# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | September 17, 2024 |
| **Subject:** | Education Collaboratives – Amendments to Collaborative Agreements Approved in FY24 |

At its meeting on February 26, 2013, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) voted to authorize the commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on its behalf in approving education collaborative agreements and any subsequent amendments to such agreements; provided that the commissioner shall report to the Board periodically on all collaborative agreements, including any subsequent amendments, that have been so approved.

This memorandum provides background information about education collaboratives, an overview of the process for amending collaborative agreements, and a summary of amendments that I approved as acting commissioner during the 2023-24 school year.

**Background**

Education collaboratives have operated in Massachusetts for over 50 years and there are currently 24 in the Commonwealth. Formed through an agreement among two or more school committees and/or charter school boards under [General Laws c. 40, § 4E](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40/Section4E), education collaboratives provide programming that supplements and strengthens the programs and services offered by school districts and charter schools. Information about Massachusetts education collaboratives is on DESE’s website at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edcollaboratives/> and the Board regulations on education collaboratives are at [603 CMR 50.00](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr50.html).

All education collaborative agreements and amendments must be approved by the relevant school committees and/or charter school boards as well as the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education through the commissioner, as stated above. Once approved, the school committees and/or charter school boards are recognized as members of the collaborative.

The written agreement forms the basis of the education collaborative setting forth:

* The mission, purpose and focus of the collaborative;
* the programs or services to be offered by the collaborative;
* the financial terms and conditions of membership of the education collaborative, including a limit on the amount of cumulative surplus revenue that may be held by the collaborative at the end of a fiscal year;
* the procedure for the preparation and adoption of an annual budget;
* the method of termination of the education collaborative and of the withdrawal of member school committees and charter school boards;
* the procedure for admitting new members and for amending the collaborative agreement;
* the powers and duties of the board of directors of the education collaborative to operate and manage the education collaborative; and
* any other matter not incompatible with law which the member school committees and charter school boards consider advisable.

**Overview of Amendment Process**

For a variety of reasons, from time to time collaborative agreements may require revision due to a change in membership, a change in required procedures outlined in the collaborative agreement, and/or to ensure that the agreement is consistent with current legal requirements or practices.

DESE manages the annual review process for collaborative agreements or amendments to collaborative agreements. The [Guidance for Amending a Collaborative Agreement](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edcollaboratives/governance-guidance/amending-agreement-guidance.docx) on DESE’s website helps with an orderly and transparent approval process. All amendment requests submitted to DESE are reviewed for compliance with regulations and guidance. Once the request is finalized, the collaborative board votes its approval of the request, obtains approval from member school districts, and submits the final request to DESE for the commissioner’s approval.

A collaborative proposing to add or withdraw a member district must comply with the following timeline:

* A school committee or charter school board may be admitted to, or an existing member district may withdraw from an education collaborative as of July 1st of any fiscal year, provided that all **requisite approvals** for such admission or withdrawal, including the commissioner’s or BESE’s approval, shall be obtained no later than the preceding April 30th (603 CMR 50.03(3)).

**Summary of Approved Amendments**

In April 2024, in accordance with the review process outlined above, I approved amendments to four collaborative agreements. This memo informs the Board of about these approvals that became effective on July 1, 2024.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Original Agreement** | **Last Amended** | **Proposed Changes** | **Approval Date** | **Effective Date** |
| **ACCEPT Education Collaborative (ACCEPT)** | 1976 | 2015 | * Amended to reflect best and current practices and recent statutory changes. * Added a new member district (highlighted below) | April 30, 2024 | July 1, 2024 |
| **Membership:** Ashland, Dover, Dover-Sherborn, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, South Middlesex Regional Vocational, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Sudbury, Sherborn, Wellesley, Westborough | | | | | |
| **Central Area Programs and Services Education Collaborative (CAPS)** | 1991 | 2014 | * Amended to reflect best and current practices and recent statutory changes. * Added a new member district (highlighted below) | April 29, 2024 | July 1, 2024 |
| Membership: Ashburnham/Westminster Regional, Ayer-Shirley Regional, Athol/Royalston Regional, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Mahar Regional, Narragansett Regional, Orange, Petersham, Quabbin Regional, Winchendon | | | | | |
| **Regional Educational Assessment and Diagnostic Services (READS)** | 1987 | 2023 | * Amended to reflect best and current practices and recent statutory changes. * Added two new member districts (highlighted below) | April 23, 2024 | July 1, 2024 |
| **Membership:** Abington Public Schools, Acushnet Public Schools, Berkley Public Schools, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District, Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School District, Brockton Public Schools, Carver Public Schools, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, East Bridgewater Public Schools, Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District, Marion Public Schools, Mattapoisett Public Schools, Middleborough Public Schools, Norton Public Schools, Rochester Public Schools, Somerset Public Schools, Somerset-Berkley Regional School District, Taunton Public Schools, West Bridgewater Public Schools, Whitman-Hanson Regional School District | | | | | |
| **Pilgrim Area Collaborative (PAC)** | 1975 | 2013 | * Updated to reflect recent changes in statute and regulation (M.G.L. c. 40, s. 4E and 603 C.M.R. 50.00). * Membership unchanged. | April 23, 2024 | July 1, 2024 |
| **Membership:** Duxbury, Halifax, Kingston, Marshfield, Middleborough, Plymouth, Plympton, Silver Lake Regional School District, Stoughton, Whitman-Hanson Regional School District | | | | | |

If you have any questions regarding these matters or require additional information, please contact Alison Bagg, Director of Charter Schools and School Redesign; Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner; or me.