# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | February 21, 2025  |
| **Subject:** | Briefing for the February 24, 2025 Special Meeting and the February 25, 2025 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) will have a virtual **special meeting** on **Monday, February 24, 2025**, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. and a **regular meeting** on **Tuesday, February 25, 2025**, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.(held in person at the office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE or Department), 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, February 24, 2025**

Our meeting will lead off with an update on the Commissioner search process from Chair Craven. I will then provide an update on the Department’s Educational Vision, including DESE’s ongoing work to advance student learning.

Most of the meeting will focus on the final annual report on the Pilot of Alternative Assessments for Educator Licensure that the Board authorized in October 2020 through an amendment to the Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00. A description of the alternative assessments included in the pilot and final results of the associated evaluation are included in the report enclosed with the memorandum for this topic.

Claire Abbott, Director of Educator Effectiveness, Liz Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy, and Aubree Webb, Research and Policy Analyst will provide an overview of the alternative assessment pilot. They will be joined by Dan Goldhaber and James Cowan, representatives from our evaluation partner, National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER). They will share the high-level findings in the report and answer questions from Board members.

**REGULAR MEETING, February 25, 2025**

Our business agenda will lead off with a discussion and vote on requests from charter schools to increase their maximum enrollment and a request from one school to remove districts in its charter region. I will present proposed amendments to the regulations on educator licensure and preparation program approval for discussion and vote to solicit public comment. I will present proposed amendments to the regulations on vocational technical education (recruitment and admissions) for discussion and vote to solicit public comment. I will also present proposed amendments to the regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination to address changes in statute, for discussion and possible vote to solicit public comment.

**Statements from the Public**

**Comments from the Chair**

* Chair Craven’s presentation to Special Commission on Combatting Antisemitism, February 10, 2025

**Comments from the Secretary**

* US Department of Education Feb 14 Dear Colleague Letter
* Financial Aid Roadshow
* Proposed regulation changes to career technical education

**Comments from the Acting Commissioner**

* Milken Educator Award
* National Assessment of Educational Progress
* Recap of the February 24, 2025 Special Meeting

**Routine Business:** Approval of the Minutes of the January 28, 2025 Regular Meeting and the February 10, 2025 Special Meeting.

The Board will vote on approval of the minutes.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

1. **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)**

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.10(1), the Board must approve certain changes to the material terms of a school’s charter, including maximum enrollment and the districts named within a charter school’s region. This year, the Department received requests from six schools to increase their 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, Salem Academy Charter School, and South Shore Charter Public School) and from one school (Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School) to remove districts in its charter region. I provided you with [an overview of the amendment requests](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2025/2024-10/item7.2-schedule.docx) in a memorandum dated [October 24, 2024](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2025/2024-10/item7.docx).

This month, I recommend that the Board approve amendments to the charters of six of these schools:  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, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, and South Shore Charter Public School.

I evaluated the charter amendment request submitted by the board of trustees of Salem Academy Charter School. I am not recommending approval of this request at this time.

The Department’s assessment of the recommended requests is described in the memorandum that I provided in preparation for the discussion and vote. The memorandum details the Department’s review process; each school’s request, and the availability of seats to implement the individual requests; public comment, if received; and my recommendation.

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 will be available to answer your questions.

1. **Educator Licensure: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00 (MTEL Alternatives and Other Updates)**

I am presenting proposed amendments to 603 CMR 7.00, the Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, for a vote to solicit public comment, anticipating a final vote by the Board in May 2025 following the public comment period. The proposed amendments will permanently authorize alternative assessments for educator licensure, following up on the successful pilot program that the Board authorized in 2020.

The proposed amendments also include revisions to create a new Media Arts Endorsement, create additional flexibilities in coursework for professional licensure, align the name of the Health/Family and Consumer Sciences license to the framework, allow the Bilingual Endorsement as an alternative to the Sheltered English Immersion Endorsement, specify the end date for emergency licenses, and remove outdated language.

Claire Abbott, Director of Educator Effectiveness, Brian Devine, Director of Licensure, Liz Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy, Lucy Wall of our legal staff, and James Cowan from CALDER will join us for the discussion.

1. **Career Technical Education: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.0 (Recruitment and Admissions)**

I am presenting to the Board proposed amendments to 603 CMR 4.00, the Regulations for Vocational Technical Education, for a vote to solicit public comment, anticipating a final vote by the Board in May 2025 following the public comment period. These proposed amendments relate to changes in admissions practices and also update references to this type of education from “vocational” to “career technical.”

Since October 2024, the Board has had three special meetings and three Career Technical Education (CTE) Committee meetings relating to the topic of admissions in CTE schools. As part of these presentations and during public comment, superintendents, parents, school committee representatives, principals, school counselors, and community advocates representing CTE and sending school communities have shared their experiences. Through these discussions, we have considered the full picture of how CTE schools connect with students beginning with recruitment through admission and enrollment. Importantly, we have examined admissions data on both the state level and school level, as well as enrollment data through a series of presentations.

Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner, Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner of College, Career and Technical Education, Nicole Smith, Director of College, Career, and Technical Education, and Caitlin Looby of our legal staff will join us for the discussion.

1. **Competency Determination: Proposed Amendments to Regulations on MCAS and Competency Determination, 603 CMR 30.00 (Addressing Changes in Statute)**

I will present proposed amendments to 603 CMR 30.00, the regulations relating to the standard for the competency determination, for a possible vote to solicit public comment. With the Board’s approval, the Department will invite public comment on the proposed regulations and then present the comments and any recommended revisions to the Board for final action anticipated in May 2025.

Since this fall, the Board has discussed the matter of the competency determination and the new statutory requirements at four meetings, including the special meeting on February 10, 2025 that was devoted to this topic. The proposed amendments to the regulations are informed by the Board’s discussions and are designed to focus on student learning and promote academic equity for all students.

Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability, will join us for the discussion.

1. **Acting Commissioner – Salary Adjustment Consistent with State Law**

Chair Craven will lead the discussion of her recommendation that the Board consider and vote on a salary adjustment for the Acting Commissioner consistent with state law.

**OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. **College Going: Increasing FASFA and MASFA Completion**

Enclosed is the Increasing FASFA and MASFA Completion report. This interagency report responds to the June 20, 2024, joint resolution of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education.

1. **Update on the 193rd Legislative Session Education Related Laws**

This report provides a summary of the laws relating to the Department that have been enacted and approved by Governor Healey during the 193rd Legislative Session (2023-2024).

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to meeting with you on February 24 and 25.