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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Board Documents - November 27, 2007

Regular Meeting Agenda
 Massachusetts Board of Education
 Ferryway School
 150 Cross Street
 Malden, MA 02148
 Tuesday, November 27, 2007
 9:00 a.m.

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

Routine Business:

Approval of the Minutes of the October 30, 2007 Regular Meeting, the October 30, 2007 Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Public Comment, and the November 1, 2007 Special Meeting - **Vote**

Items for Discussion and Action:

1. [Presentation on Expanded Learning Time](#) - **Discussion**
2. [Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association: Parent Engagement in Children's Education](#) - **Discussion**
3. [Preliminary Report on Review of Fiscally Distressed Districts](#) - **Discussion**
4. [Report on Randolph Public Schools from EQA/EMAC](#) - **Discussion and Possible Vote**
5. [MassCore \(Recommended High School Core Program of Studies for College- and Career-Readiness\)](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
6. [Board of Education Budget Proposal for FY 2009](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
7. [Commissioner's Recommendations on 15 Underperforming Schools](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
8. [Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers](#) - **Discussion and Vote**
9. [Approval of Grants](#) - **Vote**

Other Items for Information:

10. Education-Related News Clippings
11. [Report on District Leadership Review in Gill-Montague Regional School District](#)
12. [Progress Reports on Holyoke and Winchendon](#)

Briefing

last updated: December 4, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

School Redesign: Expanded Learning Time Initiative

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 20, 2007

The November 27, 2007 Board of Education meeting is being held at the Ferryway School in Malden to highlight the school's participation in the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative. The Board will hear an update on the growth of the ELT initiative statewide, with an additional focus on the implementation in Malden. Panelists for this discussion will include Sarah McLaughlin of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Jennifer Davis of Massachusetts 2020; Mayor Richard C. Howard, Chairperson of the Malden School Committee; Sidney Smith, Superintendent of Schools in Malden; and Thomas DeVito, Principal of the Ferryway School.

Overview

The Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative began in FY06 when planning grants were first included in the state budget. The planning grant program is intended to support districts' activities in planning for longer school days, a longer school year, or both, as part of a redesign strategy to raise student achievement. The grants awarded by the Board of Education provide resources for districts to plan for innovative redesign in selected schools that would offer all students more time for challenging, research-based, and varied learning experiences. At the end of the planning grant period, districts submit ELT Implementation plans to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Based on review and approval of the plans, the Department awards grants to districts so that the qualifying schools can implement their plans to expand learning time for students and teachers.

The School Redesign: Expanded Learning Time initiative intends to add at least 25% more time to school schedules in order to:

- Provide students with more core instructional opportunity in math, literacy, science and other core subjects to support student achievement;
- Integrate enrichment and applied learning opportunities into the school day to motivate and engage

students; and

- Provide educators with increased opportunity to plan together and to participate in professional development with other teachers and in collaboration with their partnering community-based organizations.

Implementation of ELT redesigns began in FY07 when the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education awarded grants of \$1300 per student to schools in five districts. The Legislature appropriated \$6.5 million for the ELT initiative, enabling ten schools in five districts to open in September 2006 with a substantially longer school day. This appropriation enabled the Board also to fund an additional 29 districts to join in a second round of planning to explore whether and how they would expand schedules for schools in their communities.

The FY08 state budget included a \$13 million appropriation for ELT. (A copy of the line item is enclosed for your information.) Currently 18 schools in eight districts are operating redesigned schools with expanded learning time. Four of the five districts that participated in the first year of the initiative expanded the number of redesigned schools in the district in year two. Three districts are new to the ELT initiative this year. Most of the implementing schools have longer school days although several schools have added days to the school year. All schools have expanded their previous schedule by at least 25% more time. For example, a school that currently has a six hour and twenty-five minute school day may redesign a new eight-hour day for students. The chart below includes all schools currently receiving ELT funding.

Current ELT schools

Cohort	District	School	Grade Span	Projected Enrollment
2006	Boston	Clarence R. Edwards	6-8	343
2006	Boston	Mario Umana Academy	6-8	609
2006	Boston	James P. Timilty	6-8	667
2007	Boston	Boston Arts Academy	9-12	415
2006	Cambridge	Fletcher Maynard	K-8	230
2006	Cambridge	MLKing	K-8	240
2007	Chicopee	Bowe	PreK-5	434
2006	Fall River	Matthew J. Kuss	6-8	560
2006	Fall River	Osborn Street	K-5	385
2007	Fall River	North End	K-5	600
2007	Fitchburg	Academy	5-8	450
2007	Greenfield	Newton	K-4	225
2007	Greenfield	Greenfield Middle	5-8	544
2006	Malden	Salemwood	K-8	1195

2007	Malden	Ferryway	K-8	850
2006	Worcester	Jacob Hiatt Magnet	K-6	500
2007	Worcester	City View	K-6	550
2007	Worcester	Chandler Elem.	K-6	325
Total				9122

The Board of Education approved a new round of ELT planning grants at its October 2007 meeting, awarding 37 grants for new and continued planning activities. 28 districts (targeting 67 schools that have not previously received planning grants) applied for new FY08 planning grants. While several schools are proposing September 2008 start-ups, most intend to do an extended planning process for possible September 2009 start-up.

Evaluation

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has contracted with Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to conduct a comprehensive, multi-year evaluation of the ELT initiative. The evaluation is designed to elicit information on factors affecting implementation and, ultimately, on program impact. Student performance, as measured by MCAS, will be reviewed over several years to enable the evaluators to reliably draw conclusions about the effects of additional time in the participating schools. A report on the first year of implementation is anticipated in January 2008.

In October 2007, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with Abt Associates, submitted a grant application to the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. If awarded, the grant would be used to build upon and expand our current evaluation. The Department expects to receive official notification from IES in May. If our application is successful, we anticipate a July 1st grant start date.

Partnerships

Massachusetts 2020 (Mass2020) has been an integral partner in the development of the ELT initiative. Mass 2020 has been able to provide much-needed technical assistance, not only to districts planning to establish ELT schools, but to those implementing the redesign as well. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Mass2020 work together to ensure that the message and support to the schools and districts are consistent, by holding regular leadership meetings with Acting Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus and Mass2020 Chairman Chris Gabrieli.

Recognizing the need to have clear expectations for the current implementing schools, Mass 2020 has contracted with the organization *Focus on Results* to help guide the creation of essential documents and tools designed to outline expectations for implementation. Mass 2020 and the Department, with facilitation support from Focus on Results, established clear goals and expectations, as well as a self-assessment tool, for schools to reflect on and gauge their progress. This tool will be piloted with a subset of the ELT schools this winter.



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has also fostered a strong working relationship with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). In order to ensure a seamless system for children and parents, EEC



has provided flexibility to its child care providers allowing them to amend their hours of care when working with children who attend ELT schools. EEC has also provided Department staff with information about childcare providers in each ELT planning district to facilitate early outreach. EEC and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education orchestrated a data match last year to evaluate and analyze the overlap of students attending ELT schools who also receive childcare vouchers.

Upcoming

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is co-hosting an ELT Summit on November 30, 2007 at UMASS Boston. This third annual event will include remarks from Governor Patrick, Commissioner Nellhaus, and Chairman Reville as well as breakout sessions for both implementing and planning districts. Information about the conference is enclosed.

Enclosures:

  School Redesign: Expanded Learning Time

  Massachusetts 2020: Partnership Responsibilities

  Conference information: Nov. 30, 2007

last updated: December 5, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Parent Teacher Association Presentation

To: Members of the Board of Education


From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 27, 2007


Representatives of the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association have been invited to speak with the Board at its November meeting to discuss ways in which parents can get more involved in their children's education.

The national Parent Teacher Association has been active for nearly 100 years. Their mission is threefold: to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children; to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and to encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

Today's presentation will be made by Massachusetts PTA President Michelle Tremont, President-Elect Kimberly Hunt, National PTA representative Deborah Walsh, and Margaret O'Hare of the Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC).

Board member Ruth Kaplan, who is a member of the state's PTA, holds the seat on the Board of Education designated by law for a representative of parents of school children selected by the Governor from a list of nominees provided by the Massachusetts Parent Teachers Association. She will introduce the panel. At Ruth's request, your packet includes informational material from the PTA as well as a June 2007 report, "*The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle* , " produced by the Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council, an advisory group to the Kentucky Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Enclosures:

 *The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle*



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

TO: Members of the Board of Education

Update on Study of Districts in Financial Distress

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 21, 2007

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Education have recently heard increased concerns from school districts across the Commonwealth about challenges with financial conditions and their impact on districts' ability to maintain educational services for all students. At the Board's request, the Department has begun an analysis of the data it collects on district finances, staffing, and enrollment to look for trends that might shed light on what is happening and why.

We are examining several major potential symptoms and causes of financial distress to determine the degree to which each is contributing to individual districts' financial problems. Some of the symptoms of distress include: declining total spending; increasing local contributions per pupil; declining instructional spending; increasing athletic and transportation fees; increasing student-teacher ratios; and declining average teacher salaries. Some of the potential causes include: declining Chapter 70 aid; rising health insurance and other fixed costs; rising special education costs; enrollment changes (both declines and increases); and declining ability to raise local revenues. We also plan to include some specific examples of districts facing different types of financial problems to give a sense of how these problems play out at the ground level.

We will continue to refine our analysis over the next several weeks and will share our draft findings with selected superintendents to validate our results in their districts. We expect to bring preliminary findings to the Board in early 2008.



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

EQA Report - Randolph Public Schools

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 20, 2007


Dr. Joseph Rappa, Executive Director of the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), will present key findings resulting from the review that EQA conducted in the Randolph Public Schools in November 2006. The Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) has referred the EQA report on Randolph to us with a recommendation that the Commissioner and Board of Education consider a determination of district underperformance. The report presents EQA's findings on various factors affecting student performance in the district. The Board received a copy of the EQA report last month. Another copy is enclosed for your information. Board members will have the opportunity at this month's meeting to discuss the EQA findings with Dr. Rappa.

The conclusion of the EQA report (pages 20-21 in the enclosed copy) summarizes factors that appear to have contributed to low student performance in the district's schools. Further, the Board heard last month from Randolph Superintendent Richard Silverman and others about fiscal constraints and other issues that are limiting the school system's ability to provide adequate educational opportunities for its students.

I recommend that the Board determine the Randolph Public Schools to be underperforming. The Board may choose to vote on the recommendation this month or defer action on it. If the Board so votes, I would further recommend that the Board direct the Department to begin the leadership review stage of our fact-finding process, to assess whether the school district has the capacity to address the problems that have been identified and to improve significantly the quality of educational services being delivered to students. This review will help us to determine whether state collaboration with the current district leadership and support for district improvement initiatives will be sufficient to achieve the needed improvements in the district and its schools. It will inform the Board's consideration of possible next steps.

In accordance with our Regulations on Underperforming Schools and Districts, we have invited Superintendent Silverman and the Randolph School Committee chairperson to this month's Meeting, to be heard in response to my

recommendation. Associate Commissioner Juliane Dow and Lynda Foisy will be present to respond to questions about the Department's role in underperforming school districts.

Enclosed are the [EQA report on Randolph](#)  along with the transmittal letter; a [summary of the statute and regulations on district underperformance](#); the text of the statute ([M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1K](#)) and regulations ([603 CMR 2.04](#)); and a motion.

Enclosures:

last updated: November 23, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

MassCore: Discussion and Vote

To: Members of the Board of Education



From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 21, 2007

In October, we continued our discussion of MassCore in anticipation that the Board would take a vote at this month's meeting to approve MassCore as a recommended program of study for high school students in the Commonwealth. The Board's approval of MassCore is an important step towards increasing the college and career readiness of Massachusetts high school graduates.

Based upon data from the Massachusetts School to College database, approximately one-third of public high school graduates attending public colleges require remediation and must take developmental courses that do not count for college credit. Also, based upon a January 2007 course-taking survey conducted by the Department, approximately 45% of the class of 2006 urban high school graduates completed the proposed program of studies. This contrasts to 80% in suburban high schools. We believe adoption of MassCore is one important step to help reduce the college remediation rate and close the current course-taking gap between suburban and urban high schools.

In developing MassCore, I met twice with a delegation from the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA), and Department staff worked closely with a MAVA appointed subcommittee to ensure that the Association's concerns were addressed. While MAVA has not taken a formal vote to endorse MassCore, I believe that the proposed recommended program of studies has the support of most vocational administrators. I also met with representatives from the Care for Youth Delegation and recently received a follow-up letter from the Coalition's coordinator. The letter reads in part "the Board's decision to include health education in the additional core course work (electives) section of these proposed recommendations is a good first step towards making health education a reality for all public school students."

Following the Board's discussion in October, the definition of a MassCore unit of study was revised to the following: "A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework." No additional changes have been made to MassCore  .

Next Steps to Implement MassCore

Subject to the Board's vote, I have outlined below a series of actions that the Department will take over the coming months to communicate the purpose of MassCore, provide technical assistance and support to school districts and state education associations, and collect additional graduate data through the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

- Develop a Department webpage that includes general information, a description of the courses and units contained in MassCore, and a question and answer document. The webpage will include a PowerPoint presentation that school leaders can use to help inform students, teachers, and parents.
- Host a College and Career Readiness Summit in January at Holy Cross College in Worcester. The Summit will include regional follow-up activities from March - September 2008.
- Provide exemplars of college and high school course syllabi, college and high school teacher assignments, and student work. The exemplars will be posted on the Department's website.
- Collect data in the 2008 Spring SIMS Collection on high school graduates who have and have not completed the courses and units in MassCore.
- Continue to collaborate with professional education associations, give presentations upon request, and provide telephone and email support to the field.

A report will be prepared for the Board next fall documenting the results of steps taken to implement MassCore. The report will include each high school's results from the SIMS MassCore data collection.

Stafford Peat, Director of the Office of Student and Secondary School Support, will be at the meeting to respond to your questions and comments.

last updated: November 23, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Revised Budget Package for FY09

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 26, 2007


This month the Board will be voting on its budget request for FY09. The attached spreadsheet reflects the budget proposal that the Board discussed at its November 1 special meeting, with some changes based on your feedback.

Budget development for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education follows a two-stage process. First, in late summer each year, Administration and Finance (ANF) sets a maintenance target for all state agencies and requires each, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to submit a planning budget reflecting that target. The FY2009 maintenance request column in the spreadsheet is based on that target, set by ANF this year at \$4,533,830,191.


Each fall, the Board of Education and Commissioner also develop and submit a budget proposal reflecting their best estimate of the cost of achieving the educational priorities of the Commonwealth. The Board budget proposal for FY09 sums to \$4,677,467,544 and includes additional funding for a variety of high-priority program initiatives, as outlined in the summary memo in your Board packets.

I recommend that you vote to adopt this budget package. With the Board's approval, we will, in accordance with state law, transmit the budget proposal to the House and Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and the Humanities, and the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

 [Discussion and Vote on the FY2009 Budget Proposal – November 21, 2007 Memorandum](#)

 [FY2009 Board of Education Budget Request](#)

  [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Description of State Appropriations](#)

  [Proposed Priority Areas for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#)



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education



Status of Underperforming Schools (2000-2004)

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 16, 2007

At last month's meeting, the Board reviewed my recommendations on the status of 14 Commonwealth Priority Schools (CPS) identified as such during the review periods of 2000 through 2004.

The   **attached chart** lists the 15 schools (one is closing) that have remained in CPS status during this time period and my recommendations for Board action. Also included is the memo the Board received at last month's meeting, since it includes information specific to each school's performance profile and will be helpful if members would like to review this information.

Since the October Board meeting, we have been in conversations with the superintendents whose schools are listed here, with particular discussion of the six schools in three districts for which "Priority 1" status is being recommended: Springfield, Holyoke and Lawrence. In each case, the superintendents recognize that their schools are appropriately designated and they are not planning to object to the recommendation.

For each "Priority 1" school, the superintendent has described the district's plan for specific actions, most of which are already underway. Over the next several weeks, district and school leaders will prepare written intervention plans for each school. The Department will review the plans and we will present them to the Board for approval. The Department will work in collaboration with district leaders to determine what else might be needed to support the improvement efforts at each school and decide what further state assistance is needed. The following brief summaries describe the interventions already initiated in each "Priority 1" school.

Springfield "Priority 1" Schools

Springfield leaders have identified the following actions for the four "Priority 1" schools:

Gerena Elementary School: In 2006-2007, the district initiated a plan to convert the school to a Montessori model school. This model is based on a developmental approach to teaching and learning and is designed to empower students to be engaged in their own learning. It is organized in a multi-grade approach, including student groupings at Pre-K to Kindergarten, grades 1-3 and 4-5. A federal magnet grant has been awarded to the school and is supporting the conversion plan, allowing the school to support three additional instructional leader positions. Setting the conditions for this change involved offering teachers the option to remain in the school or opt to move to a different school; the district facilitated that process. Teachers choosing to stay in the school participated in Montessori training last summer and are committed to specific professional development activities through this school year and over the next two years. Based on their experience with another Montessori conversion school in the district, leaders are confident that this approach will lead to improved student learning. The district is in partnership with the College of St. Catherine in Minnesota in this effort.

Homer Street Elementary School: The district transferred a successful principal to the school last year and established a partnership with Springfield's American International College to support the school's improvement efforts. The district has initiated a schedule that includes extended-day time for teachers to study data, plan lessons and design individual student interventions. With these positive conditions in place, district and school leaders indicate an interest in applying to the Commonwealth Pilot School program and are preparing the school's application.

M. Marcus Kiley Middle School: The Kiley Middle School has been designated by the district as a priority school and a number of changes have been implemented. The district appointed a new principal to lead the school this year. With experience as a long-time assistant middle school principal, the new principal has created a new, more collaborative climate in the school. The district has taken action to reconstitute the staff, assigning 25 (out of a total of 75) staff members new to the school this year. A Dean of Students administrative position was created specifically to develop a plan to address student behavioral needs. The district has replaced two of the school's four assistant principals and reconfigured their responsibilities to focus on support and supervision of instruction in English language arts and mathematics. The district has also hired a retired principal to serve as a turnaround support specialist with responsibility for advising and supporting the school administrative team in their planning and improvement work. Three of the district's most capable coaches have been assigned to the school to support improved instructional practices in English language arts, mathematics and science. Teachers in the school are being supported with training in the implementation of the district's Pupil Progression Plan and in using the district's new lesson-planning protocol. With these significant changes already implemented, district and school leaders will be prepared later in this school year to identify further needs and will collaborate with the Department in the design of next steps for intervention.

White Street Elementary School: Logistical challenges at this school have presented the district with unusual issues to deal with in their selection of intervention strategies. The school is split into two separate buildings creating a physical arrangement that is problematic, especially with regard to student management. The district has created an additional assistant principal position to address immediate student management issues and is studying a number of options for a more effective organizational model for the school. A Project LEAD intern and a new intervention support specialist have been assigned to support the school staff. The district is providing targeted math and literacy intervention assistance to the school. The district has entered into a unique labor-management intervention agreement with their local union leadership and has selected the White Street School as a participant in this joint intervention effort. The district has participated in a study conducted through the KEYS initiative and the results of a research-based perceptual survey completed by teachers have been used to develop improvement plans

at White Street School. The district has made significant changes: 12 of 35 staff members have been changed; and an intensive writing project with associated staff training has been implemented in partnership with the MTA. The district transferred a successful administrator to the school as principal two years ago and is supporting the school's leadership team by hiring a retired principal to provide guidance and advice to the team. In addition, the district has hired a retired teacher to work with staff in their efforts to identify three key priorities for improved student performance. Current intervention efforts are scheduled for review through the labor-management agreement in late spring, with an interim report to the Springfield School Committee expected to include recommendations for next steps. At the end of this first phase of the labor-management intervention effort, the Department will collaborate with the district in assessing the need for an outside partner.

Holyoke "Priority 1" School

Holyoke leaders have identified the following actions for the school:

John J. Lynch Middle School: In 2005, the district hired a new principal for the school who has provided effective leadership for the America's Choice school reform initiative. The school has conducted a series of extensive analyses of student data and has used these data, with support from the turnaround partner, to develop programs at the school designed to address the wide range of unique student learner types and levels. The school initiated English Language Learner programs for beginning, early intermediate and transitioning ELL students that are designed to support the Readers' and Writers' literacy curriculum. In this school year, they are developing a parallel program in mathematics (MSL - Math for Speakers of Other Languages) to support ELL students' success with the Connected Math Program. Teacher study groups meet twice a month to engage in professional learning. Instructional coaches in literacy, mathematics and English Learner Development are assigned to the school on a fulltime basis. School and district leaders expect all teachers to attend ELL Category training; the school hosts some of these trainings in an effort to ensure that Lynch teachers have ready access to the training. School leaders see a need to continue the restructuring and program development work they have begun, extending their models to science and social studies. They express urgency about finding ways to meet the needs of a significant ELL/special needs population of students at the school. The district is exploring ways in which America's Choice can support and help them deepen this work. The district is developing its plan for further intervention at the Lynch School through collaborative planning work with the Department and the turnaround partner; specific assistance needs will be identified.

Lawrence" Priority 1" School

Lawrence leaders have identified the following actions for the school:

Arlington Middle School: After a year of study and planning, the district developed a reorganization plan for the Arlington School, restructuring the K-8, 1000 student school into two separate schools. The Arlington Middle School opened in September 2005 under the leadership of a newly selected principal. Over the last two years, the district has hired a middle school facilitator and provides fulltime content coaches to support improved instructional practice. A full professional development agenda has been established for the school staff, including work with the New England League of Middle Schools, on-going work with the Success For All Foundation of Johns Hopkins University, the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, the Growing Readers program of Simmons College, and the Focus on Mathematics NSF program of Boston University. District and school leaders indicate that the restructuring plan for the school shows promise and some gains in student achievement have been made. The

superintendent is interested in considering the Commonwealth Pilot program as an alternative for the Arlington Middle School and has requested an opportunity to meet with Department staff to discuss the possibility.

Juliane Dow and Lynda Foisy will be at the November 27th meeting to respond to any questions Board members may have concerning the status of these schools.

last updated: November 23, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers

To: Members of the Board of Education



From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 20, 2007

In April 2007 the Board of Education voted to approve amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations to strengthen the mathematical preparation and knowledge of elementary and special education teachers. The standards in the new regulations will be reflected in the Massachusetts Tests of Educator Licensure (MTEL) by means of a revised general curriculum test with a separately scored mathematics subtest as of January 2009.

The regulations direct the Commissioner, in consultation with the Chancellor of Higher Education, to issue guidelines for the scope and depth of knowledge expected in elementary mathematics. At our August 2007 meeting, we distributed the completed *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers*. Board member Tom Fortmann played a major role in preparing this landmark document. The guidelines are already motivating and assisting Massachusetts teacher preparation programs to revise how they prepare candidates for licenses at the elementary level, including K-8 special education teachers. The guidelines are posted on the Department's Web site. A copy is enclosed with this memo.

I recommend that the Board formally approve the *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers* at this month's meeting. The Board's action to strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills in mathematics, through the licensure regulations and these more detailed guidelines, is a significant step to improve students' proficiency in mathematics. Your approval of the guidelines affirms the importance of this action.

  Enclosure: *Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers*



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Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2008

Notification of FY2008 Competitive Grant Awards: November 27, 2007

To call a Department of Education Program Contact , dial 781-338- and the extension listed below.

PROGRAM NAME	FUND CODE	PROGRAM CONTACT	EXT
Adult Basic Education Distance Learning (Federal)	669	Anne Serino aserino@doe.mass.edu	3801
Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College Program - Increases (State)	668	Ruth Derfler rderfler@doe.mass.edu	6604
Massachusetts Reading First Plan (MRFP): Targeted Assistance Grant (Federal)	727	Cheryl Liebling cliebling@doe.mass.edu	6225
Competitive Academic Support Services Pathways One Stop Career Center Initiative School Year Program (State)	627- B	Keith Westrich kwestrich@doe.mass.edu	3902
Competitive Academic Support Services Pathways One Stop Career Center Initiative Summer Program, 2008 (State)	626- B	Keith Westrich kwestrich@doe.mass.edu	3902
Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students (State)	194	John Bynoe jbynoe@doe.mass.edu	6300
		Sarah Slautterback sslautterback@doe.mass.edu	6330
Workplace Education - Increase (State)	538	Anne Serino aserino@doe.mass.edu	3801



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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) Leadership Evaluation

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 15, 2007

In June 2007, the Board determined that the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) was underperforming. As a result of that determination, the Department engaged a three-member team of independent evaluators to conduct an onsite District Leadership Review. The **final report**   has been developed and is provided here for your information. Also included is the transmittal letter from the Commissioner that sets out next steps for the district.

last updated: November 23, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Follow-up Reviews - Holyoke and Winchendon

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 16, 2007

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) has conducted follow-up reviews in two of the Commonwealth's underperforming districts: Holyoke Public Schools and Winchendon Public Schools. Copies of these EQA reports are enclosed for your information. The Department is currently reviewing these reports with district leaders from Holyoke and Winchendon and their district turnaround partners. Following our review, I will present my recommendations to the Board on any changes that are warranted. Dr. Joseph Rappa of EQA will be available at the Board's November 27th meeting if members have questions for him about the follow-up reviews.

Background

Holyoke Public Schools

In November 2003, the Board of Education acted on the Commissioner's recommendation under M.G.L. c. 69, section 1K, to declare the Holyoke Public School district to be underperforming. As a result of this formal determination, district leaders were instructed to develop a turnaround plan for the Board's approval. In August 2004, Superintendent Eduardo Carballo presented the district's plan for improvement and in September the Board approved the plan.

The Holyoke Turnaround Plan identified six key areas of need and proposed major district initiatives to be undertaken in response to those needs. The initiatives recommended that the district:

1. Develop a centralized student data management system to store all student assessment and demographic information in order to provide Holyoke staff at all levels with accurate and timely access to information critical to tracking progress.
2. Align curriculum in English language arts and mathematics for PreK-12.

3. Hold educators accountable for delivery of instruction.
4. Consistently assess, analyze and monitor student performance.
5. Develop and sustain a comprehensive professional development program.
6. Provide a program to stabilize highly mobile students so that they will have access to high quality instruction that meets their individual needs.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has supported the Holyoke Turnaround Plan in substantial ways. After a period of joint exploration and research, Holyoke Public Schools and the Department entered into a partnership agreement with America's Choice, Inc. The America's Choice model is designed to provide the district with the tools and technical assistance needed to improve the quality of education delivered in the district's schools and ensure that all students graduate ready to enter college without need for remediation. America's Choice began its work with the district in May 2005 with a summer planning effort and implementation of the design began in September 2005. Since that time, the America's Choice school reform model has been implemented across the district.

The Department provided Holyoke school and district leaders with the opportunity to participate as a stand-alone cohort in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training during the 2005-2006 School Year. The program's focus on developing leadership for improved instruction supports the district's improvement plan.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) conducted a follow-up review in the district in May 2007. The focus of the review was to assess the district's implementation of its turnaround plan and determine improvement.

Winchendon Public Schools

In November 2003, the Board determined the Winchendon Public School district to be underperforming. Following an EQA Tier III review in March 2004, the superintendent resigned and the Department appointed interim leadership to stabilize the district over a period of time extending from July 2004 through March 2005. During that time, interim leaders developed a short-term plan for district improvement, focused on three central goals:

1. Aligning the district's curriculum in English language arts and mathematics with state standards.
2. Developing systems to collect, manage and use student performance data to inform teaching and learning in all the district's schools.
3. Developing an initiative designed to increase community support of education, and foster better communication and understanding of the district's goals.

In March 2005, the district hired a new, permanent superintendent and in April 2005, Superintendent Peter Azar submitted a revised turnaround plan for Board consideration. The plan leveraged work that had already begun in the district and the Board approved it. The Department enlisted the support of the Education Development Center (EDC) as the district turnaround partner. In July 2005, partnership- planning work began and five areas of specific focus emerged:

1. Developing a comprehensive instructional program
2. Tailoring instruction to meet students' needs
3. Establishing set standards and high expectations for all students

4. Providing preventive programs to address students' social needs
5. Strengthening the system of governance and communication between the school committee and other town committees

District leaders, in concert with EDC personnel, developed detailed action plans and identified specific strategies to guide the district's work in each of the five areas.

The Department has provided Winchendon school and district leaders with the opportunity to participate in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training during the 2006-2007 School Year. The program's focus on the development of leadership for improved instruction supports the district's improvement plan.

The EQA Office conducted a follow-up review in the district in January 2007. The focus of the review was to assess the district's implementation of its turnaround plan and to determine improvement.

Enclosures:

 Holyoke Report

 Winchendon Report

last updated: November 26, 2007

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Briefing for the November 27, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 20, 2007

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be on Tuesday, November 27, 2007, at the Ferryway School, 150 Cross Street, Malden, starting at 9:00 a.m. An optional tour of the school will begin at 8:15 a.m. Coffee will be available at 8:00 a.m. The meeting will adjourn by 1:00 p.m. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Belinda Wilson at (781) 338-3118.

Overview

The Ferryway School is in its first year of implementing Expanded Learning Time, a program that will be highlighted at this month's meeting. Principal Thomas DeVito has invited all Board members to meet him at the school at 8:15 a.m. for a tour of the building and a brief discussion about the Expanded Learning Time initiative.

Malden Mayor (and School Committee Chairperson) Richard Howard, Superintendent Sid Smith, and Principal Thomas DeVito will welcome the Board and present on the Expanded Learning Time initiative. We will hear a presentation from the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association on parent involvement in children's education. I will update the Board on our study of fiscally distressed districts, following which we will discuss the report from the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability on the Randolph Public Schools. I will make a recommendation on Randolph for a possible vote this month. Our meeting agenda also includes continuing discussion and votes on the proposed recommended high school core program of studies (MassCore), the budget proposal for FY 2009, recommendations on underperforming schools, the Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers, and state and federal grants.

Regular Meeting

Comments from the Chairman

The Chairman will update the Board on current issues and activities, including the commissioner search process.

Comments from the Commissioner

Reports to the Legislature. The Department is required to file several reports with the Legislature each year, primarily in response to budget language. This month we have submitted the following reports to the Legislature: Students with Disabilities Annual Report, including statistics and update on the federally required State Performance Plan; Audio-Digital MCAS Pilot Program to provide the tenth grade mathematics and English Language Arts MCAS tests in audio digital format for use with the Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic's "books on tape" or books on CD software and players; and Strategic Vision and Progress Report further defining the priority areas identified by the Department: support for students, support for educators, support for schools and districts, and state leadership. The reports are posted on the Department's Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and Evaluation website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/>.

Items for Discussion and Action

1. **Presentation on Expanded Learning Time - Discussion**

We are holding this month's meeting at the Ferryway School to highlight the school's participation in the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative, a first-in-the-nation effort to redesign schools with substantially more time for learning. The Board will hear from Malden school officials, Jennifer Davis of Massachusetts 2020, and Sarah McLaughlin of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Your materials include a brief overview of the statewide ELT program and information about the November 30th Expanded Learning Time Summit that we are co-sponsoring with Massachusetts 2020.

2. **Mass. Parent Teacher Association: Parent Engagement in Children's Education - Discussion**

At the suggestion of Board member Ruth Kaplan, who holds the seat on the Board designated by law for a parent representative nominated by the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association, we have invited representatives of the Massachusetts PTA to present on ways that parents engage in their children's education. Massachusetts PTA President Michelle Tremont, President-Elect Kimberly Hunt, National PTA representative Deborah Walsh, and Margaret O'Hare of the Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center will make a brief presentation. Background materials under Tab 2 include information from the PTA as well as a June 2007 report produced by the Parents Advisory Council to the Kentucky Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

3. **Preliminary Report on Review of Fiscally Distressed Districts - Discussion**

The Board and Department have heard concerns from local school officials about fiscal constraints that are affecting educational services for students. At the Board's request, the Department is analyzing data on district finances, staffing, and enrollment to look for trends that might shed light on what is happening and why. This month we are presenting a brief update on the study. As we continue with the study over the next several months, we will review our draft findings with superintendents of some of the affected districts. We expect to bring preliminary findings to the Board in early 2008.

4. **Report on Randolph Public Schools from EQA/EMAC - Discussion and Possible Vote**

Enclosed is the report on the Randolph Public Schools that was prepared by the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) and referred to us by the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC). Dr. Joseph Rappa, Executive Director of EQA, will present the key findings. I am recommending that the Board declare the Randolph Public Schools to be an underperforming district. The Board may choose to vote on that recommendation this month or defer action on it. Randolph Superintendent Richard Silverman made a presentation to the Board at our October 30th meeting. In accordance with our Regulations on Underperforming Schools and Districts, we have invited Superintendent Silverman and the Randolph School Committee chairperson to this month's meeting.

5. MassCore (Recommended High School Core Program of Studies for College- and Career-Readiness) - Discussion and Vote

At the October meeting the Board continued its discussion of MassCore, the recommended high school core curriculum. Based on that discussion, we have clarified the definition of a unit of study. While MassCore is a recommendation rather than a mandate, it sets a standard that will be an important step towards increasing the college and career readiness of Massachusetts high school graduates. I recommend that the Board vote this month to approve MassCore.

6. Board of Education Budget Proposal for FY 2009 - Discussion and Vote

Based on the Board's discussion at its November 1st special meeting on the budget, we have made some revisions to the education budget proposal for FY 2009. The proposed budget includes funding for a number of new initiatives as well as increases to current programs. The Board's adoption of this budget proposal is an important step in identifying and presenting the areas that we believe need priority attention. With the Board's approval, we will transmit the budget proposal to the Administration and the Legislature.

7. Commissioner's Recommendations on 15 Underperforming Schools - Discussion and Vote

Between 2000 and 2004, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reviewed 62 of the Commonwealth's lowest performing schools, and the Commissioner designated 27 as "underperforming." Fifteen of the 27 schools have remained in underperforming status (now called "Commonwealth Priority Schools"). At our October 30th meeting I presented recommendations on those 15 schools as well as an update on the status of the other 12 schools on which action has already been taken. Of the 15 schools, one is scheduled to close at the end of this year. Of the 14 remaining, I recommend that the Board vote this month to declare six schools (four in Springfield and one each in Holyoke and Lawrence) "Priority 1" schools, maintain four schools in Commonwealth Priority Schools status, and declare that four schools are no longer identified as Commonwealth Priority Schools in light of the progress they have made.

8. Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers - Discussion and Vote

In April 2007 the Board of Education voted to approve amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations to strengthen the mathematical preparation and knowledge of elementary and K-8 special education teachers. In August, we distributed Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers, to explain the scope and depth of knowledge expected in elementary mathematics. Board member Tom Fortmann played a major role in drafting the guidelines. I recommend that the Board vote this month to formally approve the guidelines. This is an important step in strengthening the teaching and learning of mathematics in our schools.

9. Approval of Grants - Vote

Presented for your approval this month are grants totaling \$990,384 under the following programs:

- Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students (\$23,700 - state funds)
- Workplace Education (\$1,500 increase - state funds)
- Academic Support Services: Pathways One-Stop Career Centers, School Year Program (\$170,064 - state funds)
- Academic Support Services: Pathways One-Stop Career Centers, Summer Program (\$42,286 - state funds)
- Adult Basic Education: Transition to Community College (\$50,000 increases - state funds)
- Adult Basic Education: Distance Learning (\$294,334 - federal funds)
- Mass. Reading First: Targeted Assistance (\$408,500 - federal funds)

I recommend that the Board approve the grants as presented. If you have questions about any of the grants, we will be pleased to respond.

Other Items for Information

10. **Education-Related News Clippings**

Enclosed for your information are several recent newspaper articles about education.

11. **Report on District Leadership Review in Gill-Montague Regional School District**

The Board voted in June 2007 to designate the Gill-Montague Regional School District as underperforming. The Department then engaged a team of evaluators to conduct an onsite district leadership review. The evaluation report and my transmittal letter to the superintendent, outlining next steps, are enclosed.

12. **Progress Reports on Holyoke and Winchendon**

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) has conducted follow-up reviews in two of the Commonwealth's underperforming districts: Holyoke Public Schools and Winchendon Public Schools. Copies of these EQA reports are enclosed for your information. The Department is reviewing these reports with district leaders from Holyoke and Winchendon and their district turnaround partners. Following our review, I will present recommendations to the Board. Dr. Joseph Rappa of EQA will be available at the Board's November 27th meeting if you have questions for him about the follow-up reviews.

13. **Directions to the Meeting**

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you at the Ferryway School on November 27th.

last updated: November 23, 2007