**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

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

**Tuesday, June 25, 2019, 9:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

**Rumney Marsh Academy**

**140 American Legion Highway**

**Revere, MA 02151**

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

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

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

**Ed Doherty**,Boston

**Amanda Fernandez**,Belmont

**Matthew Hills**, Newton

**Maya Mathews**, Student Advisory Council, Newton

**Margaret McKenna**, Boston

**Michael Moriarty**, Holyoke

**James Peyser**,Secretary of Education

**Mary Ann Stewart**, Lexington

**Martin West**, Newton

**Jeffrey C. Riley**,Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Chair Craven convened the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting at 9:00 a.m. and members introduced themselves.

## Public Comment

* **Emily Ruddock,** MASSCreative and the Arts for All Coalition, addressed the Board on the 2019 Arts Curriculum Framework.
* **Sarah Hall,** Pelham School Committee, addressed the Board on the Request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School for Review of Commissioner's Decision.

**• Peter Demling,** Amherst School Committee/Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee, addressed the Board on the Request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School for Review of Commissioner's Decision.

* **Molly Burnham,** Northampton School Committee, addressed the Board on the Request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School for Review of Commissioner's Decision.
* **Tyrone Mowatt,** Former Chair, Gifted and Talented Advisory Council, Former Vice- Chair and Chair, Academic Achievement Committee, and Lowell Community Charter School, addressed the Board on providing opportunities for gifted Black and Latinx students.
* **Elizabeth Sansone**, Teacher, Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children, addressed the Board on concerns about teacher layoffs at the Pappas facility.

**Comments from Chair Craven**

Chair Craven welcomed Matthew Tibbitts, the incoming student member of the Board for 2019-2020. She announced that she has asked Ms. Fernandez to chair a committee of the Board on educator diversity, to complement and highlight the initiative the Commissioner has launched. She has also asked Mr. Doherty, Ms. McKenna, and Ms. Stewart to serve on the committee.

Chair Craven highlighted the data usage consortium that the Commissioner has been involved with along with the Commissioners of Higher Education and Early Education and Care, and Secretary Peyser. The consortium is creating a data roadmap to help policymakers address critical issues with the benefit of longitudinal and outcome data. Chair Craven has asked Mr. West to be part of this consortium. She commended DESE for being the leader among the education agencies in making data available and using it strategically.

Chair Craven appointed Matt Hills to take her place as chair of the Board’s budget committee. She also commended Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston for the initiatives he is leading to improve special education processes and outcomes for the benefit of students and parents.

**Comments from Commissioner Riley**

Commissioner Riley thanked Revere Mayor Arrigo and Superintendent Kelly for hosting the Board today. He noted that deeper learning and high-quality teaching happen daily in the Revere Public Schools. The Commissioner thanked outgoing student Board member Maya Mathews and welcomed incoming student member Matthew Tibbitts from Ludlow. Commissioner Riley noted the upcoming transition of receivers at the Dever School in Boston: Michael Contompasis will be stepping down as receiver but still consulting with the Dever for the coming year, and the Commissioner plans to appoint Eileen Nash, former Deputy Superintendent in the Boston Public Schools, as receiver.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Moriarty noted a correction in the minutes recounting his comment about recruitment of teachers; he asked that the word “internationally” be replaced with “other states with large Latino populations.” Chair Craven said the minutes would be revised to reflect the wording change.

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

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the May 21, 2019 Regular Meeting, as corrected.**

The vote was unanimous.

## Chair Craven welcomed Mayor Brian Arrigo and Superintendent Dianne Kelly and thanked them for hosting the Board today.

## Welcome from Revere Public Schools

Superintendent Dianne Kelly said they are honored to host the Board meeting in Revere today. She recognized two school committee members in attendance, Stacey Rizzo and Carol Tye, Assistant Superintendent Josh Vadala, and Revere Teachers Association President and co-chair of the Revere Educators Leadership Board, Erik Fearing.

Superintendent Kelly gave an overview of student demographics in the Revere Public Schools and reviewed the district’s vision and mission, the mindsets that drive the work, and practices that have fostered success. She highlighted the work of the Revere Educators Leadership Board, including six councils that focus on different aspects of improving instruction. Superintendent Kelly said she has seen great progress in Revere over the last 20 years. She thanked Chair Craven for helping to create Rumney Marsh Academy when she was with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Chair Craven thanked Superintendent Kelly for all she has done.

## The Commissioner’s Report to the Board: Our Way Forward

Commissioner Riley presented his report and plan, Our Way Forward. He said after spending his first year as Commissioner on a listening and learning campaign, four common themes emerged for a new K-12 education platform: deeper learning for all; holistic support and enrichment; innovation and evidence-based practices; and the state as a partner. Commissioner Riley explained each theme and said he intends to begin to implement them starting with a new pilot program called the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (KCL).

Commissioner Riley said KCL will incorporate all four themes and will: create a research and development (R&D) hub of educators, schools, and districts focused on incubating and assessing innovative approaches to deeper learning, including standards-aligned instruction and assessment (Theme I); form a highly engaged network of practitioners, through which holistic support (wraparound) and enrichment efforts and evidence-based practices can be identified and shared (Themes II and III); and model a new approach for how the Department can partner with the field to support adoption of promising practices, especially those shown to close achievement gaps, while respecting and learning from each community’s context (Theme IV).

Commissioner Riley said he looks forward to further discussion of his plan with the Board and the education community, and expects it to lead to better outcomes for students.

Mr. Doherty said he believes the Commissioner’s plan is on target, especially in its holistic approach to support students. Mr. Doherty urged the Board to voice its support for additional resources for public education. Ms. Stewart asked if the Department would be moving to more performance-based assessments, and if the KCL might collaborate with the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment. Commissioner Riley said he is willing to work with everyone to find a way forward.

Mr. Moriarty said the report has a lot of merit and he hopes it will be disseminated beyond the education community. He noted that grade 3 reading is an important data point but a trailing indicator, whereas chronic absenteeism is a leading indicator. He said schools need more information about the best educational practices.

Ms. McKenna said she in encouraged by the plan and supports the concept of the Department as a partner. She added that the Department is now seen as a place to get support, which is a tribute to the Commissioner. Commissioner Riley said it is actually a tribute to the terrific people at DESE. Mr. Hills asked if the plan indicates any shift in assessment and accountability standards. Commissioner Riley said the Department is not abandoning the MCAS but is looking for efficiencies, quicker turnaround on results, and potentially different kinds of assessment for history/social science and technology/engineering. He added that the Department is working to figure out what that would look like.

Vice-Chair Morton said he likes that the plan is called “Our” Way Forward because it is a collective effort. He commended the focus on workforce diversity, early college, acceleration academies, parents as partners, and alternative assessments. Ms. Fernandez said she in encouraged by the plan and feels hopeful about the path the Commissioner has laid out and how he has framed the issues. Chair Craven thanked the Commissioner for all his work, particularly his emphasis on partnerships.

## Annual Performance Evaluation of the Commissioner

Vice-Chair Morton, who chaired the committee on the Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation, thanked Chair Craven and Ms. Fernandez for serving on the committee. He explained that the committee gathered data from various sources, including student performance data, the Commissioner’s self-evaluation, and input from members of the Board, the Commissioner’s leadership team, receivers in Lawrence, Holyoke, and Southbridge, and several external stakeholders and constituents. He added that the evaluation was structured around four dimensions: facilitate student growth and achievement (30%); management and operations (25%); external relations and communication (25%); and Board support and effective interactions (20%).

Vice-Chair Morton said the committee concluded that Commissioner Riley’s performance in his first year was positive and inspiring, creating momentum for the coming school year, with an overall rating of 4.15, based upon the criteria adopted by the committee. He added that the committee would prefer to underline this endorsement with a greater salary increase, but is limited by budget constraints. Based upon the performance of Commissioner Riley and the Department, as set forth in the memo, he said the committee is recommending a salary increase of two percent.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Commissioner’s FY2019 performance rating of *Very Good,* as recommended by the Board’s committee. The Board further approves a salary increase for the Commissioner of 2 percent, effective July 1, 2019.**

The vote was unanimous.

Chair Craven called for a ten-minute break. The Board reconvened at 10:35 a.m.

## 2019 Arts Curriculum Framework

Ron Noble, Associate Commissioner, Craig Waterman, lead writer of the revised Arts framework, and Dawn Benski, Arts content lead, presented a brief overview of the review process, public comment, and the Department’s response to the feedback. They highlighted the recommended revisions to the framework. Chair Craven commended the Department for revising the framework and asked about plans for implementing it. Ms. McKenna asked about resources and professional development for teachers. Mr. Waterman said 2019-2020 would be a transition year with the intention of fully implementing the standards by 2020-2021. He said the Department would provide online resources, professional development modules, and regional networks, among other strategies. Mr. Hills asked how districts would view the framework in relation to elementary school schedules. Mr. Noble said the consistent organization of the frameworks across disciplines should help schools and districts to integrate the arts into the overall curriculum in ways that the 1999 framework did not facilitate.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Chapter 69, Sections 1D and 1E of the General Laws, approves the 2019 Arts Standards, and directs the Commissioner to incorporate the standards into the 2019 Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework and distribute copies to the Joint Committee on Education for their information, and to public schools and other interested parties throughout the Commonwealth for use in improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the arts.**

Further, that the Board extends its appreciation to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and to the many individuals and groups statewide that helped to revise and strengthen the 2019 Arts Standards and the 2019 Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework.

The vote was unanimous

## District and School Accountability System: Recommended Modifications

Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner, and Rob Curtin, Associate Commissioner, presented the proposed modifications to the district and school accountability system. Mr. Johnston reviewed the process: since the modifications were introduced to the Board in March 2019, the Department has received feedback through public comment, from the Board’s Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council (AAAC), and from information sessions held with district and school personnel.

Mr. Curtin summarized the changes proposed and feedback received. He noted that these changes to the accountability system would not require any changes to the state regulations this year. Mr. Curtin added that if the Board approves, the Department will incorporate these changes into the 2019 accountability reporting.

In response to a question from Mr. West, Mr. Curtin said the changes to the advanced course work list and participation calculation would apply retroactively to the first year, so that there is a consistent system across both years. Mr. Moriarty commended the Department for continuing to focus on chronic absenteeism, noting that districts and schools need professional development to better understand the causes and effective ways to address the problem. In response to a question from Ms. Stewart, Mr. Curtin said students who miss more than 18 school days (10 percent of the school year) are counted as chronically absent, and schools may exclude from that calculation students who attend a half-day of school, including online or in a home/hospital program. Ms. McKenna encouraged the Department to disseminate best practices for promoting student attendance and engagement in school.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED:        that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. General Laws c. 69, §§ 1A, 1B, 1I, 1J, and 1K, hereby adopts the framework for district and school accountability recommended by the Commissioner as described in the June 2019 Summary of the District and School Accountability System.

The vote was unanimous.

## Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework: Update on Revision Process

Rachelle Engler Bennett, Associate Commissioner, introduced the topic, noting the current Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework was adopted in 1999. Kristen McKinnon, assistant director of Student and Family Support summarized work done to date on the revision process. She reviewed outreach and planning, highlighted priorities, and noted the work done by the 45-member review panel. Ms. McKinnon said next steps include outreach to more stakeholders, including the State Student Advisory Council. She said the plan is to bring a draft revised framework to the Board in the fall for discussion and a vote to release it for public comment. On that schedule, the final document, reflecting public comment, would be presented to the Board for approval in the winter.

Ms. McKenna asked if the framework is recommended or required. Ms. Peske joined the panelists and said that while the curriculum frameworks are recommended rather than required, districts generally follow the state frameworks and standards. Vice Chair Morton advocated including in the framework factors relating to the impact of poverty, incarceration, drug addiction, violence, and the experience of trauma. In response to a question, Ms. McKinnon said on the current timetable, the revised framework would be implemented in school year 2020-2021. Ms. McKenna commented that teachers will need support and resources to implement the new framework well.

**Delegation of Authority to Commissioner to take Necessary Action between Board Meetings and to Approve Proposed Contracts with Education Management Organizations for Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School**

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 approving any matters that are not otherwise covered by the Board's previous delegations of authority and that require Board action between June 25, 2019, and the next regular meeting of the Board in September 2019, provided that the Commissioner shall consult with the Chair in advance of any such action and shall report to the Board on any matters that have been so approved.**

**Further, 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 approving the management contracts for Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School as required by General Laws chapter 71, section 89 (k)(5), and 603 CMR 1.00. Such approval will follow a legal and technical review of the proposed contracts and a vote by the boards of trustees of these charter schools to approve such contracts and to submit a request to amend their charters accordingly. Any such approval by the Commissioner shall also operate to amend the charters granted to Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School to include these management contracts.**

The vote was unanimous.

## Schedule for Regular Board Meetings through June 2020

Chair Craven reminded members that they reviewed the proposed dates at last month’s meeting.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the schedule of regular meetings through June 2020, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was unanimous.

Request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School for Review of Commissioner's Decision

Chair Craven introduced Cliff Chuang, senior associate commissioner, and Brenton Stewart, school development and data specialist, to discuss the request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCICS). Mr. Chuang said PVCICS has asked the Board to review the Commissioner’s decision not to recommend its most recent expansion request. He noted that representatives from the school were at the meeting to present the information they want the Board to consider. Attorney Howard Cooper from Todd & Weld, counsel to PVCICS, introduced his colleague Attorney Elizabeth Olien; PVCICS trustee Roland Mandler; Richard Alcorn, executive director; and Maureen Shaw, the PVCICS special education administrator.

Attorney Cooper presented his points, including a 13-page handout, in support of the school’s request for an increase in its enrollment cap to 950 students, an increase of 368 seats. He referred to the letter he sent to Chair Craven and the Board on May 17, 2019, asking the Board to review the Commissioner’s decision not to recommend the expansion. In closing, Attorney Cooper said his client’s persistence in pursuing the expansion is in response to demand from families and the success that PVCICS has achieved with its students.

Commissioner Riley said based on the lack of compelling evidence that the school can maintain sustained enrollment under the proposed growth plan it submitted as part of the 2018 request, he did not recommend the request. He noted that the Board could do any of the following: vote to approve the school's amendment request, notwithstanding the Commissioner's objections;

vote to deny the amendment request, based upon the reasons the Commissioner has presented;

vote to approve a modified version of the school's request, addressing how the school would prepare for and implement an enrollment growth plan different from what was originally proposed and whether a proven provider determination has been made by the Commissioner; or

take no formal action, in which case the denial stands for the reasons presented by the Commissioner.

Mr. Moriarty said he has supported PVCICS in the past and believes it is an innovative and valuable program, and he hopes the ongoing conversation can produce a recommendation that the Board can support. Secretary Peyser said he is very supportive of the school and hopeful of a path forward if PVCICS works with the Department. He added that the Board relies on the Commissioner and Department to vet these proposals thoroughly, and the integrity of the process has been essential to the success of charter schools.

Chair Craven encouraged the school to work with the Department. She asked if any member wanted to make a motion. Vice-Chair Morton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Doherty.

**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 denies the request of the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School to amend its charter and affirms the Commissioner’s decision during the charter amendment process in 2018-2019 to not recommend an increase in the school’s maximum enrollment to 952 students. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education relies on the reasons presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was 10-1. Mr. Moriarty voted in opposition.

State Student Advisory Council End-of-Year Report for 2018-2019

Ms. Mathews expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board and thanked members for their support. Ms. Mathews and Mr. Tibbitts reported on the State Student Advisory Council’s work during 2018-2019 on topics including school climate and student mental health, global outreach, and civics education. Chair Craven thanked Ms. Mathews for her service.

## Update on FY 2020 State Education Budget

Bill Bell, Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO, and Rob O’Donnell, Director of School Finance, updated the Board on the status of the FY2020 state education budget. Mr. Bell noted an interim budget is in place for the start of the new fiscal year. He added that legislative committees are continuing to deliberate on Chapter 70 reform bills. Secretary Peyser said the Governor has been advocating funding to ensure that the Commissioner and Department have flexible resources to promote initiatives in the strategic plan.

Chair Craven thanked the Board for a great year.

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

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board