**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

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

**Tuesday, April 26, 2016**

**8:30 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:**

**Paul Sagan**, Chair, Cambridge

**James Morton**, Vice-Chair, Boston

**Katherine Craven**, Brookline

**Ed Doherty**, Boston

**Margaret McKenna**, Boston

**Michael Moriarty**, Holyoke

**James Peyser,** Secretary of Education (by **Tom Moreau, Designee**)

**Mary Ann Stewart**, Lexington

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

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

**Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:**

**Roland Fryer**, Cambridge

**Pendred Noyce**, Boston

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He welcomed Board members and public. He thanked the Department for last night’s special meeting on social and emotional learning. Mr. Sagan said the Board’s Assessment Committee met and heard updates on the request for responses for the new assessment, review of the frameworks, and workgroups. He said the Committee on the Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation is in the process of completing interviews with Board members.

Commissioner Chester said the special meeting on social and emotional learning was thought-provoking and a very positive discussion. He reported that the Eagleton School is now closed, and exceptional interagency teamwork ensured a smooth closure and transfer of students. He updated the Board on assessment. He said the review of the ELA and math curriculum frameworks is underway and the Department is receiving constructive feedback through the survey. He informed the Board about the arts literacy conference that the Department sponsored recently for educators.

The commissioner said the Department has released an online tool to collect feedback on the accountability system in connection with the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and will continue to gather feedback from stakeholders through the summer. He announced the appointment of Heather Peske and Cliff Chuang as senior associate commissioners. He welcomed former Nashoba Valley Vocational Technical School Superintendent Judy Klimkiewicz to the Department as a part-time advisor for vocational technical education. The commissioner also introduced Jass Stewart, who has joined his office to work on strategic communications.

**Comments from the Public:**

1. Seven Hills Charter Public School students Lawrencia Boateng, Marcos Santos, and Samantha Augustin addressed the Board on changing the term English language learner to multi-lingual.
2. Maria Walzer addressed the Board on the Ukrainian Genocide and the curriculum frameworks.
3. Paul Rabchenuk addressed the Board on the Ukrainian Genocide and the curriculum frameworks.

**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 March 22, 2016 Regular Meeting.**

The minutes were approved. Vice-Chair Morton abstained.

**Low Income Education Access Project (LEAP) Update**

Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts has a high number of students identified for special education services – 17 percent in Massachusetts compared with 12 percent nationally. He said the Department worked with Dr. Tom Hehir to analyze special education in Massachusetts; the studies found that low-income students are twice as likely to be identified, students with disabilities in substantially separate settings do not perform as well, and low-income students are twice as likely to be in substantially separate settings.

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said in response to the findings, the Department created the LEAP project with a commitment to reduce inappropriate referrals and identification of students into special education and to reduce the high rate of substantially separate placements for low-income students. He presented information on the project, including inclusion and graduation rates and the percentage of low-income students by region. He said the Department has developed collaborative partnerships with 14 districts and an educational collaborative to produce tools, resources, training, professional development, and statewide dissemination. He introduced principal Sean O’Shea and ELA-literacy coordinator Patty O’Conner of Nashoba Regional School District, and Superintendent David DeRuosi, guidance counselor James Bouhuys, and adjustment counselor Diana Dymtryk of the Malden Public Schools.

Mr. O’Shea said the district identification rate is three times higher than the state, and through the LEAP project they are working collaboratively, reflecting on their practice, and making adjustments based on training. Ms. O’Conner reflected on a recent workshop and said the project and support have kept the district on track. Mr. DeRuosi said Malden embraced social and emotional learning as its focus this year, and that has continued to drive these types of conversations. Mr. Bouhuys said his school team is focusing on using strategies from the trainings at the school, revamping how they use data, and taking action to address the underlying issues with students.

Chair Sagan asked why Massachusetts has a higher identification rate. Mr. Johnston said the categories of learning disabilities and other cognitive disabilities generally involve judgment. Commissioner Chester added that a diagnosis of learning disabilities is generally based on reading problems, which raises the question whether the disability is in the student or in how we teach reading. Mr. Johnston said the solution to the problem of over-identification has to be in the general education program. Mr. Moriarty noted the connection between low rates of early literacy and students being identified as needing special education. He said educators need better training and more focus on early literacy. Commissioner Chester said he will keep the Board informed about the project.

**Update on Southbridge Public Schools Receivership Activities**

Commissioner Chester said work in Southbridge is moving in a positive direction and the turnaround plan is being developed. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said Jessica Huizenga will begin as receiver on May 2. Ventura Rodriguez said Dr. Huizenga has already been meeting with stakeholders and working on the turnaround plan. He said she is currently focusing on recruitment and improving school culture and climate. Mr. Johnston said the Commissioner and receiver are responsible for producing the turnaround plan, as outlined in the statute.

**Update on Holyoke Public Schools**

Mr. Johnston said the district is focused on implementing the turnaround plan. He said the professional compensation plan was announced to all Holyoke teachers, who will be receiving increases under the new model. Mr. Rodriguez said recruitment and retention of strong educators is a key part of the turnaround plan; Holyoke is recruiting through the Teach Western Mass initiative and received 500 applications to date. He said the district has partnered with Mount Holyoke College for teachers to earn or advance their license. Mr. Rodriguez said the secondary school redesign calls for all freshmen to begin at Holyoke High School. The Freshman Academy will form a house system with small clusters of students so they and their teachers get to know each other. All students will take part in an exploration program with career options and experiences. Mr. Moriarty said there is some community anxiety around the redesign, although most of it is unfounded. He encouraged further outreach to seventh and eighth grade students and parents.

Mr. Rodriguez reported that the district held acceleration academies for 200 students over the April vacation break; they received math instruction and participated in enrichment activities. Ms. McKenna asked about summer learning. Mr. Johnston said it is a work in progress because funding is an issue; one school will run a summer program this year, others are exploring it, and the district hopes to expand the programs in the future. In response to a question from Mr. Willyard, Mr. Johnston said Holyoke will increase instructional time in 2016-17 by providing 1330 instructional hours to elementary students. Mr. Moriarty commented that community organizations such as Homework House and the YMCA are key to helping students after school.

Commissioner Chester noted Holyoke is participating in an exciting new program in advanced manufacturing and health careers with Springfield Technical College and Holyoke Community College, as well as dual enrollment with UMass-Amherst. In response to a question from Chair Sagan, he said he plans to have the Holyoke, Southbridge, and Lawrence receivers present to the Board in May or June.

**Update on Level 5 Schools**

Mr. Johnston said the Level 5 receivers met together earlier in April for a professional learning opportunity at the Parker School. At the Dever School, the Second Step program is being used to focus on social and emotional learning and to reduce suspensions. UP-Holland has stopped the use of suspensions in the lower grades and brought in the Dovetail program to work on alternatives and prevention. The Parker School is focusing on school-based counseling, positive behavioral intervention and support, and all teachers are involved. In response to Ms. Stewart’s question, Mr. Johnston confirmed that the Dever principal has left the school and the Department is taking an active role with Blueprint in identifying a replacement.

Margaret McKenna left the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

**Proposed Rescission of Obsolete Regulations**

Commissioner Chester presented his recommendation that the Board rescind four sets of regulations that are obsolete because of changes in state law, funding, and practice. He asked the Board to take an initial vote to solicit public comment on the proposed rescissions, per the Administrative Procedure Act. He said he expects to bring the regulations back to the Board in June for final action.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted on the four matters as a package:**

1. **Proposed Rescission of Regulations on Private Occupational Schools, 603 CMR 3.00**

(using emergency provision of Administrative Procedure Act so as to coordinate timing of rescission with adoption of new regulations by Division of Professional Licensure)

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B and Chapter 106 of the Acts of 2012, hereby rescind the Regulations on Private Occupational Schools, 603 CMR 3.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

**Further, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the Board finds that the immediate rescission of these regulations is necessary for the preservation of public safety and general welfare, and that observance of the requirements of prior notice and public comment would be contrary to the public interest. The Board directs the Commissioner to provide notice and an opportunity for public comment on the emergency rescission of the regulations, in accordance with the requirements of G.L. c. 30A, § 3.**

1. **Proposed Rescission of Regulations on Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, 603 CMR 6.00**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with**

**G.L. c. 69, § 1B, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed rescission of the Regulations on Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, 603 CMR 6.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

1. **Proposed Rescission of Regulations on School Construction Grants, 603 CMR 38.00**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed rescission of the Regulations on School Construction Grants, 603 CMR 38.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

1. **Proposed Rescission of Regulations on Independent Agricultural and Technical Institutes, 603 CMR 45.00**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with**

**G.L. c. 69, § 1B, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed rescission of the Regulations on Independent Agricultural and Technical Institutes, 603 CMR 45.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

**Update on FY2017 Budget**

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the House Ways and Means Committee (HWM) released its recommendations for the upcoming FY17 state budget year. He said the most problematic cut in the HWM education budget is that it does not include the increase in the assessment budget for the development of the next-generation MCAS. He said most of the education amendments submitted were not passed. Mr. Wulfson said the final House budget will be released by the end of the week, the Senate budget will be released in mid-May, and then the budget will go to conference committee. Commissioner Chester said the HWM budget does invest in K-12 education at the local level, but it has cut back resources for the Department.

**Foundation Budget Review Commission**

Roger Hatch, Director of School Finance, said the commission was charged by the Legislature with reviewing and updating the funding formula to reflect changes in educational practice and costs of services in the decades since 1993. The commission issued its final report in October 2015, and its recommendations are currently under consideration by the Legislature. Mr. Hatch said the final recommendations identified employee health insurance costs, in-district special education costs, out-of-district tuition and costs, English language learner grade-base rate, and low-income increment as areas for change. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson presented an analysis of spending and student performance data. He said there is no clear connection between high spending and high performance.

Assistant Secretary Tom Moreau said the Department’s report on the Chapter 70 program identified similar recommendations to the commission. Mr. Moreau said there are still many unknowns on specific district spending and what yields the best results; he encouraged further study. He said the commission’s report is now with the Legislature and is informing the review of the Chapter 70 formula, for example, addressing the low-income metric. Ms. Craven commented that the Governor and Legislature are unlikely to commit to $1 billion more without some assurance on outcomes.

Commissioner Chester said the demographic shifts expected over the next 20 years need to be taken into account: the K-12 population will remain steady while the 65+ population doubles, which will increase competition for resources. He said we need to help school districts think more strategically about how they are using resources and what expenditures are high-leverage in terms of student benefits. Mr. Moreau said the review of Chapter 70 is a multi-year process and calls for a long-term view. Ms. Stewart said she would like the Board to reinforce support for the commission’s recommendations. Chair Sagan said he will ask the commissioner to discuss this individually with Board members and return with a recommendation.

Katherine Craven left at 12:20 p.m.

Mary Ann Stewart reported on her attendance at the National Association of State Boards of Education’s Legislative Conference. She said the focus was on ESSA, accountability, assessment, student data privacy, and the role of state boards. Ms. Stewart said the conference was very high-quality, informative and relevant.

**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

**Minutes of the Special Meeting**

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

**Monday,** **April 25, 2016**

**5:00 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

**Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:**

**Paul Sagan**, Chair, Cambridge

**James Morton**, Vice-Chair, Boston

**Katherine Craven**, Brookline

**Ed Doherty**, Boston

**Margaret McKenna**, Boston

**Michael Moriarty**, Holyoke

**James Peyser,** Secretary of Education (by **Tom Moreau, Designee**)

**Mary Ann Stewart**, Lexington

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

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

**Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:**

**Roland Fryer**, Cambridge

**Pendred Noyce**, Boston

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed members of the Board and public.

Commissioner Chester welcomed the Board and members of the panel. He said social and emotional learning is a topic of high interest in schools across the Commonwealth and nationally. He introduced Rachelle Engler Bennett, Director of the Department’s Office of Learning Supports and Early Learning, and panel members:

* Audrey Jackson, 5th grade teacher, Joseph P. Manning School; 2016 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year
* Dana Brown, Principal, Malden High School
* Meg Mayo Brown, Superintendent, Fall River Public Schools
* Chad d’Entremont, Ph.D., Executive Director, Rennie Center
* Linda Dusenbury, Ph.D., Research Consultant, CASEL
* Ronald F. Ferguson, Ph.D., Professor and Achievement Gap Initiative Co-Chair and Director, Harvard University; Co-Founder, Tripod
* Sara Bartolino Krachman, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Transforming Education

Ms. Engler Bennett said the discussion would have two parts: the first to discuss policy and research and the second to share examples of practice in Massachusetts schools.

Chad d’Entremont discussed the Rennie Center’s recent policy brief on social and emotional learning (SEL). He said there is often a false dichotomy between the development of the whole child and education reform and rigor. He said focusing on SEL and health needs improves academic rigor. Mr. d’Entremont said many schools are struggling to address diversity and a large achievement gap. He said the Rennie Center’s policy report highlighted the need for training, support, and integration for SEL. He stressed that SEL should not be an add-on initiative, but rather a cohesive approach embedded in a new vision for schooling and learning.

Linda Dusenbury presented on CASEL’s definition of social and emotional learning. She said SEL is a process of acquiring and applying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to five core competencies. Ms. Dusenbury outlined the five core competencies of SEL. She summarized national research showing that teachers believe SEL benefits students in school, work, and life.

Ronald Ferguson discussed teaching and the development of agency. He said tested outcomes (reading, math, reasoning skills, and academic knowledge) and agency-related factors (growth mindset, conscientiousness, future orientation, social emotional skills) lead to success in school and life. He said the focus should be on the characteristics of good teaching that enhance social-emotional learning, and reviewed Tripod’s 7Cs of effective teaching. He said he is skeptical about using students’ descriptions of their dispositions; he advocates asking students what they are learning.

Sara Bartolino Krachman presented on the results of a longitudinal analysis of Massachusetts showing that eighth-graders’ social-emotional skills predict on-time graduation rates. She reviewed the accountability system for the California CORE school district, which incorporates measures of social-emotional learning, culture, and climate. Ms. Krachman also reviewed field test results showing the correlation of student self-reports with academic and behavioral outcomes. She said SEL helps identify students who are in need of supports. In response to Chair Sagan’s question, Ms. Krachman said some levers show better results, such as growth mindset at the high school level and self-monitoring at the middle school level.

In response to Mr. Moriarty’s question, Ms. Dusenbury said she recommends using a common definition of SEL within a school system. She said CASEL uses lesson-based programs, teaching practices, curriculum integration, and policies set at the district and school level. Dr. Ferguson said agency means the capacity and propensity to take purposeful action, and promoting it with students means teaching teachers when and how to clear up confusion, challenge students to persist, and resist coddling. Dr. d’Entremont said SEL must be embedded into the school culture, teaching, and learning. He provided an example of a classroom with a small group design comprised of a peer-led group, an independent learner group, and one group working with the teacher, with all students learning English language arts (ELA) while building skills. Ms. McKenna said we cannot assume everyone agrees that SEL is a key component to a child’s success; some believe we should focus only on core academic subjects, despite the research that shows SEL enhances academic outcomes. Ms. Craven asked for advice on how the Board should address SEL. Dr. Ferguson said the Board should support schools’ and districts’ use of different models and approaches, but study them to determine success and challenges.

The Board took a short break.

Commissioner Chester welcomed the next panel of practitioners. He said schools in Fall River are much improved because of the leadership of Meg Mayo Brown. He noted the diversity of Malden High School and students’ success under the leadership of Dana Brown. He said Audrey Jackson has done a remarkable job participating in the rulemaking for the Every Student Succeeds Act, in addition to her classroom duties and role as Teacher of the Year.

Fall River Superintendent Meg Mayo Brown said Fall River was one of the seven wraparound zone districts through the state’s Race to the Top grant. She said the Fall River wellness initiative focuses on coordinated wraparound services, positive child and youth development, positive school and classroom culture, and home-school connections. She said by embedding it within the district’s accelerated improvement plan, the district was able to build a system to support SEL. Ms. Mayo Brown said according to an evaluation of the wraparound zone (WAZ) project, students attending WAZ schools gained 5.8 percentage points in ELA and 7.9 points on mathematics state assessments, and turnaround schools exited their status at higher rates. She said partnerships with the Department of ESE, social services agencies, higher education, and others are necessary to support the SEL needs of students.

Malden High School Principal Dana Brown commended the Board and Department for making SEL a focus. Mr. Brown said his district recast its budget to add licensed social workers and adjustment counselors to each high school “house.” He said the school leadership built teachers’ skills by providing training and working with community partners on trauma, triggers, and health.

Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Audrey Jackson said SEL policies must incentivize rather than be compliance driven. She said the Joseph Manning School in Boston, where she teaches, is a K-5 school with 150 students. The school uses an inclusion model. She provided examples of her students’ behaviors and challenges and ways in which she has addressed them. In response to Ms. Craven’s question, Ms. Jackson recommended there be a cohort of schools with a performance network to build skills and tools around SEL. Mr. Brown said educator training should be strengthened and the Board of Higher Education should also make this a focus, along with other agencies and organizations. In response to a question regarding trauma, Ms. Jackson said trauma is one facet of a larger framework for SEL. Dr. Ferguson said trauma is a special need and calls for a multi-strand approach, including institutes to teach teachers to do the sorts of things that Ms. Jackson does in her classroom. He added that SEL, cultural competence, and orderly classrooms are some of the key components of successful schools, noting that effective classroom management (captivate, clarify, challenge) is the strongest predictor of year-to-year learning gains.

Chair Sagan thanked the panel and the Commissioner for tonight’s presentation. He thanked Mary Ann Stewart and Margaret McKenna for focusing the Board on this work. Commissioner Chester said he is restructuring the Department to be more deliberate in this area. He thanked the Board and the presenters for an excellent discussion.

**On a motion duly made and seconded:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:10 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