



- › BESE Home
- › Board Meeting Schedule
- › Board in Brief
- › Board Meeting Minutes
- › BESE Members
- › Board Documents
- › BESE Advisory Councils
- › Chairman's Statements

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

Board Documents - Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Regular Meeting Agenda
 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
 Massachusetts Archives
 220 Morrissey Blvd.
 Boston, MA 02125
 Wednesday, June 25, 2008
 1:00 p.m.

Comments from the Chairman
Comments from the Commissioner
Statements from the Public



Routine Business:

Approval of the Minutes of the May 20, 2008 Regular Meeting - Vote

Items for Discussion and Action:

1. Governor's Readiness Project Recommendations - Discussion
2. [Districts' Plans for Commonwealth Priority Schools](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
3. [English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Review: Second Progress Report and Next Steps](#) - **Discussion**
4. [Charter Schools: Amendments for Conservatory Lab Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
5. [Non-Operating Schools](#) - **Vote**
6. [Randolph Public Schools: Proposed Turnaround Plan](#) - **Discussion and Possible Vote**
7. Authorization to Commissioner on Grants - Vote

Other Items for Information:

8. Education-Related News Clippings
9. Massachusetts Reading First Evaluation Report: Executive Summary  
10. [MCAS Performance Appeals for Competency Determination: Annual Report](#)
11. [Tentative Schedule for Regular Board Meetings through June 2009](#)
12. [Directions to the Meeting](#)

[Briefing](#)

last updated: June 20, 2008

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#) | [Print Pdf](#)

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[Search](#) · [Site Index](#) · [Policies](#) · [Site Info](#) · [Contact ESE](#)



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 17, 2008

Recommendations from State Review Panels on District Plans for School Intervention - Commissioner's Districts

Background

Over a five-week period from March through May 2008, the Department convened nine State Review Panels to review district Plans for School Intervention submitted by leadership teams from the nine "Commissioner's Districts:" Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester. These Plans set out the priority initiatives identified by district leaders in response to the identified needs of their Commonwealth Priority Schools. In total, 54 Commonwealth Priority Schools are addressed in the nine Plans.

In all nine cases, the State Review Panels recommended Board approval of the districts' Plans for School Intervention. State Review Panels determined that the improvement initiatives and strategies set out by each district leadership team in their written plans and in their presentations to panelists demonstrated appropriate consideration of the needs in their Commonwealth Priority Schools.

In five of the State Review Panel meetings, (Brockton, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell and Worcester), panelists determined that no further clarifications or edits were required. In four of the districts, (Boston, Holyoke, New Bedford and Springfield), panelists requested further written clarification. Although panelists agree that the priority initiatives identified in these four plans are appropriate, they recommended that more information be added to the plans. The requested clarifications are identified in the State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report that is provided under each specific district section.

At last month's meeting, the Board reviewed the findings and recommendations made by each State Review Panel regarding the viability of the Plans. At the June meeting, I will ask the Board to accept each of the districts' Plans for

Update

District leaders from Boston, Holyoke, New Bedford and Springfield have responded to the panels' requests for further information by submitting written clarification to the Department. This information is included in the Board packet under each district section. Department staff have reviewed the responses and note the following:

Boston

The Boston Leadership Team has provided adequate written clarification of the next, most immediate steps the district plans to take in order to improve the quality of services and supports for students with special needs. As was noted during the State Review Panel session, district leaders plan to undertake a major reexamination of existing special education programs in order to make redesign decisions and develop a more systematic and complete continuum of services. District leaders also submitted clarification of their plan to address the learning needs of students identified as English language learners. In this narrative, they identify the specific strategies the district will undertake in order to build new capacity to more successfully meet the needs of this large subgroup.

Holyoke

The Holyoke Leadership Team has responded adequately to the State Review Panels' request for further information regarding the district's plan for redesigning the Holyoke Alternative Program. The district has provided its concept paper, setting out the progress made and the challenges still to be faced in this redesigned model. The concept paper discusses the proposed structure of the program at the early childhood, intermediate, middle and high school levels. District leaders state that staffing issues are a continuing concern, since it is essential to ensure that the adults working with these students are not only highly-qualified in their professional credentialing, but have a deep understanding of students' emotional and behavioral needs. The new "Center for Excellence" is expected to open for the start of the 2008-2009 school year. District leaders appear to have developed a plan that is based on their analysis of unique student needs and has the potential to create a more positive learning environment.

New Bedford

The New Bedford Leadership Team has responded adequately to the State Review Panel's request for clarification of their Plan. The district has submitted a response that establishes why they identified the three key initiatives set out in their District Plan for School Intervention, specifically their use of MCAS data to identify a focus on both English language arts and mathematics. Leaders have clarified the connections between their analyses of data, the decisions they made regarding identification of priorities, and the top-level strategies they presented in their Plan. For each of the major strategies to be implemented, they have articulated measurable outcomes.

Springfield

The Springfield Leadership Team has responded adequately to the State Review Panel's requests for further information. Specifically, the Team has provided information to clarify the Panel's concerns regarding the high teacher turnover that has plagued the district over the past several years. The district has initiated several interventions designed to address this problem and has already made some progress in interrupting this pattern. Through collective bargaining efforts, the district has raised compensation and created a new Teacher Evaluation and Development System that emphasizes teacher professional development and embeds teacher support as part of teacher accountability for learning. The district is also addressing the need to create more opportunities for teacher leadership as part of a broader strategy to retain highly-qualified personnel. Another aspect of this initiative includes

the administration and analysis of the KEYS teacher perception survey as a means of collecting data to inform next steps in the district's efforts to retain teachers.

Information on each of the nine districts is provided under Tabs 1-9. For each district, we have included:











1. A copy of the district's Plan for School Intervention
2. The State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report
3. Further information requested by State Review Panels: Boston, Holyoke, New Bedford, Springfield

I recommend that the Board accept these nine plans this month and direct the districts to proceed with their improvement initiatives. We will monitor their progress and report to the Board periodically on the results they have achieved.







Associate Commissioners Juliane Dow and Lynda Foisy will be present at the meeting to respond to questions Board members may have.

Supporting Materials





Boston Public Schools

-   Boston – Special Education District Plan
-   Boston – English Language Learner District Plan
-   State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report
-   District Plan for School Intervention
 -   Phineas Bates Elementary School



Brockton Public Schools

-   State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report
-   District Plan for School Intervention
 -   Using Standards and Data to Improve Achievement

Fall River Public Schools

-   State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report
-   District Plan for School Intervention



Holyoke Public Schools

  Holyoke – Revised Plan

  State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report



  District Plan for School Intervention

Lawrence Public Schools

  State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report

  District Plan for School Intervention

Lowell Public Schools



  State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report

  District Plan for School Intervention



New Bedford Public Schools

  New Bedford – Revised Plan










  State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report

  District Plan for School Intervention









Springfield Public Schools

  Springfield – District Plan for School Intervention (Revised)

  State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report

-   District Plan for School Intervention
-   Elias Brookings Elementary School
-   Daniel Brunton Elementary School
-   Chestnut Accelerated Middle School
-   John F. Kennedy Middle School
-   Van Sickle Middle School

Worcester Public Schools

-   State Review Panel Findings and Recommendations Report
-   District Plan for School Intervention
 -   Analysis of School Improvement Initiatives Spring 2008
 -   Canterbury Street School Plan for Improvement Identified Needs

last updated: June 20, 2008

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#) | [Print Pdf](#)



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 19, 2008

Second Progress Report of the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Review Panel

As you know, we have embarked on a five-year cycle of reviewing each of the seven curriculum frameworks with the goal of making them more accessible and stronger in academic content. Last summer, the Board adopted the process and schedule for reviewing the frameworks, and in November 2007 the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Panel began its work. The Board received and discussed the Panel's first progress report in April 2008. The Panel has done additional work, based on your comments in April, and now presents this second progress report for your information.

I believe that the first stage of the curriculum framework revision process adopted by the Board has been completed and intend to ask the Panel to begin the second phase immediately so that a draft of the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework can be presented to the Board this fall. To that end, I welcome your suggestions on the blueprint for changes in the attached report and for additional ways in which we can make the "third generation" of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as clear and appropriately challenging as possible.

Enclosure: Second Progress Report  

last updated: June 23, 2008

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#) | [Print Pdf](#)



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 19, 2008

Charter Schools - Approval of Charter Amendment Requests for Conservatory Lab Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.11(1), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) must approve major changes in the material terms of a school's charter, including changes to a school's maximum enrollment; grades served; and location of facilities, if such change involves relocating or expanding to another municipality. This memo presents charter amendment requests from three charter schools: Conservatory Lab Charter School (grades served), Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (location of facilities), and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (maximum enrollment and grades served).

As required by 603 CMR 1.11(5), for amendment requests that seek to change a charter school's maximum enrollment, grade span, or the municipality of its location, the Department solicits written comment from the superintendent of the school districts within each charter school's district or region specified in the school's charter. At the time this memorandum was written, we had not received any comments on any of the requests.

Conservatory Lab Charter School

Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS), located in Boston, currently serves approximately 132 students in grades K through 5 and seeks a change in the grades it serves. In October 2005, the Board approved the school's request to increase the maximum enrollment allowed by its charter from 132 to 154 students and to add grade six to the school's K through 5 grade span. Recently, the school's board of trustees voted to request the addition of a K1 program for four-year-old students, instead of adding the previously approved grade 6. The maximum enrollment would remain the same at 154 students. The CLCS proposes to begin the school's Learning Through Music program with students one year earlier in order to improve student outcomes in later grades. The school currently has strong

demand for its 22 kindergarten (K2) seats, with an average of over five applicants for each seat in the past five years. CLCS has provided a detailed implementation plan for this expansion in the attached amendment request.

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCi), located in Amherst, is a regional charter school that currently serves 42 students in grades K through 1 and seeks a change in the location of its facilities. The school is in its first year of operation this year. The school's board of trustees requests approval to move the school's facility approximately four miles, from its current location in Amherst, to a new facility in Hadley, effective the beginning of the 2008-09 school year. PVCi is requesting this change in order to accommodate the growth of its student body in accordance with the terms of the school's charter. The school's proposed new facility is centrally located within the school's region of service.

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (RPCS), located in Boston, currently serves approximately 200 students in grades 6 through 8 and seeks a reduction in its maximum enrollment and the grades it serves. The Board last renewed the school's charter in February 2004, with a maximum enrollment of 432 students and a maximum grade span of grades 5 through 10. Over the past several months, a feasibility study committee of the school's board of trustees met to determine if and how to use the remaining seats allotted to the school. As a result of this committee's recommendations, the school's board of trustees voted to request a charter amendment to reduce the school's maximum enrollment from 432 students to 300 students and to make the grade span in the school's charter consistent with the grade span offered by the school, grades 6 through 8. In lieu of expanding to a high school or substantially increasing its middle school program, RPCS plans to increase the size of its incoming sixth grade class to serve more students in its current middle school structure.

The Department has reviewed these requests, and they appear reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. I recommend that the Board approve these requests as presented. If you have any questions regarding these amendments, please contact Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781-338-3200; Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; or me.

Enclosures:

Correspondence from Conservatory Lab Charter School

Correspondence from Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Correspondence from Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

last updated: June 19, 2008

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#) | [Print Pdf](#)



- › BESE Home
- › Board Meeting Schedule
- › Board in Brief
- › Board Meeting Minutes
- › BESE Members
- › Board Documents
- › BESE Advisory Councils
- › Chairman's Statements

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education>

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 19, 2008

Non-maintenance of Schools

This month's Board package contains a routine annual motion approving the requests submitted by the superintendents and school committees of several small towns that do not operate their own schools and seek to tuition their students to public schools in another town. This action is governed by General Laws chapter 71, sections 1, 4 and 6. I have enclosed copies of the relevant sections of the statutes, for easy reference.

A tuition agreement is one of several organizational options for small school districts to join together to provide services on a regional basis. Other options include superintendency unions, regional school districts, and educational collaboratives. The large number of small school districts in the Commonwealth makes it harder to deliver educational services efficiently and effectively. In the months ahead, we need to look at ways to encourage even more consolidation of district administrative functions.

These requests are all in order for Board approval, and the superintendents will be notified of the Board's action.

[Enclosures](#): M.G.L. Chapter 71.

last updated: June 19, 2008

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#) | [Print Pdf](#)



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 19, 2008

Randolph Public Schools - Turnaround Plan

Background

At the May 2008 Board meeting, members received an update from the state-appointed District Support Team assigned to work with leaders of the Randolph Public Schools, the Randolph School Committee and the Randolph Board of Selectmen in developing a plan to address the causes of district underperformance. In this progress report, we were informed that Randolph officials were on track to present their Turnaround Plan for review and discussion at the June Board meeting.

Update

On June 11, 2008, I convened a meeting with Randolph leaders and selected Department staff members to discuss critical questions that will affect the recommendations I must make to the Board regarding approval of the Randolph Turnaround Plan. Among other issues, I was particularly interested in understanding:

- How confident Randolph's leaders are that the improvement initiatives they have targeted in the Turnaround Plan are the right ones
- The willingness of all stakeholders to collaborate in meaningful ways to support purposeful implementation of the improvement initiatives set out in the Plan
- The level of commitment among these leaders to address and resolve existing barriers that have inhibited community support for education in the past, and
- The likelihood that the community will maintain the desire and capacity to sustain the necessary support over time.

At the end of this memo is a list identifying attendees at this meeting.

I appreciated the opportunity to engage in this discussion with Randolph leaders and Department staff. It was a long meeting at the end of a long day, but the discussion was substantive and important.

The Randolph Public Schools Turnaround Plan has been developed through a collaborative effort directed by a local team that included representatives from the School Committee, the Board of Selectmen, parents, the local teachers' association, and a range of school and district administrators. The Turnaround Plan articulates the district team's identification of key challenges and their analysis of the root causes that have contributed to low student performance. The Plan is focused on three priority goals:

1. Develop, implement and support standards-based curricula and instruction in all content areas, with particular attention to teaching and learning in mathematics.
2. Improve performance for all special education students.
3. Raise the community's confidence and trust in the quality of education provided to all students through the deliberate design and implementation of opportunities that will create new conditions for positive collaboration.

I will carefully consider what I have read about the Randolph situation, what I have learned in many conversations over the last several weeks, and what I heard in my meeting with Randolph leaders on June 11th, as I prepare my [recommendation](#) for the Board on the Randolph Public Schools Turnaround Plan. The Turnaround Plan is enclosed for your review.

  Enclosure:

Addendum:

June 11, 2008 Commissioner's meeting with Randolph officials - List of Attendees

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner
Jeffrey Nellhaus, Deputy Commissioner
Rhoda E. Schneider, General Counsel
Juliane Dow, Senior Associate Commissioner
Lynda Foisy, Associate Commissioner

Richard Silverman, Randolph Superintendent of Schools
Larry Azar, Chair of Randolph School Committee
Paul Connors, Chair of Randolph Board of Selectmen
Tamara Pitts, Member of Randolph School Committee
James Burgess, Member of Randolph Board of Selectmen
Karen Manning, President, Randolph Education Association
David Murphy, Executive Secretary to the Randolph Board of Selectmen



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: June 19, 2008

MCAS Performance Appeals Annual Report & Next Steps

The MCAS Performance Appeals process was established by the Board in 2002 to provide a way for students who have repeatedly failed the English Language Arts (ELA) and/or Mathematics MCAS exams to demonstrate their ability to meet or exceed the passing standard of 220 through a review of their coursework. While most of the graduates in the classes of 2003-2007 (roughly 301,000 students) met the standard by passing the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests, more than 2,800 students have earned a Competency Determination through the MCAS Performance Appeals process, including approximately 335 students who were granted appeals in both English language arts and mathematics.

This report serves the following three purposes: (1) to provide you with an overview of the appeals process; (2) to present the 2008 Appeals Annual Report, which summarizes the 2007 data on number of appeals submitted and granted, and percent granted, and compares those figures to comparable data since 2002; and (3) to describe next steps as the Department prepares recommendations for amending the performance appeals regulations to add Science and Technology/Engineering to the appeals process. We expect to present those recommendations in August 2008. This is a necessary next step because that content area has been added to the Competency Determination standard beginning with the class of 2010.

Appeals Overview

Massachusetts' public high school students in the Class of 2003 were the first graduating class required to meet the state's Competency Determination standard as a condition for high school graduation. In 2001, former Commissioner David P. Driscoll formed a Blue Ribbon Panel, headed by former Board member Henry Thomas, to explore alternative pathways for students to earn a Competency Determination. The panel's recommendations led to the creation of the MCAS Performance Appeals process, which provides students with a fair and reasonable opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the required knowledge and skills to meet the academic standard

required for graduation even though they have not passed the MCAS tests in ELA and/or mathematics.

It is important to note that the MCAS appeals process does not waive the Competency Determination standard for any student. Rather, it is a mechanism through which students who are unable for some reason to demonstrate that they meet the standard through the standard MCAS tests, are provided an opportunity to show that they possess the required knowledge and skills through other measures.

Eligibility Requirements

The Board's regulations on MCAS performance appeals are found at [603 CMR 30.05](#). District superintendents are responsible for filing performance appeals on behalf of students. A student must first satisfy the following eligibility criteria [1](#), for an appeal to be considered:

1. The student has taken the required grade 10 MCAS tests at least three times;
2. The student has maintained at least a 95 percent attendance level (no more than nine days of absence from school in a 180-day school year) during the year prior to and the year of the appeal;
3. The student has satisfactorily participated in the tutoring and other academic support services made available by or approved by the school under an individual student success plan or under any other plan designed to strengthen the student's knowledge and skills in the subject(s); and
4. For a student who has participated in the MCAS Alternate Assessment, the student has submitted at least two portfolios in the subject area of the appeal.

The Commissioner has the authority to waive one or more of the above eligibility requirements if there are extenuating circumstances such as serious illness, childcare commitments, or hardship.

Two Types of Appeals

Once the eligibility requirements have been satisfied, superintendents can submit either a cohort or a portfolio appeal for the student.

A cohort appeal compares the student's grade point average to the grade point average of a cohort of at least 6 other students who took the same sequence of courses at grades 10 and 11 in that subject area. The students who make up the appellant student's cohort must have also earned a passing score in the 220- 228 range on the grade 10 MCAS test of the subject area of the appeal. To be granted an appeal, the appellant student's GPA must equal or exceed the median GPA of the comparison cohort, or fall within two standard errors of the mean GPA of the cohort. An impartial Appeals Board comprised of public high school educators appointed by the Commissioner generally meets monthly to review cohort performance appeals and make recommendations to the Commissioner.

When it is not possible to create a cohort of at least 6 other students, superintendents may file a *portfolio appeal* of the student's current and/or cumulative work in the subject area of the appeal. To be granted an appeal, a student's portfolio must demonstrate a comparable level of performance to that of a student who has passed the grade 10 MCAS test in the subject area of the appeal. A panel of experts in ELA and mathematics reviews each portfolio and makes individual determinations in each subject area. Portfolio

appeals are reviewed three times annually, typically in November, April, and June.

Based on the evidence presented and the recommendation of the performance appeals board, the Commissioner decides whether to grant or deny the appeal or request additional information from the superintendent. If the evidence indicates that a student has not yet met the minimum academic standard for the Competency Determination, the student should continue to receive instruction in ELA or mathematics in order to meet the standard.

Next Step: Adding Science and Technology/Engineering to the Appeals Process

Beginning with the class of 2010, state regulation [603 CMR 30.03\(3\)](#) requires students to meet or exceed the state standard in Science and Technology/Engineering, in addition to English language arts and Mathematics, in order to earn a Competency Determination and qualify for high school graduation. The addition of Science and Technology/Engineering to the graduation requirement will require an amendment to the regulations that govern the MCAS Performance Appeals process.

My intention is to convene a working group this summer to discuss and recommend options for adding Science and Technology/Engineering to the appeals process. Based on input from the working group, I will bring my recommendations to the Board in August and ask for your approval to release the proposed amendments to the MCAS Performance Appeals regulations for public comment. I anticipate bringing them back to the Board for a final vote on the amendments in October or November.

Appeals Annual Report: Summary of 2007 Data and Trends

The tables on the following pages provide 2007 summary data, as well as trend data, on the number of MCAS performance appeals submitted and granted, and the percent of appeals granted, by subject, by type of appeal submitted, and by students with disabilities.

As you will see in Table 1, the number of appeals submitted since 2003 has decreased each year in both ELA and mathematics as the percentage of students passing the ELA and mathematics tests on their first attempts as 10th graders has risen over that time period. In addition, the percent of appeals granted has generally increased since the creation of the appeals process as superintendents and principals have come to better understand the requirements for students to meet the standard through the appeals process.

**Table 1. MCAS Performance Appeals, by Subject:
2002 - 2007**

Subject	Year	# Submitted	# Granted	% Granted
ELA	2007	151	121	80%
	2006	242	169	70%
	2005	322	244	76%

	2004	491	386	79%
	2003	711	467	66%
	2002	96	48	50%
Mathematics	2007	399	293	73%
	2006	607	403	66%
	2005	611	393	64%
	2004	849	617	73%
	2003	1,454	830	57%
	2002	368	186	51%

Table 2. MCAS Performance Appeals, by Type of Appeal: 2002-2007 English Language Arts

	Year	# Submitted	# Granted	% Granted
Cohort Appeal	2007	120	103	86%
	2006	213	156	73%
	2005	265	214	81%
	2004	439	361	82%
	2003	657	451	69%
	2002	96	48	50%
Portfolio Appeal	2007	23	11	48%
	2006	27	11	41%
	2005	47	25	53%
	2004	52	25	48%
	2003	54	16	30%
	2002	-	-	-

Note: The number of cohort and portfolio appeals in 2005 and onward may not add to the totals in Table 1 due to a small number of transfer appeals and commissioner's appeals.

Table 3. MCAS Performance Appeals, by Type of Appeal: 2002-2007 Mathematics

	Year	# Submitted	# Granted	% Granted
Cohort Appeal	2007	324	260	80%
	2006	516	359	70%
	2005	508	354	70%
	2004	720	573	80%
	2003	1,273	787	62%
	2002	368	186	51%
Portfolio Appeal	2007	63	28	44%
	2006	88	41	47%
	2005	90	35	39%
	2004	129	44	34%
	2003	181	43	24%
	2002	-	-	-

Note: The number of cohort and portfolio appeals in 2005 and onward may not add to the totals in Table 1 due to a small number of transfer appeals and commissioner's appeals.

Table 4. MCAS Performance Appeals, by Special Education: 2002-2007 English Language Arts

	Year	# Submitted	# Granted	% Granted
Cohort Appeal	2007	61	53	87%
	2006	119	86	72%
	2005	111	90	81%
	2004	180	157	87%
	2003	239	173	72%
	2002	60	26	43%
Portfolio Appeal	2007	6	1	17%
	2006	13	5	38%
	2005	18	3	17%

	2004	27	12	44%
	2003	40	12	30%
	2002	-	-	-

Table 5. MCAS Performance Appeals, by Special Education: 2002-2007 Mathematics

	Year	# Submitted	# Granted	% Granted
Cohort Appeal	2007	170	133	75%
	2006	230	150	65%
	2005	245	160	65%
	2004	343	273	80%
	2003	472	291	62%
	2002	175	75	43%
Portfolio Appeal	2007	43	15	35%
	2006	56	27	48%
	2005	66	19	29%
	2004	90	30	33%
	2003	124	33	27%
	2002	-	-	-

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education removed an additional requirement that students attain a minimum score of 216 to be eligible to submit an MCAS Performance Appeal in November 2006.

last updated: June 19, 2008



- › [BESE Home](#)
- › [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- › [Board in Brief](#)
- › [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- › [BESE Members](#)
- › [Board Documents](#)
- › [BESE Advisory Councils](#)
- › [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 19, 2008

Proposed 2008-2009 Board Meeting Dates

Below is a list of proposed Board meeting dates for the upcoming school year. Whenever possible, Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, but conflicts occur this year in October, November, December and May. To accommodate those scheduling conflicts, I am proposing that we meet in those months on the third Tuesday.

Proposed Board Meeting Dates 2008-2009

Tuesday, August 26, 2008

Tuesday, September 23

Tuesday, October 21 (to accommodate STEM Summit)

Tuesday, November 18 (to accommodate Thanksgiving)

Tuesday, December 16 (to accommodate Christmas)

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Tuesday, February 24

Tuesday, March 24

Tuesday, April 28

Tuesday, May 19 (to accommodate Memorial Day)

Tuesday, June 23

Please note that meetings in July or August do not count toward the attendance requirement in the Board statute, which says, "If a member is absent from any four regularly scheduled monthly meetings, exclusive of July and August, in any calendar year, his office as a member of said board shall be deemed vacant."

I recommend that the Board adopt the meeting schedule after we have checked with the incoming Board chair and member(s) whose terms take effect on July 1st. When the Board approves the final schedule, we will post it on our

website.

last updated: June 23, 2008

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*Massachusetts Department of
Elementary & Secondary Education*

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EVENTS CALENDAR

June 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11



Conference Directions

Boston - Massachusetts Archives

220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston

The Massachusetts Archives is located on the campus of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, just past the Campus Center and before the JFK Library. [View a map of the campus.](#)

Driving Directions

From the South

Take I-93 (Southeast Expressway) to exit 14. At the end of the ramp, merge onto Morrissey Boulevard. Follow the signs toward the JFK Library and Museum and the University of Massachusetts-Boston campus.

From the North

Take I-93 (Southeast Expressway) to exit 15. Bear left at the bottom of the ramp and follow the signs to the JFK Library and Museum and the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Subway Directions

UMass Boston is located less than a mile from the MBTA's JFK/UMass Station (Red Line). The university runs a regular, free shuttle bus service between the JFK/UMass stop and the campus. The trip normally takes less than ten minutes. The Massachusetts Archives is located next door to the Campus Center.

Parking

Please park in the spots located directly outside of the Massachusetts Archives building.



- › BESE Home
- › Board Meeting Schedule
- › Board in Brief
- › Board Meeting Minutes
- › BESE Members
- › Board Documents
- › BESE Advisory Councils
- › Chairman's Statements

[District/School Administration](#) › [Administration](#) ›

The Massachusetts Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: June 18, 2008

Briefing for the June 25, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on Wednesday, June 25, 2008, in the Patriot Room at the Massachusetts Archives, 220 Morrissey Blvd. in Boston. The meeting will start at 1 p.m. and adjourn by 5 p.m. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Belinda Wilson at (781) 338-3118.

OVERVIEW

We will convene at the Massachusetts Archives at 1 p.m. on June 25th following Governor Patrick's announcement of the Readiness Project initiatives at 11 a.m. at the John F. Kennedy Library. Our business agenda includes a discussion of the Readiness Project, a vote on the District Plans for School Intervention submitted by the nine Commissioner's Districts that have Commonwealth Priority Schools, an update on the review of the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, and a possible vote on the Randolph Turnaround Plan. Other items on our agenda for a vote are amendment requests from three charter schools, the annual list of non-operating schools, and a vote authorizing grant approvals over the summer.

REGULAR MEETING

Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Reville will brief the Board on current issues and activities. Governor Patrick has announced two new appointments to the Board effective July 1st: Maura O. Banta of Melrose, who will chair the Board, and Beverly A. Holmes of Springfield. The press release is enclosed following this memo. We also have a new student Board member, Andrew "AJ" Fajnzylber, who is entering his senior year at Brookline High School and is the newly elected chair of the State Student Advisory Council. Zachary Tsetsos, our outgoing student member, will present a brief

report on the work of the State Student Advisory Council this year and will introduce AJ.

Comments from the Commissioner

1. **Proposed state budget for FY09.** I will update the Board on any new developments in the proposed FY09 education budget
2. **Honors for Ron Honesty.** I am pleased to inform you that the Boston Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants selected Ron Honesty, the Director of our Grants Management unit, for its 2008 achievement award. The AGA Boston Chapter gives the award each year to a Boston area government employee in recognition of outstanding achievement in developing, implementing, and improving financial management in government services. Ron was selected for the improvements he made in our grants payment system, which have greatly facilitated the flow and accounting of funds to school districts and other grant recipients. Ron was formally recognized at the AGA's awards dinner on May 29th.
3. **Advisory council nominations.** The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established advisory councils to advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters related to improving public education and student achievement. We are seeking applications from educators, parents, students, business leaders, and other community members who have a demonstrated commitment to excellence in public education as well as experience and expertise specific to the advisory council. Councils with openings for the fall of 2008 are: Adult Basic Education, Arts Education, Community Service Learning, Educational Personnel, Educational Technology, English Language Learners/Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Global Education, Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services, Life Skills Management, Mathematics-Science Education, Parent and Community Education and Involvement, Racial Imbalance, Special Education, and Technology-Engineering Education. The recruitment memo is posted on the Board's website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/recruit.html>

The Board appoints advisory council members upon recommendation of the Commissioner. I expect to bring recommendations to you in September. Advisory councils meet at least four times a year, and members serve without compensation. If you know of good candidates, please encourage them to apply by the July 31st deadline. Interested parties should submit two copies of a letter of intent along with a resume to Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906 (Attention: Advisory Councils).

4. **Update and plans.** I am enthusiastic and energized after my first month on the job as Commissioner. I will update the Board on our progress and on plans for moving forward.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

1. **Governor's Readiness Project Recommendations - Discussion**

Chairman Reville will lead the Board in a discussion of the Governor's Readiness Project Action Plan, released earlier in the day.

2. Districts' Plans for Commonwealth Priority Schools - Discussion and Vote

Last month the Board received recommendations from the State Review Panels that reviewed the District Plans for School Intervention submitted by the nine Commissioner's Districts: Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester. The panels make recommendations to the Commissioner and the Board on the adequacy and viability of each plan, and they have recommended approval of all nine districts' Plans for School Intervention. At our meeting last month, Board members discussed the standards and process for the review and asked for additional information that we have provided to you under separate cover. I recommend that the Board vote at the June 25th meeting to accept the plans from these nine districts.

3. English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Review: Second Progress Report and Next Steps - Discussion

As part of our ongoing review of the seven curriculum frameworks, in November 2007 the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Panel began its work. The Board received and discussed the Panel's first progress report in April 2008. The Panel has done additional work, based on your comments in April, and now presents this second progress report for your information. Based on the discussion at this month's meeting, I will ask the Panel to proceed with its work so that a draft of the updated English Language Arts Curriculum Framework can be presented to the Board this fall.

4. Charter Schools: Proposed Amendments for Conservatory Lab Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School - Discussion and Vote

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, the Board must approve major changes in the material terms of a school's charter, including changes to a school's maximum enrollment; grades served; and location of facilities, if the change involves relocating or expanding to another municipality. I recommend that the Board vote this month to approve charter amendment requests from three charter schools: Conservatory Lab Charter School (grades served), Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (location of facilities), and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (maximum enrollment and grades served). The enclosed memo provides details.

5. Non-Operating Schools - Vote

By statute, towns that do not operate their own public schools, generally because the town is small and is not a member of a regional school district, must request and receive approval annually from the Board to tuition their students to public schools in other towns. This item is presented for your approval this month.

6. Randolph Public Schools: Proposed Turnaround Plan - Discussion and Possible Vote

In November 2007, the Board voted to designate Randolph Public Schools as an underperforming district. In February 2008, the Board voted on actions and benchmarks for Randolph. The Board also voted to defer

action on the question of chronic underperformance and state receivership for the district for 120 days, with the understanding that the Department would appoint a District Support Team to work with local school, municipal, and community leaders to define actions to be taken over the next 24 months and to assist in a community-wide, consensus-building effort. At our meeting last month, the Board received the progress report from our District Support Team, chaired by former Malden superintendent Joan Connolly. The Turnaround Plan submitted by Randolph officials is enclosed. On June 25th, Supt. Richard Silverman and other representatives from Randolph will be present to respond to questions about their Turnaround Plan. We have scheduled discussion of this item to begin around 3:30 p.m. to accommodate Randolph school and community officials who have a commitment earlier in the afternoon. I will make a recommendation to the Board at the meeting.

7. Authorization to Commissioner on Grants - Vote

The state budget takes effect on July 1st, but the Board typically does not meet in July. For that reason, in June the Board votes a standard motion to authorize the Commissioner, in consultation with the Chairman and members of the Board, to approve grants and any other matters that require action between the June meeting and the next regular Board meeting. I will report to the Board on any such approvals. The motion is enclosed.

OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8. Education-Related News Clippings

Enclosed are several recent articles about education.

9. Massachusetts Reading First Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

At the May Board meeting, members requested information on the evaluation of the Massachusetts Reading First program. The executive summary of the Year 5 evaluation is enclosed under Tab 9. The full evaluation report is available online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/read/mrfp/donahue.html>.

10. MCAS Performance Appeals for Competency Determination: Annual Report

Enclosed is the 2008 report on MCAS performance appeals. The Board established the MCAS performance appeals process in 2002 to provide a way for students to demonstrate, through their course work, that they meet or exceed the state standard in English language arts and/or mathematics on the grade 10 MCAS tests even though they repeatedly have not passed the tests. The performance appeals system is integral to the fairness and reasonableness of the state competency determination standard for high school graduation. This summer I plan to convene a working group to consider options for adding Science and Technology/Engineering to the appeals process. Based on input from the working group, I will bring my recommendations to the Board in August for initial review and ask for your approval to invite public comment on proposed amendments to the MCAS Performance Appeals regulations.

11. **Tentative Schedule for Regular Board Meetings through June 2009**

After consulting with Board members, we have prepared a tentative schedule for regular Board meetings from August 2008 through June 2009. Most of the meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of the month; exceptions are noted. We are providing this now for your information and will recommend that the Board vote on the meeting schedule after we have checked with the new Board chair and member(s) to be appointed as of July 1st. Reminder: the Board statute says, "If a member is absent from any four regularly scheduled monthly meetings, exclusive of July and August, in any calendar year, his office as a member of said board shall be deemed vacant." After the Board approves the final schedule, we will post it on our website.

12. **Directions to the Meeting**

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you in Boston on June 25th.

last updated: June 20, 2008

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