# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | October 22, 2024 |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the October 28, 2024 Special Meeting and October 29, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) will have two meetings this month: a **special meeting** on **Monday, October 28, 2024,** 5:00–7:00 p.m.(held virtually); and the **regular meeting** on **Tuesday, October 29, 2024**, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.(held in person at the office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)), 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149). The meetings will be live-streamed and recorded. Helene Bettencourt will assist with all arrangements; please email or call her if you have any questions.

**SPECIAL MEETING, October 28, 2024**

The Monday, October 28, 2024 special meeting of the Board, will be the first of two study sessions on Career Technical Education (CTE) admissions. The second session will be the Monday, November 18, special meeting of the Board.

The meeting on October 28 will focus on admission and enrollment data since implementation, including a presentation from an external researcher with expertise in Massachusetts CTE admissions data. These study sessions will address a key question: *What impact has the most recent regulation change had on addressing equitable access to CTE admissions?* This information will contribute to any further changes to state regulations.

At the Board meeting, Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner of College, Career and Technical Education, Caitlin Looby of DESE’s legal staff, Rob Curtin, Chief Officer of Assessment, and Accountability and Information, and Shaun Dougherty, Education and Policy, Boston College will present and respond to your questions.

The special meeting is an opportunity for the Board to hear the presentation about CTE admissions and engage in discussion. No votes will be taken.

**REGULAR MEETING, October 29, 2024**

Our business agenda will lead off with Chair Craven who will provide an update on the Commissioner search process. The Board will discuss District and School Accountability Decisions, the Curriculum Data Dashboard, the Accelerated Literacy Reviews in Educator Preparation, and the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

**Comments from the Secretary**

**Comments from the Acting Commissioner**

**Routine Business: Approval of the Minutes of the September 23, 2024 Special Meeting, the September 24, 2024 Regular Meeting, and the June 20, 2024 Joint Meeting of the Board of Higher Education and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **Update on Commissioner Search Process**

Chair Craven will update the Board on the search process.

1. **District and School Accountability Decisions – Discussion**

At the meeting, I will provide you with an overview of 2024 district and school accountability determinations, including decisions made for certain underperforming schools and chronically underperforming schools and districts. These determinations are based in part on the 2024 MCAS results for districts and schools.

At the beginning of the 2024-25 school year, nineteen schools in Massachusetts continued to be designated as underperforming; three schools continued to be designated as chronically underperforming; and three districts continued to be designated as chronically underperforming. No additional schools or districts were designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming.

At the Board meeting, Lauren Woo, Acting Chief of Staff and Michelle Ryan, Acting Chief of Schools, will be available to answer your questions.

1. [**Educational Vision**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/) **and Advancing Student Learning Update**

**3.a. Curriculum Data Dashboard – Discussion**

I will introduce the [Curriculum Data Dashboard](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/mass.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a&id=a27fd63927&e=583fc2bc03__;!!CPANwP4y!QcnfDp_EzaqBH-ARwAbemQ_JTg6hTlveKcO3Ikju15ISA2HEtE4nsMj9cIdvYFnzSqp4EWYzGfPXe8TbVUTTElD6ZjSI5WxZ9w$) that DESE has created. Since March 2022, DESE has been [collecting and reporting data on the curricula schools and districts are using](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/mass.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a&id=60cfd98354&e=583fc2bc03__;!!CPANwP4y!QcnfDp_EzaqBH-ARwAbemQ_JTg6hTlveKcO3Ikju15ISA2HEtE4nsMj9cIdvYFnzSqp4EWYzGfPXe8TbVUTTElD6ZjSShsxiww$) for grades K-8 ELA/literacy, K-12 math, and 6-8 science. We have seen a steady increase in the percentage of districts using high-quality instructional materials. The new Curriculum Data Dashboard builds on the existing curriculum data and presents it in a user-friendly format.

At the October 29 meeting, Erin Hashimoto-Martell, Associate Commissioner of Instructional Support, and Craig Waterman, Assistant Director of Instructional Policy, will demonstrate the dashboard and invite discussion.

**3.b. Accelerated Literacy Reviews in Educator Preparation and Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program – Discussion**

I will provide an update on DESE’s Educational Vision and Strategic Objective #3, with a specific focus on two key initiatives: the Accelerated Literacy Reviews in Educator Preparation, and the new Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

DESE is committed to all aspiring teachers of students in grades PK–3 being prepared with the knowledge and skills to teach evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically sustaining early literacy. To advance [Mass Literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/), DESE launched the [Early Literacy in Educator Preparation](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy.html) initiative in 2020.

This fall we are in the process of launching an exciting new pathway to teaching: the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP). This fall, DESE will be inviting districts and their partner educator preparation providers to submit applications to operate an RTAP in accordance with the state’s expectations and requirements for this new role. Grant funding will also be available for RTAPs that prioritize teacher shortage areas.

At the October 29 meeting, Erin Hashimoto-Martell, Associate Commissioner; Claire Abbott, Director of Educator Effectiveness; and Lakia Baymon, RTAP Coordinator, will present overviews of these two initiatives to the Board and invite discussion, questions, and feedback.

**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.

**5. Chronically Underperforming Schools: Quarter 1 Reports**

This month, I am presenting the first of four SY2024-2025 quarterly progress updates to the Board on the three chronically underperforming schools’ implementations of their school turnaround plans, focusing on activities from July to October 2024. Future quarterly updates for SY2024-2025 will be presented in January 2025 and March 2025, and a final annual review in June 2025.  SY2023-2024 accountability data has been included for your reference.

**6. Annual Reports from 2023-2024 Advisory Councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Enclosed please find the 2023-2024 Advisory Councils’ Annual Reports to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. There are currently 13 advisory councils. This document compiles the reports from the councils.

Each council’s annual report, submitted by the council chair, includes a summary of the work of the council, recommendations to the Commissioner and Board, council leadership and membership, and meetings held. The reports and their recommendations are those of the councils and not of the Department.

I am grateful to the council members and liaisons for their time, efforts, and constructive feedback. If the Board is interested in greater detail on the activities and recommendations of any council, please feel free to contact me.

**7. Charter Authorizing Overview and Anticipated Schedule for 2024-2025**

Between now and June 2025, the Board will take a number of votes related to its statutory role as a charter school authorizer. The enclosed memorandum summarizes the statutory framework for charter schools and the Board's responsibilities as the state's sole charter school authorizer and provides a schedule of charter items for the year.

8. **Report on Student Learning Time Waivers for Innovative Programs**

On April 23, 2013, Board voted to delegate to the Commissioner the authority to approve waivers of the Student Learning Time regulations for good cause. Pursuant to this authority, the Commissioner may grant waivers to permit districts to initiate innovative programs that provide less instructional time than the minimum school day and school year requirements established in the regulations for Student Learning Time.

The enclosed memorandum provides some background information, an overview of the Student Learning Time Waiver process, a summary of the waivers granted by the Commissioner for the 2024-25 school year, and a list of districts currently operating under such waivers.

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on October 28 and 29.