**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

**of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**135 Santilli Highway**

**Everett, Massachusetts 02149**  
**Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 9:05 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:**

**Katherine Craven**,Chair,Brookline

**Matthew Hills**, Vice-Chair, Newton

**Ioannis Asikis,** Brookline, Student Member

**Ericka Fisher,** Worcester

**Farzana Mohamed,** Newton, *participated remotely*

**Michael Moriarty,** Holyoke

**Dálida Rocha,** Worcester, *participated remotely*

**Mary Ann Stewart,** Lexington

**Patrick Tutwiler**, Secretary of Education, Andover

**Martin West,** Newton

**Russell D. Johnston,** Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Chair Craven called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., and members introduced themselves. Chair Craven announced that today’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting, like all open meetings of the Board, is being [livestreamed](https://vimeo.com/user217853291) and recorded, and votes would be by roll call because two members are attending remotely.

**Statements from the Public**

* **Senator Brendan Crighton, Representative Dan Cahill, Representative Sean Reid, and Representative Jenny Armini** addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn expansion application
* **Representative Lindsay Sabadosa** addressed the Board on the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School expansion application
* **Jared Nicholson, City of Lynn Mayor,** addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn expansion application
* **Jared Freedman, on behalf of Senator Joanne Comerford,** addressed the Board on the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School expansion application
* **Jessica J. Tang, President, AFT Massachusetts,** addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn expansion application
* **Michael Klein**, **parent,** addressed the Board on the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School expansion application
* **Nikki Barnes, Executive Director, KIPP MA,** addressed the Board on the KIPP Academy Lynn expansion application
* **Hsinpei Normand, PVCICS Board of Trustees Teacher Representative, and Kathleen Wang, School Administrator, PVCICS,** addressed the Board on the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School expansion application
* **Maura Webster, Board Chair, Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School, and Stephan Richter, student,** addressed the Board on the Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School expansion application
* **Ed Lambert, Executive Director, Mass Business Alliance for Education,** addressed the Board on the Competency Determination: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00
* **Jill Norton, Voices for Academic Equity Coalition**, addressed the Board on the Competency Determination: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00

**Comments from the Chair**

Concluding the public comment section of the agenda, Chair Craven said the Board is exploring holding a special meeting in March to allow time for more public comment and discussion. Chair Craven then spoke about her presentation to the Special Commission on Combatting Antisemitism on February 10, 2025.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Tutwiler said the Higher Education Financial Aid Roadshow is being held at high schools across Massachusetts to encourage students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Massachusetts has boosted support to students. The Secretary commented that the U.S. Department of Education’s February 14 Dear Colleague letter is not supported by the rule of law, adding that Governor Healey and Attorney General Campbell, together with the Executive Office of Education, Department of Higher Education, and DESE are issuing updated Joint Guidance Affirming the Commitment to Equal Access to Education in Massachusetts. Secretary Tutwiler said the Healey-Driscoll administration reaffirms its commitment to its values and will continue to foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to advance educational goals and opportunities.

**Comments from the Acting Commissioner**

Acting Commissioner Johnston highlighted the recent recipient of the Milken Educator Award, Jillian Levreault. Acting Commissioner Johnston then commented on the recent release of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results and Advanced Placement exam results for Massachusetts. Acting Commissioner Johnston gave a brief recap of the previous night’s special meeting regarding the evaluation of the MTEL alternative assessment pilot. He said his key takeaway from the presentation was that the alternative assessment pilot has been successful in opening pathways to teaching, in support of our goal to build and sustain a diverse and effective educator workforce.

Chair Craven called for a motion and vote to approve meeting minutes from January and February.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes**  **of the January 28, 2025 regular meeting and the February 10, 2025 special**  **meeting.**

The vote, by roll call, was unanimous.

**Charter Schools: Amendments to Maximum Enrollment (Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, South Shore Charter Public School) and Region (Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School) — Discussion and Vote**

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced DESE staff presenters Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner, Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, and Alyssa Hopkins, Assistant Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign. The Acting Commissioner framed the agenda item, stating that today the Board will vote on his recommendations to approve six charter school amendment requests. He said the recommendations have taken public comment into account and are grounded in an evaluation of the evidence as required by legal criteria. Acting Commissioner Johnston stated that each school’s amendment request met the criteria for approval as described in statute and regulation. He said that while he has heard the concerns regarding the financial impact of these expansions on sending districts, this is not a consideration included in law or regulation. Acting Commissioner Johnston then suggested that the Board discuss each request in order.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School (AMSA). Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School (enrollment increase from 966 to 1,000)

Location: Marlborough

Districts in Region: Clinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard

Maximum Enrollment: 1,000

Grades Served: 6-12

Effective school year: FY2026

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote, by roll call, was 5-5. Chair Craven, Vice-Chair Hills, Members Mohammed, Moriarty, and West voted in favor. Members Asikis, Fisher, Rocha, Stewart, and Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed. The motion did not pass.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School. Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:**

### **Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School(enrollment increase from 448 to 800)**

**Location:**  **Boston**

**Maximum Enrollment:** **800**

**Grades Served:**  **9-12**

**Effective school year:**  **FY2026**

**Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-1. Chair Craven, Vice-Chair Hills, Members Asikis, Fisher, Mohammed, Moriarty, Rocha, Stewart, and West voted in favor. Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School. Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

### KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School(enrollment increase from 1,586 to 2,036)

Location: Lynn

Maximum Enrollment: 2,036

Grades Served: K-12

Effective school year: FY2026

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote, by roll call, was 4-6. Vice-Chair Hills, Members Mohammed, Moriarty, and West voted in favor. Chair Craven and Members Asikis, Fisher, Rocha, Stewart, and Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed. The motion did not pass.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School. Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:**

**Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (enrollment increase from 584 to 684)**

**Location:**  **Hadley**

**Districts in Region:** **Agawam, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chesterfield-Goshen, Chicopee, Conway, Deerfield, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Northampton, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick-Tolland-Granville, Springfield, Sunderland, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg**

**Maximum Enrollment:** **684**

**Grades Served:**  **K-12**

**Effective school year:**  **FY2026**

**The charter is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in a Commissioner recommendation and Board action to further amend the charter.**

1. **By June 2, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will engage in a comprehensive self-evaluation of its capacity and expertise, taking into consideration current term limits for existing board members, possible recruitment of additional members with needed expertise, and staggering trustee terms to ensure board viability during transitions in membership. The board of trustees will submit any proposed bylaw amendments, as necessary, to the Department,** [**charterschools@mass.gov**](mailto:charterschools@mass.gov)**, by October 31, 2025 for approval.**
2. **By August 29, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will engage in training, conducted by an external consultant on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees of a charter school. Such consultant and the substance of the training must be submitted to and approved in advance by the Department. In addition, all members of the board of trustees must participate in training on the** [**Open Meeting Law**](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/open-meeting-law-trainings) **as offered by the Office of the Attorney General, and provide confirmation of participation, no later than March 31, 2025.**
3. **By December 31, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will submit a plan to implement a cost-effective regional transportation plan that is eligible for state reimbursement. In formulating this plan, the board of trustees must consider historical trends in enrollment, attendance, and attrition, in addition to any current disparities in enrollment, retention, and/or attrition.**

**Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote, by roll call, was 6-4. Chair Craven, Vice-Chair Hills, Members Asikis, Mohammed, Moriarty, and West voted in favor. Members Fisher, Rocha, Stewart, and Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:**

### **Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (remove Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill-Montague, Greenfield, Longmeadow, Mohawk Trail, Monroe, Monson, Palmer, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional, Tantasqua, and Ware from region)**

**Location:**  **South Hadley**

**Districts in Region:** **Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Holyoke, Ludlow, Northampton, South Hadley, Springfield, West Springfield, and Westfield**

**Maximum Enrollment:** **400**

**Grades Served:**  **7-12**

**Effective:**  **FY2026**

**The charter is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in a Commissioner recommendation and Board action to further amend the charter.**

1. **By May 1, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will submit a plan to implement a cost-effective regional transportation plan that is eligible for state reimbursement. In formulating this plan, the board of trustees must consider historical trends in enrollment, attendance, and attrition, in addition to any current disparities in enrollment, retention, and/or attrition.**

**Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote, by roll call, was 8-2. Chair Craven, Vice-Chair Hills, Members Asikis, Fisher, Mohammed, Moriarty, Stewart, and West voted in favor. Member Rocha and Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed.

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the recommendation for South Shore Charter Public School. Chair Craven solicited a motion and discussion.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:**

**South Shore Charter Public School (enrollment increase from 1,075 to 1,300)**

**Location:**  **Norwell**

**Districts in Region:** **Abington, Braintree, Brockton, Cohasset, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate, Weymouth, and Whitman-Hanson**

**Maximum Enrollment:** **1,300**

**Grades Served:**  **K-12**

**Effective school year:**  **FY2026**

**South Shore Charter Public School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.**

The vote, by roll call, was 6-4. Chair Craven, Vice-Chair Hills, Members Asikis, Mohammed, Moriarty, and West voted in favor. Members Fisher, Rocha, Stewart, and Secretary Tutwiler voted opposed.

Member Mohamed, participating remotely, left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

**Competency Determination: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00 (Addressing Changes in Statute) — Discussion and Possible Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced the topic of the proposed amendments to the regulations on MCAS and competency determination and invited Rob Curtin, Chief Data, Accountability, and Assessment Officer to present. Mr. Curtin reviewed the previous discussions that the Board had on this topic at the November, December, and January regular meetings and most recently, at the February special meeting. Mr. Curtin said the proposed amendments are informed by the Board’s discussions and are designed to focus on student learning and promote academic equity for all students. He then presented an overview of the proposed amendments to the regulations including the alignment of the regulations to the new statutory language, new definitions, minimum requirements to earn the competency determination, adding United States History as an area under the competency determination, and the provisions for DESE to provide oversight and audit districts’ competency determination policies. Mr. Curtin also presented non-regulatory actions that DESE plans to take on this matter. Lastly, Mr. Curtin noted that at the February 10 special meeting, the question was raised as to whether to use MCAS more broadly as a path to show mastery. Vice-Chair Hills offered comments on that idea.

Board members engaged in discussion about the proposed amendments. Acting Commissioner Johnston and Mr. Curtin responded to questions and comments from Board members. Reflecting the discussion, Acting Commissioner Johnston said DESE could add a question to the notice inviting public comment on the proposed amendments.

Chair Craven called for a motion to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the regulations.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 1B and 1D, hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00, as presented by the Commissioner. The proposed amendments address changes in statute.**

**In addition, the Commissioner will include a question to solicit public comment on the idea that has been discussed at today’s meeting.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-0.

**Career Technical Education: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.00 (Recruitment and Admissions) — Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced DESE staff presenters Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner, Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner of College, Career and Technical Education and Nicole Smith, Director of College, Career, and Technical Education. The Acting Commissioner said the proposed amendments to the regulations for vocational technical education relate to changes in admissions practices and also update references to this type of education from “vocational” to “career technical.” Acting Commissioner Johnston noted that since the fall, the Board has had three special meetings and three CTE Committee meetings related to this topic.

Deputy Commissioner Robinson presented an overview of the stages of CTE awareness and recruitment, admission, and student retention and success. Associate Commissioner Bennett then presented on the proposed changes to regulations regarding middle school access and middle school informed choice. Ms. Smith presented the proposed changes to regulations regarding the required use of a lottery when there are more applicants than available seats and the two selective criteria that may be used to create the pool for the lottery.

Acting Commissioner Johnston flagged the idea of including a requirement for an additional, non-scored expression of student interest. He then invited comments and questions from the Board. After Board members engaged in a discussion of the proposed amendments, Chair Craven said the Board would return to this topic at the March 10 special meeting. Acting Commissioner Johnston said the special meeting will be an opportunity for the Board to hear more from stakeholders and have further review and discussion before sending out proposed amendments for public comment.

**Educator Licensure: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00 (MTEL Alternatives and Other Updates) — Discussion and Vote to Solicit Public Comment**

Acting Commissioner Johnston introduced DESE staff presenters Claire Abbott, Director of Educator Effectiveness, Brian Devine, Director of Licensure, Allison Balter, Director of the Office of Language Acquisition, Lucy Wall, Legal Counsel, Liz Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy, and visiting presenter James Cowan, Senior Researcher from CALDER. Acting Commissioner Johnston invited Ms. Losee to present on the proposed amendments to the regulations. Ms. Losee listed five broad categories for the changes that are being proposed: alternative licensure assessments, MA curriculum framework-based updates, bilingual education endorsement, professional licensure, and general provisions. Ms. Losee, Mr. Devine, and Ms. Balter presented on the recommendations. Acting Commissioner Johnston and the panelists then responded to comments and questions from the Board.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:**  **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G, hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c.30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-0.

**Salary Adjustment for Acting Commissioner — Discussion and Vote**

Chair Craven introduced the topic of a salary adjustment for the Acting Commissioner, as presented in her memo.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:** **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves a salary adjustment for Acting Commissioner Russell Johnston consistent with the salary increases that the Commonwealth’s Human Resources Division (HRD) announced on July 25, 2024 for all eligible managers in the executive branch.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-0.

Member West congratulated Acting Commissioner Johnston on his new role as a district superintendent in Pennsylvania. Chair Craven also offered her congratulations. With today’s agenda concluded, Chair Craven asked to adjourn the meeting.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED:**  **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns the meeting at 1:00 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote, by roll call, was 9-0.

 Respectfully submitted,

Russell D. Johnston

Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

and Secretary to the Board