And I can formally welcome you to the Commissioner's spring webinar next slide, please.

Here's our agenda for this afternoon, which we shared with all of you. Last week.

I want to express gratitude as always, to the leaders at Mass MCPSA and MOEC for your input on this agenda.

I appreciated the way that Acting Commissioner Johnson would organize his Webinar agenda items within the framework of the educational vision. And, as you can see here, I kept the same format for our experience this afternoon.

Today, I'm going to start with some updates on Federal actions and on the new incoming Commissioner. And then I'll go through some specific topics related to our strategic objectives and core functions.

And I'll end with announcements, and we'll save time at the end for some Q&A.

But let's begin with our educational vision.

as we think about recent Federal actions. I think it's important to show this slide and how DESE is maintaining our commitment to our educational vision during these current times.

when the Healey Driscoll Administration and the Attorney General's office responds to Federal orders. We're working to protect all of you from funding cuts and policy changes at the Federal level that threaten the stability of our local school communities and the well-being of Massachusetts students and educators.

While we cannot predict what the Federal Government will do, the Governor and the Massachusetts Attorney General have been on the same page

where the United States Department of Education has overreached. We've responded through the courts.

Ultimately we will stay true to this department's educational vision of all students being known and valued and having the supports that they need to succeed

in terms of supports that DESE provides all of you. I'm excited to announce the launch of our 3rd annual catalog of aligned supports

each year. DESE engages in a strategic planning process to promote alignment of the guidance, resources, tools, professional learning, opportunities and grant offerings to our strategic objectives and educational vision.

I joined this process when I stepped into the interim role, and I'm excited about the continued and new supports for districts in school year 25-26.

The catalog will be posted on our website early next week, and we look forward to districts engagement with it as they plan for next the next school year.

We've, as you might imagine, been hearing a lot of questions about the President's skinny budget, and how it will impact us

to unpack this. I'd like to share some context for you on the presidential budget and process. And then I'll talk about the current Federal education award status.

A special shouts out to Bill Bell and Matt Denninger for their help in preparing this slide.

A President's budget is not final. I'll start by saying that, much like the Governor's budget or house one in Massachusetts, it starts the budget process for a given fiscal year, and helps to signal to the Congress what provisions the White House supports.

President Trump released a skinny budget on May second.

it's considered a skinny budget because it lacks many of the program level details.

While it generally lacks granular details, it proposes sweeping changes.

The proposal goes to the House and Senate appropriations committees which are expected to release their own proposals. Later this summer

legislative negotiations will determine which of these proposals are adopted.

Now let's shift to a look at our current Federal education award status

in FY25, we received awards that will finish up later on. This year.

Most of the FY25 Federal grants are good for 27 months.

FY26 has been signed into Federal law as well.

We the expectation there is level funding, however, we've only received awards for Idea title one, and Perkins, all of which were level funded as expected.

the Federal office of Management and Budget and Us. Ed. Are delayed on the other awards

most FY26 Federal grants are good for 27 months.

As for FY27, it's still in the early days of the process, because the President's skinny budget was released on the second of this month.

Next slide, please.

Moving on from the Federal level to a little bit closer to home. I want to highlight the many ways that the Governor's FY26 budget is designed to provide relief for schools and districts.

Here are some of the budget highlights that I want to share with you this afternoon

7.3 billion dollars in Chapter 70 A to school districts which is an increase of 420 million dollars over FY25 includes a $75 minimum aid per pupil to ensure that all districts receive increased supports, and, as you know the House and Senate will take that number and go even higher.

There's 32 and a half million dollars proposed to reimagine High School. This is part and parcel of a multi-year approach on college and career readiness, readiness initiatives historically prioritized by the Administration and the Legislature.

Special education circuit Breaker is fully funded at 682 million dollars, a 24% increase over the current fiscal year, or 132 million dollars increase. I want to note that 150 million dollars of that is made available through the FY26 companion fair share supplemental budget.

We intend to maintain free school breakfasts at breakfasts and lunch

through a 170 million dollars proposal. There's a 25 million dollars proposal for literacy launch to ensure quality reading instruction for our youngest students, an increase of 5 million dollars over the current fiscal year.

And then there's a 5 million dollars proposal for early childhood. Mental health supports with an additional 5 million dollars in fair share to be utilized across the executive office of education.

Again, these are the ways that the Governor's budget is really pushing to provide relief for schools and districts in the coming fiscal year.

Moving on to some exciting updates about DESE’s new commissioner

in April, as I'm sure many of, if not all of you know. The Board voted to recommend Pedro Martinez as the next Massachusetts Commissioner of elementary and secondary education.

I was pleased in my secretary capacity to accept the Board's recommendation.

Mr. Martinez is a nationally recognized superintendent with over 20 years in K to 12 leadership, including 13 years as a superintendent.

He's known for creating long-term solutions that promote equity and economic mobility

as head of Chicago public schools. He led the nation's led the nation in post-pandemic reading and math gains.

Under his leadership. Chicago saw record high graduation rates, scholarships, and college credits earned in high school

before Chicago. He led in San Antonio, where his district was named Texas's fastest improving large district in 3 different years.

He also held senior education roles in Nevada.

Born in Mexico, Mr. Martinez will be DESE’s 25th Commissioner, and will be the 1st Latino person to serve in the role.

Having met him personally, I can say that Mr. Martinez will bring a fresh, new energy and endless dedication to the agency.

Now many of you have been asking when he will start? And how do you get in touch with him? How do you get to meet him? How do you invite him to speak at events, and will he keep doing webinars such as that in which we're engaged right now with all of you.

1st let me say that we are looking at a summer start for Mr. Martinez, and when he begins his schedule and entry meetings will be determined at his direction.

The Commissioner's office here at DESE will provide updates during the transition. Please stay tuned for more, and I ask for your patience and flexibility. As Mr. Martinez enters this new role.

Moving on to strategic objective number one, which is focused on whole student supports.

The next topic is about the birth to higher education, mental and behavioral health framework.

We've been thinking more robustly and strategically about mental and behavioral health in Massachusetts.

So much so that in Governor Healy's FY25 budget proposal there was a 5 million dollars allocation designed to deepen some existing practices for sure, but also build something that currently does not exist in Massachusetts or any other State to our knowledge.

A piece of these funds has been used to build out a mental and behavioral health framework from birth through higher education in Massachusetts.

This means that we are establishing a shared language around mental and behavioral health.

uplifting effective practices, establishing better linkages between early education K to 12 and adult public education and higher education, and building out a more robust data system, so that we can better monitor progress to help assess the degree our collective efforts are having the kind of impact that we expect them to have.

DESE is leading this project with guidance and consultation from the executive office of Education.

We anticipate the framework will help us and our partner agencies articulate. A common understanding of the mental and behavioral health challenges being faced currently and a way to document the scale of these growing challenges

at this point of the work. The team is working on this and needs your input frankly

watch for upcoming invitations in the coming weeks for our survey and listening sessions to help inform this process as well as the product.

Next slide, please.

Strategic objective number 2 is focused on deeper learning.

The next topic is on the Statewide K to 12 graduation council.

Next slide, please

next slide, please.

Thank you kindly.

As part of her State Commonwealth address. Earlier this year Governor Healy announced that she signed an executive order to bring together a Massachusetts K to 12 statewide graduation council to create recommendations for a new high school graduation standard.

responding to the approval of the competency, determination, ballot initiative. Last fall, the Governor stated, quote. It creates for all of us a responsibility to make sure that every student graduates ready to succeed.

We need a high statewide standard students, families, and employers need to know what a diploma represents.

and without that, baseline it's always the most vulnerable students who don't get what they need.

The Council was established soon after, and has begun meeting Monthly.

Our mission is clear to make recommendations on how Massachusetts can ensure that every student graduates ready for college, ready for meaningful careers and ready for active civic life.

we'll be submitting our formal recommendations to the Governor and to the Legislature later on. This calendar year. Next slide, please.

The Council is committed to hearing from communities across the State, and is hosting regional listening sessions this spring. The first 2 have already taken place. The southeast region, one took place at Taunton High School and the central region. One took place at Worcester Tech.

There are 4 remaining sessions we have coming up.

please. I'm asking of you. Spread the word. The voices of communities will inform the decisions of the Council and the shape that this will take as we move forward.

Amrita, can I trouble you to put the link for the upcoming, listening sessions in the chat, please.

and Helene, if you could move to the next slide, please.

The Council also has plans to send a survey to all of you soon.

I know, having been where you are right now, not too long ago, that this is a very challenging time of the year to ask you to do a survey, and I want to emphasize that this will not take long ideally no more than 10 min.

The purpose of this survey will be twofold, first, to gather information on the current local graduation requirements at your lea.

and second, to ask for your perspective on what a new statewide graduation requirement should include

something really important. That I want to highlight is that the purpose of this survey is to understand the current landscape in Massachusetts districts, and to inform the Council's eventual recommendations to the Governor. The survey is not an official collection of district data by DESE.

In the near future we will plan to put out a community survey as well to gather the important voices of students, families and educators. Please be on the lookout for that survey. Soon.

Strategic objective number 3 is focused on a diverse and effective workforce.

This next topic is about future teacher signing days

each year. Several districts hold future teacher signing days to celebrate graduating seniors who've committed to career paths in education.

On the screen you will see a sample signing letter that we share on our website for this type of event.

similar to how we acknowledge student athletes with signing days when they commit to play sports on the college level. Future teacher, signing days, celebrate graduating, graduating seniors who are aspiring to be educators

these signing days aim to motivate young people to enter the teaching profession.

I encourage you to host, future teacher, signing days

as a former superintendent. I recognize that the end of the school year can be a challenging time with lots of activities. But I do think that this is a worthy celebration, be it big or small.

we have developed optional templates and resources like this sample signing letter to make the process simpler and feasible for you and Ritha, can I trouble you put to put the link in the chat for the resources related to future teacher signing days.

Thank you, Helene, and as we move into our core functions, part of the agenda. I invite my colleague, Rob Curtin, chief officer, for data, assessment and accountability to lead us through some enrollment and attendance updates. Rob. I will pass it to you.

**Robert Curtin**

**17:05**

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Good afternoon, everybody. Good to be with you all again. One of the requests, as the secretary said when we were pulling together this agenda. One of the requests we received from your respective agent respective associations, was to give you a look at the enrollment data over the course of time to look at our how our demographics have changed over a period of 10 years or so.

So we have pulled that together for you today, and I think as many of you would expect, you're going to see some pretty significant changes here related to the student demographics, and you'll have access to these slides with this information, but thought it was. We periodically look at this information, but I thought it was important for everybody to see, and exactly what's happened over the last 10 years in terms of our student population.

So the 1st one you have here just to orient you to the slide is for our students by race and ethnicity. And basically we did a 10 year view with 5 year increments, looking at 2,01520, 20 and 2025

looked at the change from 15 to 2020 to 25 and then 15 to 25.

And then what? That percent change is from 15 to 25, and you'll see the biggest changes here are in a decrease of our white student population and increases in many of our populations of students of color. So if you look at the Asian population, our black or African American, Hispanic or multi-race students.

you'll see that that's where the change has occurred in a decrease of our white students, in an increase in those populations, and in some cases pretty significantly so. When we look at, for example, our Hispanic population, that population has increased by over 40% in the last 10 years.

where we were looking at about 18% of our kids. And now over a quarter for the 1st time in 2025, a quarter of our students are identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

so wanted to be responsive to that request and show this to you. And again, you'll have access to this information that you might want to use in your perhaps in your presentations, to show some of the changing demographics, or perhaps model your own districts off of a slide like this.

Next slide, please.

And then I also wanted to show you some of our other popular student groups. So when we think about students with disabilities, low income, English learner and high need students, we basically here showing the same information that we showed before. Set up the same way. And you can see we've experienced great change.

There is a little bit of a definitional challenge as it relates to low income students. But I think the general trend here holds when you think about when we look at students with disabilities. You know, a 20% increase since 2015 English learners, almost over a 60% increase in terms of the overall population

where just about 14% of our students now, are considered to be English learners. So

we wanted to put this together for you again. You'll have access and be able to use in any way that you might see fit

next slide, please.

The last thing I want to talk about 2 attendance data issues to you. That we are going to be either releasing or providing to you. The 1st is around student attendance.

Yesterday we notified districts about tonight's release of the march. 1st student attendance data.

a reminder that these data were available for your preview upon submission. The the our system automatically calculates the chronic absenteeism rate for you.

And when you certified the data for us, you certified that those reports were available to you, and you had reviewed them.

The state data, and every. There's much variation among districts. But the state data reveal a slight improvement, less than half a percent, but still an improvement in chronic absenteeism as compared to March 1, 2,024,

a reminder that there's still days left in the year.

Chronic absenteeism data has historically improved between March one and the end of the school year. So these remaining days are all very important, and that message should continue to our students.

and the opportunity to improve that chronic absenteeism rate exists between now at the end of the year. And historically, that's what we've seen.

So tonight that data will be released publicly on our district and school profiles.

Next slide, please.

The next announcement is around staff attendance data. And this is something that we've talked about previously.

But we are ready to begin a little movement here next week.

DESE will be sharing your 2023 24 staff attendance data back to you

in a manner that would replicate a public release. We are not planning to publicly release the data on district and school profiles.

The goal of this exercise is to show you how the data would look so that you could focus on the quality of your 2024, 25 end of year submission, the data that you're submitting through EPM’s in the next month or so to us.

So we're just giving you your 2023 and 24 data to show you. If we were to publish the data, this is what it would look like

with the goal being that you can make sure that your staff are paying due attention to the quality of the data that's submitting to us

pending the approval of incoming Commissioner Martinez. Our plan right now is to publicly release the 2024, 2025 staff attendance data. This is something we've been working towards for some time. We will be reaching out to a few districts individually that we want to make sure that some of the data quality issues are addressed.

But please make sure that your district, your staff reviews the summary reports as you submit the data to us at the end of this year, because our intention, again pending the approval of Commissioner Martinez is to release the data publicly on staff attendance for the 1st time.

Okay, with that I can go back to you, Mr. Secretary.

**Patrick Tutwiler (He, Him)**

**23:59**

Thank you so much, Rob. Next up I have a few announcements to make, and then we can open it up for Q. And a. And I do see that there are some questions already submitted.

Some folks have been asking about where we are on the timeline, with various proposed amendments to regulations presented to the Board

earlier this year. The Board voted to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to regulations on career tech ed admissions, the competency, determination, educator licensure as well as timeout practices.

DESE invited public comment. Next Tuesday, May 20.th The Board will vote to adopt permanent regulations on career. Tech Ed admissions the competency, determination and Ed licensure.

And a side note that that meeting next Tuesday is happening at Methuen High School, and then next month in June the Board will vote to adopt permanent regulations on timeout practices

next slide, please. I'm also thrilled to announce that registration is open for a new teacher training opportunity called literacy launch institutes that is focused on pre-k through grade 3 literacy.

This is a core component of the literacy launch initiative, and we are offering 4 pre full day trainings in August for 600 educators. Any Massachusetts public school educator who supports literacy instruction in grades pre-K through 3 will be eligible to register at no cost until capacity is reached.

This includes classroom teachers, special education teachers, English as a second language teacher, school principals and district leaders as well. I'd ask that you share this opportunity with your educators and have them register as soon as possible. And, Ritha, can I trouble you to put the link in the chat for the Institute.

If you would do so kindly.

and then, following this webinar, you'll receive an on the desktop which will include this, these webinar slides as well as links and resources that we're sharing today with you in the chat, and a final reminder that all previous webinars can also be found online. Today's session will go up shortly as well. We'll post the recording and the slides on the page that was just posted in the chat.

Amrita. Can I trouble you to do that?

And Lauren, if I can trouble you to stop the recording? And now we'll move to Q&A.