# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | December 10, 2024 |
| **Subject:** | Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools – Funding and Amendment of Certificates for Greater Commonwealth Virtual School and for TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School |

At the meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on November 19, 2024, the Board discussed my recommendation to increase the per pupil tuition rate for each Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS) currently operating.[[1]](#footnote-2) The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) provided background information on the two virtual schools in Massachusetts, the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) and the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA). Board members heard public comment from the superintendents of each CMVS on why their current tuition rates ($9,802 per student[[2]](#footnote-3), paid by the student’s district of residence) are not adequate to serve the needs of the students they enroll.

With the benefit of the Board’s initial discussion about timing of the rate increase, I am recommending that the Board vote at the December 17, 2024 meeting to amend the certificates for GCVS and TECCA to specify a per pupil tuition rate of $13,114 with $75 per pupil retained by the Department for program administration. Each school will receive the net amount of $13,039 per pupil, effective FY26. This would fully implement the tuition rate increase in the coming fiscal year. I further recommend that the Board delegate to the Commissioner authority to revise this rate for FY26 to reflect the annual Chapter 70 inflationary adjustment and amend their certificates accordingly. When the Board considers renewal of each CMVS’s certificate in March 2026, the Commissioner will seek an extension of the delegation to annually adjust the CMVS tuition rates to reflect inflation.

We have reviewed this recommendation with the Digital Learning Advisory Council (DLAC);[[3]](#footnote-4) the Operational Services Division in the Executive Office for Administration and Finance,[[4]](#footnote-5) and other stakeholder groups.

Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner; Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign; Ruth Hersh, School Redesign and Education Collaborative Manager; and Robert O’Donnell, Director of School Finance will be present at the Board meeting on December 17 to answer any questions you may have.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Terms of Certificate, GCVS

Attachment B: Terms of Certificate, TECCA

Attachment C: Motion

1. [Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools Funding Memorandum (November 12, 2024)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2025/2024-11/item5.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Per statute, the Department retains $75 of the per pupil tuition for virtual school program administration; in FY25 the CMVS receive $9,727 per pupil. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The virtual schools legislation in 2013 created DLAC to advise the Board and the Commissioner on “matters related to virtual education” including, but not limited to, “recommendations for best practices to encourage online education to complement classroom instruction in district schools and recommendations on the appropriateness of the fee that the department may retain for the administration of the virtual school program.” Chapter 379 of the Acts of 2012, § 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Consultation with OSD is required by statute. G.L. c. 71, § 94(k); 603 CMR 52.07(1). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)