*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | December 8, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on **Tuesday, December 15, 2020**, at the Department ofElementary and Secondary Education’s office in Malden. The meeting will start at **9:00 a.m.** and should adjourn by **1:00 p.m.** As in the past three months, the Board will meet in person, following the Commonwealth’s health and safety guidelines, including limiting the number of people in our meeting room, and the meeting will be live-streamed. Helene Bettencourt and Courtney Sullivan will assist with all arrangements; please email or call them if you have any questions.

**OVERVIEW**

Our business agenda leads off with a report on the Department’s recent actions to support schools, students, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a discussion and vote on proposed emergency amendments to the Student Learning Time regulations to address standards for remote learning and hybrid learning. The Board will get an update on Career/Vocational Technical Education, including information about available CVTE data and research and a proposed timeline for amending the vocational admissions regulations. The Board will have an initial discussion of the draft World Languages Curriculum Framework, and I recommend that the Board vote to invite public comment on it. We will conclude with a review of current education budget matters.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Craven will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

**Student assessment.** I notified the field on Monday, December 7, that in recognition of the scheduling and logistical challenges that schools and districts are experiencing, the Department is adjusting the schedules and expectations for MCAS high school testing and ACCESS testing as follows:

**January-February High School MCAS ELA and Mathematics Tests:**

* Students in grade 11 (class of 2022) **will no longer participate in testing** during the January-February window. Testing for this class in English language arts and mathematics is being postponed until later in the year.
* Students in grade 12 (class of 2021), as well as adult test-takers, **will remain eligible to participate** in one or both tests beginning in January to earn their Competency Determination.
* The testing window for eligible students is extended through Friday, February 12, giving schools an additional week to complete testing. The full testing window will be **Thursday, January 14 through February 12**.

**ACCESS testing for English Learners:**

* The testing window for the ACCESS tests is being extended for several months. Schools will be able to administer the ACCESS tests at any time between **Thursday,** **January 7 and Thursday, May 20**.
* Results will be returned in late summer.

The [statewide testing schedule](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__mass.us14.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3Dd8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a-26id-3D34f6abe7ab-26e-3Dca9b716f9d&d=DwMFaQ&c=lDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWL0QWnGCCAfCDz1Bns_w&r=JlbcN79hA32ccfKfFlDj8JEl0dULOC9XhlGW_NQOp68&m=lH-oSdmffwAJIgs9dMs5YZc8a1Vo_gsPumY6Q_9ZmgA&s=eqAZPPuB7ycP8orWI53telTLVbGX9sIDKOUiXBapXAs&e=) is being updated to reflect these changes. I will keep the Board apprised about the plans for statewide testing.

**Comments from the Secretary**

The Secretary will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the November 24, 2020 Regular Meeting**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes of the November meeting.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Update on COVID-19 Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families – Discussion**

Since our meeting on November 24, the Department has continued to inform districts of new developments related to COVID-19 and to support schools and districts as they serve students during the pandemic. The memorandum in your materials summarizes some key actions in the past few weeks. I will update the Board further at our meeting on December 15.

1. **Proposed Amendments to Student Learning Time Regulations, 603 CMR 27.00 (Standards for Remote Learning and Hybrid Learning) – Discussion and Vote to Adopt Emergency Regulations**

I will present proposed amendments to the Student Learning Time regulations to address standards for remote learning and hybrid learning. I recommend that the Board adopt the amendments this month as emergency regulations. The materials will be available shortly.

1. **Career and Vocational Technical Education: Update – Discussion**

As part of the continued work regarding Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) regulatory changes, the Department has analyzed data, partnered with a research team, and convened stakeholder groups to investigate approaches to increasing equitable access to high-quality vocational technical education in Massachusetts. The memorandum in your materials provides background and a proposed timeline for amending the vocational admissions regulations; provides information about available CVTE data and research; and describes additional equity-focused initiatives that the Department is leading. Senior Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang, Associate Commissioner Elizabeth Bennett, and other Department staff will be at the meeting to address the Board and answer questions.

1. **Massachusetts World Languages Curriculum Framework Draft – Initial Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

The Board will have an initial discussion of the proposed revisions to the 1999 [*Massachusetts Foreign Language Curriculum Framework*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/foreign/1999.pdf) – now called the *Massachusetts World Languages Curriculum Framework.* Your materials include a memorandum outlining the process, a draft of the proposed revised framework, and a summary of the main changes from the 1999 framework. I recommend that the Board vote to invite public comment on the draft revised framework. After reviewing the comments and making further revisions as needed, I expect to bring the final revised standards back to the Board for adoption in spring 2021. Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske and other members of the staff will present an overview of the revised framework and respond to questions from the Board.

1. **Update on Education Budget Matters – Discussion**

Senior Associate Commissioner/CFO Bill Bell will update the Board on the latest information we have about federal and state funding for K-12 education in the Commonwealth.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **Report on Grants Approved by the Commissioner**

Enclosed is information on grants I have approved since the last meeting under the authority the Board has delegated to the Commissioner.

1. **IEP Improvement Project Update**

In January 2020, the Board received information on the IEP Improvement Project, one of our initiatives to strengthen the quality of special education in the Commonwealth. The enclosed memorandum provides an update on recent progress on this project.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you in person on December 15.