Gueye, CEO of BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life), a national non-profit organization that is working to improve performance in high-poverty schools through the summer and through after-school learning experiences for at-risk students. Mr. Morton said BELL has seen learning improvement gains with their students of 5.7 to 6 months through their summer programs. Ms. Gueye said BELL is now in communities around the nation providing access to rigorous programs and enrichment activities that the students would not otherwise have had an opportunity to experience. She said both mandatory and voluntary summer learning programs have been shown to work and sustain gains during through the school year.

Secretary Malone said in his visits to schools over the summer, he saw enrichment and academic programs having a positive impact on children. He said a formal structure between the Boards of EEC and ESE should be created to ensure continued collaboration. In response to Commissioner Chester’s question, Dr. Lesaux said the data on retention of students in grade show it is both costly and ineffective. She said retention programs allow policy makers to appear to be taking action, when research shows that targeted services make the difference. Chair McKenna informed Board members of a study by Dr. James Kim on the READS for Summer Learning intervention program, which provides **a**ccess to books at home, **b**ooks that are well-matched to each child’s reading level and interests, and **c**omprehension activities. She said follow-up phone calls with parents and families to promote home book reading activities were shown to have an impact. In response to Mr. Roach’s question about early intervention services, Dr. Leseaux said some states in the Midwest have a system of intervention services specifically targeted to the child’s need. She said a parent information model should not supplant clinical or expert services.

Chair McKenna thanked the presenters for their time and valuable information.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 6:55 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

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF EDUCATION ONE ASHBURTON PLACE • ROOM 1403

BOSTON,MA 02108

TEL: (617) 979-8340

FAX: (617) 727-0049

[www.mass.gov/education](http://www.mass.gov/education)

DEVAL L. PATRICK

GOVERNOR

MATTHEW H. MALONE

SECRETARY

October 20, 2014

Margaret McKenna, Chair

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148

Dear Chair McKenna:

Tomorrow, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be considering and voting on Commissioner Chester’s recommendation to place the Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School on probation. I wanted to make you and the rest of the Board aware of why I cannot participate in those deliberations.

On February 26, 2014, the Boston School Committee approved the formation of a 12-member search committee to find a new superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. On March 12, 2014, the Boston School Committee approved the recommendation of the search committee to hire Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HY A) as the search firm charged with recruiting and vetting candidates for the position of superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. On March 25, 2014, HYA inquired about my interest in the Boston superintendent position. On March 26, 2014, I signed an appearance of a conflict of interest disclosure as required by G.L. c. 268A, s 23(b)(3) and expressed my desire to be considered by the search firm and the search committee for the position. I filed that disclosure with my appointing authority, Governor Deval Patrick. Although I am not "negotiating" for a position or making an arrangement concerning future employment in the literal sense of those words, I was in contact with the search firm and I am currently following the application process set forth by the search firm and the search committee. Under the State Ethics Commission's interpretation of G.L. c. 268A, l felt it necessary to file a disclosure with the Governor.

Given the above and as required by G.L. c. 268A, s. 6, I must abstain from participating in matters in which the Boston Public School system has a reasonably foreseeable financial interest unless I receive a written determination from the Governor allowing me to do so. Pursuant to G.L.c. 71, s. 89, a Horace Mann charter school must have its charter approved by the local school committee, and funding for a Horace Mann charter school comes directly from the school district in which the school is located, through a memorandum of understanding with the district. The Commissioner's recommendation, which will be discussed and voted on by the Board on October 21, 2014, may have a financial impact on the Boston Public Schools, as the school district provides the funding for the Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School.

Therefore, as required by G.L. c. 268A, s. 6, Governor Patrick determined, and I agree, that I should recuse myself from consideration of this matter (see attached disclosure form). Governor Patrick has assigned this matter to Undersecretary of Education James DiTullio, who will participate in deliberations and vote on the Commissioner's recommendation.

Sincerely,

Matthew H. Malone

Secretary of Education

Attachment

cc: James E. DiTullio, Undersecretary of Education & General Counsel, Executive Office of

Education

Jamie Hoag, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel to the Governor

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Rhoda E. Schneider, General Counsel, Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education

State Ethics Commission