

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
with the Board of Higher Education
Tuesday, January 24, 2017
9:05 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
Bridgewater State University
Rondileau Campus Center, Large Ballroom, 19 Park Avenue, Bridgewater, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Roland Fryer, Cambridge
Nathan Moore, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Scituate

Members of the Board of Higher Education Present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chairman
Jasson Alvarado-Gomez, Student Member
Nancy Hoffman, Ph.D.
Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D.
J.D. LaRock, J.D., Ed.D., Community College Trustee Representative
Paul Materra, J.D., State University Trustee Representative
Dani Monroe
James Peyser, Ex Officio
Fernando M. Reimers, Ed.D.

Members of the Board of Higher Education Absent:

Sheila M. Harrity, Ed.D.
Tom Hopcroft
Henry Thomas III, J.D., University of Massachusetts Trustee Representative
Paul F. Toner, J.D.

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner of Higher Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Gabrieli called the joint meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., acknowledged Chair Sagan, and asked members of both boards to introduce themselves. He introduced Bridgewater State University President Frederick W. Clark Jr., who welcomed board members to the campus and provided a brief overview of the university's history and commitment to education, including its role as the Commonwealth's largest single producer of teachers.

Massachusetts Early College Initiative

Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Chester and Higher Education Commissioner Santiago introduced the Massachusetts Early College Initiative. Commissioner Chester said this is an opportunity to build on exemplary programs and create a statewide approach that will provide multiple pathways for students. Commissioner Santiago said early college would open doors for young people and increase alignment between K-12 and higher education. He thanked all those who worked on this initiative.

Chair Gabrieli summarized the evolution of this initiative over the last year and thanked the Barr Foundation for funding the Parthenon-EY study which produced the report on early college that the two boards have received. He thanked the Smith Foundation, Jobs for the Future, and colleagues and staff from DESE and DHE who have been involved.

Chair Gabrieli invited Cliff Chuang, ESE Senior Associate Commissioner; Keith Westrich, DESE Associate Commissioner; Pat Marshall of the Department of Higher Education; Dan Riley, Marlborough Public Schools STEM-Early College Director; and Ali Huberlie, Parthenon-EY, to discuss the Massachusetts Early College Initiative.

Mr. Chuang explained the proposed structure of the Early College Joint Committee (ECJC) and the charge to the committee. Ms. Marshall outlined the proposed Massachusetts Early College Designation process, key elements, and design principles. Mr. Riley introduced a video on the STEM Early College High School within the Marlborough Public Schools.

Chair Gabrieli presented a proposed joint resolution relating to the Massachusetts Early College Initiative. It would establish the Early College School designation and create the Early College Joint Committee to determine details to be approved by each board by June 30, 2017. The intent is to set up the first programs by September 2018. The motion was duly made and seconded by the Board of Higher Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Secretary Peyser thanked both board chairs for their leadership and commitment to working together. He said this initiative will build on effective programs such as the one in Marlborough and create a coherent statewide system. Secretary Peyser added the early college initiative would complement the New Skills for Youth grant that Massachusetts has received and would help with college accessibility and affordability as well as economic development.

Members of the two boards expressed general support and offered comments on the proposed joint resolution. Several members stated the priority should be to help students from groups currently underrepresented in higher education. In response, Chair Gabrieli noted that the first

design principle is equitable access, adding that programs would be accountable through a five-year performance agreement and could lose their designation if they do not produce results. Chair Gabrieli stated the early college programs would include STEM as well as other fields.

Following the discussion, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education each voted on the joint resolution.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Board of Higher Education (BHE) (collectively “the Boards”) receive the December 2016 report issued by Parthenon-EY entitled *Breaking Down Silos to Put Students on the Path to Success: The Promise of Early College in Massachusetts*. The Boards express their appreciation to Parthenon-EY, the members of the Steering Committee and the Working Group for their efforts.

The Boards affirm their shared commitment to helping students attain the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to succeed in college and careers, be engaged citizens and lead productive and fulfilling lives. The Boards recognize that “early college” programs that allow high school students to experience and complete college level academic work and reduce the time and expense of earning a college credential can be a powerful tool to achieve the Commonwealth’s overall goals for educational achievement.

Therefore, the Boards jointly resolve as follows:

1. The Boards hereby establish an Early College Joint Committee (ECJC) comprised of: the BHE chair, the BESE chair, one member of the BHE appointed by the chair of the BHE, one member of the BESE appointed by the chair of BESE, and the Secretary of Education. The Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education (DHE), and the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), or their respective designees, shall be non-voting members of the ECJC and shall staff the ECJC.
2. The ECJC is charged with designing, developing and coordinating the administration of a Massachusetts Early College program based on the process and key design principles set forth in Attachment A to the memorandum presented to the Boards at the joint meeting on January 24, 2017.

- 3. No later than June 30, 2017, the ECJC shall report back to and seek final approval from the BHE and BESE boards, either individually or through a joint session, on the proposed design, development and administration of the program.**

The vote by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education was unanimous. The vote by the Board of Higher Education was unanimous. Chair Gabrieli and Chair Sagan thanked board members and the presenters.

Next-Generation MCAS: High School Assessments

Commissioner Chester introduced Jeff Wulfson, Deputy Commissioner; Michol Stapel, Associate Commissioner; and Heather Peske, Senior Associate Commissioner, to discuss the next-generation MCAS high school assessments. Commissioner Chester provided a brief overview of the ongoing work to develop the next-generation MCAS assessment, in particular with regard to high school testing. Mr. Wulfson thanked staff from the Department of Higher Education and faculty from higher education institutions who have been working closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to update the state curriculum standards and assessments.

Mr. Wulfson highlighted components of this initiative and responded to questions from board members. He said a key principle is to be sure the high school assessments will provide a clear signal as to whether students are meeting academic expectations. Additional recommendations include: keeping the competency determination for English language arts and mathematics at grade 10, adding history and social science to the competency determination, and phasing out the high school chemistry and technology/engineering tests.

Board members commented on the need to address the high rate of remedial courses in higher education, particularly community colleges. Mr. Reimers suggested employers might help identify early competencies needed in the workforce. Mr. Wulfson said the DESE is engaging with both higher education and the workforce sector around these issues. Ms. Hoffman suggested early college programs could improve alignment between K-12 and higher education. Secretary Peyser encouraged DESE to explore using off-the-shelf tests to maintain the option for chemistry and technology/engineering assessments for the competency determination. Mr. Alvarado-Gomez voiced his concern that some students do not test well and MCAS testing could affect their futures.

Commissioner Chester stated that since the advent of MCAS testing, Massachusetts has seen steady improvement in graduation rates, lower dropout rates, and success for students of color and low income students. He added that of students who drop out in grades 11 and 12, over half have passed the MCAS tests and earned the competency determination. Commissioner Chester said assessment should be a gateway, not a gatekeeper, and the goal is to provide accurate information about whether students have acquired solid academic skills.

Chair Sagan thanked members of both boards and staff of both departments for their work.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m., subject to the call of the Chairs.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board