*****Massachusetts Board 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: | James Morton, Chair of the Committee on Commissioner Riley’s Performance Review |
| Date: | June 21, 2019 |
| Subject: | Performance Review of Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley for FY2019 |

Each year, the Chair of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) establishes a committee to evaluate the performance of the Commissioner. For reviewing Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley’s first year of performance in FY2019, the Commissioner’s Performance Review Committee (hereinafter the “Committee”) consists of James Morton (Committee Chair and Board Vice-Chair), Katherine Craven (Board Chair) and Amanda Fernandez (Member of the Board).

This FY2019 performance evaluation is structured around four dimensions:

* Facilitate student growth and achievement (30%)
* Management and operations (25%)
* External relations and communication (25%)
* Board support and effective interactions (20%)

Attachment A includes a detailed description of the performance criteria used to evaluate these dimensions of the Commissioner’s work.

The Committee gathered data from various sources, including student performance data, the Commissioner’s self-evaluation, and input from other members of the Board, the Commissioner’s leadership team, receivers in Lawrence, Holyoke, and Southbridge, and several external stakeholders and constituents.

This memorandum highlights some of the accomplishments of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) under the leadership of Commissioner Riley during FY2019. It also reviews the Commissioner’s performance based upon Board-developed criteria and goals, identifies challenges and opportunities, and makes recommendations to the Board in relation to his performance. Many of the highlights set forth below are most clearly delineated in Commissioner Riley’s self-evaluation, as well as the Board’s observations and conclusions.

**2018-2019 Highlights**

1. **History, Social Science and Civics Framework**. Building upon DESE’s successful development and implementation of the English language arts, mathematics, science, and computer science standards and curriculum frameworks, the Commissioner set out to lead, support, and engage the field in the development of the new History, Social Science and Civics Framework and corresponding assessment system. The Board adopted the new framework in June 2018. Under the Commissioner, the Department hosted learning institutes and conducted a series of presentations, networks, and webinars to introduce and support implementation of the framework. Specifically, DESE conducted a number of presentations and webinars entitled, “Frameworks on Tour” and connected with approximately 1000 educators statewide. Lastly, in June 2019, DESE hosted the History and Social Science Professional Learning Institute and co-hosted the Civics Learning Conference with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute.
2. **History, Social Science and Civics Assessments**. During the 2018-2019 school year, DESE’s Office of Student Assessment Services (SAS) explored the development of history and social science assessment models that could be used in conjunction with the History, Social Science and Civics Framework. SAS convened an Advisory Panel comprised of 14 educators and curriculum leaders from throughout the Commonwealth; and based upon the Panel recommendations, SAS developed a prototype Grade 8 assessment that provides all students with an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of history, social science and civics content and skills via a variety of measurements, including performance assessments. To further the development and refinement of the assessment model, SAS established the Grade 8 Civics Assessment Development Committee (ADC) comprised of twelve educators with experience teaching 8th grade social studies and/or civics. SAS is working with DESE’s testing vendor and the ADC to develop sample Grade 8 assessment tasks for piloting in the fall of 2019.
3. **Arts Framework**. Under the Commissioner’s leadership, DESE has continued working with an advisory panel and the field to review and revise the 1999 Arts Framework. The draft revised framework highlights the importance of the five included disciplines (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, and Media Arts) as part of a “well-rounded education” that prepares students for success in school, work, and civic life. In February 2019, the Board voted to seek public comment on the draft revised framework. DESE is refining the Arts Framework based on the comments and plans to submit the final version to the Board in June 2019 for approval. DESE intends to follow a similar review and revision process in FY2020 with respect to the Health Framework.
4. **Public Awareness Campaign.** Commissioner Riley executed a public awareness effort in FY2019 that included: (a) celebrating teachers and schools; (b) utilizing existing communication strategies to promote public education among various audiences; and (c) using data to drive the campaign. This effort will inform DESE’s 2019-2020 campaign.
5. **Listening Tour and Education Conference.** The Commissioner conducted a “Listening Tour” which included visiting more than 100 schools and engaging in countless conversations with students, teachers, parents, stakeholders, civic and legislative leaders, foundations, non-profit and business leaders, teachers unions, associations representing educational leaders, and concerned citizens regarding a variety of K-12 public education issues. The Commissioner intends to use the information gathered during these conversations to inform DESE’s educational strategies moving forward.

In March 2019, DESE hosted *Kairos*, a statewide educational conference, which was attended by a broad cross-section of educators and educational leaders. Conference attendees heard from thought-provoking, creative, and engaging presenters who stressed the importance and need to “engage students in applied, deeper learning through rigorous, interdisciplinary performance of tasks connected to state standards and relevant to students’ lives.” Participants were encouraged to “unleash the creative force of our educators to create the conditions for engaging instruction that leads to students’ deeper, applied learning.” The *Kairos* conference, by all accounts, was a great success and gave us great insight into the Commissioner’s hopes and aspirations for our students.

1. **Diversification of Teacher Workforce.** Commissioner Riley created a working committee to develop a plan for the diversification of the teacher work force. This plan includes providing teachers with cultural competence training. Commissioner Riley promoted Ventura Rodriguez to Senior Associate Commissioner, Strategic Initiatives; one strategic initiative that he leads is the diversification of the educator workforce. The Board heard a presentation on DESE’s various educator diversification initiatives at its May 2019 meeting.
2. **Foundation Budget.** The Commissioner has been deeply engaged with the Governor’s office, the Legislature, and stakeholders in an effort to advance important changes in the foundation budget that more accurately reflect the needs of all students in the Commonwealth.
3. **Strategies to Address Achievement and Opportunity Gaps**. Commissioner Riley has worked with purpose and intentionality to close persistent achievement/opportunity gaps by identifying targeted intervention strategies for schools and districts in need of “broad and comprehensive support” and “focused and targeted support.” Strategies include, inter alia: (a) accelerated tutoring for students, especially during school vacations; (b) support, development, and retention of effective school leaders, especially in the areas of instruction, school management and operations, and equity and cultural proficiency; (c) teacher recruitment and diversification; (d) development of a new initiative and the engagement of a program director to expand upon the Acceleration Academy model and its evidence-based instructional interventions; and (e) piloting of a Literacy Leadership Institute during the summer of 2019. The Institute will provide targeted literacy instruction for primary-grade students who are at-risk of reading failure and not achieving on grade level, and coursework and practicum experiences for teachers designed to improve their literacy practices for improved student outcomes.
4. **Receiverships.** Commissioner Riley and the DESE team continued to work closely with the district receivers in Holyoke, Lawrence, and Southbridge to support their turnaround plans. The three receivers are implementing many of the strategies outlined in #8 above, as well as extended learning time, increased school autonomy, teacher development and diversification, and greater parental, family, and community engagement.
5. **Monitoring of Accountability System.** DESE monitored the implementation of the new accountability system adopted in 2018 and has identified several proposed changes based upon input from the field. The proposed changes will be presented to the Board, for approval, at its June 2019 meeting.

**Commissioner’s Performance Evaluation**

1. **Facilitate Student Growth and Achievement** (30%)
2. Commissioner Riley supported the development of the new **History, Social Science and Civics Framework and assessment system**. DESE hosted learning institutes, presentations, networks, and webinars to introduce and support the implementation of the framework. In June 2019, DESE hosted the History and Social Science Professional Learning Institute and co-hosted the Civics Learning Conference with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute.
3. Under the Commissioner’s leadership, DESE has continued working with the field to update the **Arts Framework** (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts and Media Arts) as part of a “well-rounded education” that prepares students for success in school, work, and civic life. The final version of the new Arts Framework will be presented to BESE for approval at its June 2019 meeting.
4. Commissioner Riley and DESE continue to focus on closing persistent achievement and opportunity gaps by identifying targeted intervention strategies that appear to be the most promising, including, inter alia: (a) accelerated tutoring for students, especially during school vacations; (b) support, development and retention of effective school leaders; (c) teacher recruitment and diversification; (d) development of Acceleration Academies; and (e) piloting a Literacy Leadership Institute during the summer of 2019.
5. Commissioner and DESE continue to support and guide the work of district receivers in Holyoke, Lawrence, and Southbridge and their turnaround plans that include such strategies as extended learning time, increased school autonomy, teacher development, teacher recruitment and diversification, and greater parental, family, and community engagement.
6. Commissioner Riley and DESE continue to monitor the implementation of the new accountability system and, based upon input from the field, have identified several proposed changes, which will be presented to the Board, for approval, in June 2019.

**Rating: The Commissioner delivered a Proficient performance in this area, receiving a rating of 3.8 out of 5.**

1. **Management and Operations** (25%)
2. Commissioner Riley began the process of assessing DESE’s ability to support and strengthen public education in the Commonwealth and to support DESE’s mission to prepare all students for success and to close proficiency gaps.
3. Commissioner Riley worked with DESE leadership and community stakeholders to create a vision for its work and to establish a culture that promotes DESE’s five core strategies. The Commissioner is encouraged to continue his efforts in this regard by further engaging members of his leadership team in the refinement of the vision and culture in order to assure greater ownership and support of the same.
4. The Commissioner has demonstrated willingness to think outside the box as an innovator, as well as a commitment to respond to community concerns in a timely and thoughtful manner.
5. The Commissioner managed DESE’s budget in promotion of its goals, objectives and mission. All Department sub-divisions met their operational targets and goals.
6. The Commissioner led DESE’s continued promotion of equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural proficiency.

**Rating: The Commissioner delivered a Proficient performance in this area, receiving a rating of 3.75 out of 5.**

1. **External Relations and Communication** (25%)
2. Commissioner Riley executed a public awareness campaign that: (a) celebrated teachers and schools; (b) utilized existing communication strategies to promote public education among various audiences; and (c) used data to drive the campaign.
3. The Commissioner conducted a “Listening Tour” which included visiting more than 100 schools and engaging in countless conversations with students, teachers, parents, stakeholders, civic and legislative leaders, foundations, non-profit and business leaders, teachers unions, associations representing educational leaders, and concerned citizens regarding a variety of K-12 public education issues.
4. Commissioner Riley supported the development of a very successful statewide educational conference, *Kairos*, which challenged participants to “unleash the creative force of our educators to create the conditions for engaging instruction that leads to students’ deeper, applied learning.” The *Kairos* conference provided us with insight into the Commissioner’s hopes and aspirations for our students and the work of DESE under his leadership.
5. The Commissioner prioritized the diversification of the teacher work force and the effort to provide all teachers with cultural competence training. Commissioner Riley and his leadership team are working to create a teacher work force that more closely reflects the diversity of the students served.

**Rating: The Commissioner delivered a Very Good performance in this area, receiving a rating of 4.5 out of 5.**

1. **Board Support/Effective Interactions** (20%)
2. The Commissioner works effectively with Board members by keeping us engaged and informed of DESE’s successes and opportunities in timely fashion.
3. Commissioner Riley engages Board members in setting DESE’s strategic vision, priorities, and educational policies.
4. Commissioner Riley assembles staff and resources for the purposes of increasing the Board’s understanding of the issues impacting student success, as well as the implications of decisions being made by the Board at its monthly meetings.
5. The Commissioner has committed DESE to support a Board Retreat in the fall of 2019 to provide the Board with an opportunity to more deeply understand the issues confronting our students and educational system.

**Rating: The Commissioner delivered a Very Good performance in this area, receiving a rating of 4.75 out of 5.**

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

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 Evaluation Committee. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts continues to rank as the best public education system in the United States, which evidences the ongoing exceptional work of the MA DESE and its leadership. Nonetheless, our work is not complete, as achievement and opportunity gaps persist. The Commissioner has given us great hope that addressing this challenge will be his strategic and personal imperative.

Based on the evaluation of his job performance, the committee affirms its strong endorsement of the Commissioner and recommends that the Board do so as well. We would prefer to underline this endorsement with a greater salary increase, but we are limited by budget constraints. Based upon the performance of Commissioner Riley and DESE, as set forth in this memo, we are recommending an overall salary increase of two percent.

The Committee on the Commissioner’s Performance Review thanks Commissioner Riley, the DESE staff, and the many stakeholders who contributed to this evaluation. We also want to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Riley for his dedicated service to the children of the Commonwealth and for his belief that all students can succeed in school and in life.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**2018-2019 Performance Criteria**

**For**

**Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Background**

The mission of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is to strengthen the Commonwealth’s public education system so that every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, compete in the global economy, and understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, and in so doing, to close all proficiency gaps.

The Commissioner is the secretary to the Board, its chief executive officer, and the chief state school officer for elementary and secondary education. Mass. General Laws chapter 15, section 1F.

In support of the Board’s mission and the goal of preparing all students for success after high school, the Commissioner and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have adopted five [core strategies](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/StrategicPlan.pdf#search=%22strategic%22):

1. Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Promote educator development
3. Turn around the lowest-performing districts and schools
4. Use technology and data to support teaching and learning
5. Support students’ social/emotional health

The following performance criteria focus on the Commissioner’s roles, accountabilities, and goals and are organized in four categories: promoting student achievement and growth, management and operations, external relations and communication, and Board support, all of which are important functions of the Commissioner. The criteria promote measurable outcomes that are realistic and attainable. The Board is recommending setting these function areas into priorities that will set the Commissioner’s work plan and distribution of his time and efforts.

**Performance Criteria**

**Facilitate Student Achievement and Growth (30%)**

Building on the successful development and implementation of the English language arts, mathematics, science and computer science standards and curriculum frameworks and in an effort to strengthen teaching and learning for all students, I will lead, support and engage the field in:

* The implementation of the new History/Social Science/Civics Framework and the development of the associated assessment system. Our initiatives this year include instructional support networks for educators across the Commonwealth. We are also convening an advisory panel and consulting with stakeholders about possible options for assessing History/Social Science and will report to the Board in spring 2019.
* The development of the updated arts and health frameworks for the Board’s review. This year we will initiate the revision process for the health framework and continue the revision process for the arts framework, culminating in an anticipated vote on the revised arts framework in spring 2019.
* I will work with the field and the agency to analyze the state’s new accountability system and refine it as necessary.

**Management and Operations (25%)**

* I will assess the responsibilities and functions of the agency to determine how we can continue to strengthen, and leverage services provided to schools while carrying out the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education’s mission and goal of preparing all students for success and closing all proficiency gaps.
* Lead the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) by setting the vision, approving the strategies, and establishing a culture that promotes the Board’s mission and makes substantial progress on the five core strategies listed above
* Manage within the parameters of DESE’s budget to achieve goals, including:
  + Ensure that the DESE is structured, staffed and aligned across all centers to meet its annual operational targets and stated goals, within the limitations of DESE’s budget and state hiring parameters
* Respond appropriately to changes in federal and state requirements
* In partnership with Human Resources, I will lead the promotion of racial equity, diversity, and cultural proficiency within the agency.

**External Relations and Communication (25%)**

* Manage relationships and communications to maximize alignment of external stakeholders (e.g., Legislature, Governor’s Office/EOE, MTA, AFT-MA, MASS, MASC, principals’ associations, business groups, foundations) with the Board’s overall priorities and goals
* Engage and responsively communicate with the field and citizens regarding major Board and Department initiatives
* Effectively lead the discussion and communications regarding Massachusetts educational policies and initiatives
* Devise and execute a print, video and other media campaign during fall and winter, celebrating teachers and focusing on recruitment.
* Establish a working committee to develop a plan that will guide the diversification of the teacher force. Research shows that students of color who have even one teacher of color during their education career are more likely to do well in school. Although students of color make up 40 percent of the Massachusetts public school student

population, only 7 percent of the Commonwealth’s educators are teachers of color. Our plan will include a comprehensive strategy to address this disproportion.

* Convene major stakeholders in an education conference in spring 2019 that seeks to determine the state’s path forward on education. • Visit over 100 schools throughout the school year with a focus on listening to stakeholders in the field, providing professional development, and modeling effective instructional practices.

**Board Support/Effective Interactions (20%)**

* Effectively interact with members of the Board
* Engage Board members in setting the strategic vision for DESE and discussing DESE priorities and local/national policy issues relevant to Massachusetts
* Keep the Board updated on subjects necessary for the Board to fulfill its role, including timely transmission of materials for meetings
* Receive feedback from Board members during annual performance review process

**Rating Structure**

• Outstanding = 5

• Very Good = 4

• Proficient = 3

• Needs Improvement = 2

* Unsatisfactory = 1