

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**NO.:** BHE 26-58

**BOARD DATE:** May 19, 2026

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**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the May 4, 2026, recommendation of the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees to appoint **Dr. Jennifer G. Cournoyer** as President of Springfield Technical Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about July 13, 2026, and is approved subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment, and subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check.

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by the BHE on 5/19/2026.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

## Background

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) is a coordinating board, with some governing authority, over the public higher education system. Among the BHE's governing functions are its statutory responsibilities to approve the appointment and removal of, and set the compensation for, the president of each state university and community college within the public higher education system. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(q) and 21.

In furtherance of these legislative requirements, and consistent with the BHE's responsibility to establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth, to establish coordination between and among institutions, and to resolve conflicts of policies or operations, the BHE issued guidelines and procedures for the search, selection, appointment and removal of the chief executive officers at state universities and community colleges. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(c) and (u). [BHE Presidential Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal Guidelines \(2013\)](#). The BHE Presidential Guidelines establish minimum procedural expectations for Board of Trustees conducting presidential searches, delegate to the Commissioner the authority to act on behalf of the BHE as specified therein, and include several touchpoints between local Board of Trustee Chairs and the Commissioner to ensure that the Presidential search process is being conducted consistent with the BHE and the Commissioner's expectations.

The Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the next President of STCC in October 2025, and conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at the Pauly Group. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the Commissioner appointed a voting member to the search committee, Alison Connolly, who serves as the Department of Higher Education's Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Student Financial Assistance. Assistant Commissioner Connolly participated in the development of the position profile, the selection and interviews of semi-finalist candidates, and the search committee decisions to recommend final candidates for public interviews. (The Springfield Technical Community College Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link: [position posting, STCC webpage](#))

Although the search committee selected four finalists for advancement, one candidate withdrew before the announcement; accordingly, an unranked list of three finalists was advanced to the STCC Board of Trustees for on-campus interviews and consideration. The three candidates participated in STCC Board of Trustee interviews

and campus visits during the weeks of April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 20<sup>th</sup>. During that time, the BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all three candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential Guidelines. The Commissioner and BHE Member Bill Walczak engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all three candidates on behalf of the BHE.

On May 4, 2026, the STCC Board of Trustees unanimously voted to recommend Dr. Jennifer G. Cournoyer to the BHE for approval and appointment, subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

The Commissioner has received and reviewed the BCC Board of Trustee's recommendation, along with all supporting materials, and has determined that the submittal is complete and the search was conducted in alignment with the BHE Presidential Guidelines. Accordingly, the Commissioner is forwarding the recommendation to the BHE for consideration and formal action.

***Attachments to BHE 26-58:***

- 58a\_Dr. Jennifer G. Cournoyer Presidential Search Cover Letter
- 58b\_ Dr. Jennifer G. Cournoyer Resume (CV)
- 58c\_ Summary of STCC Presidential Search Process
- 58d\_Terms of Appointment Letter\_Dr. Jennifer G. Cournoyer
- 58e\_Letter from STCC Chair Knapik to Commissioner Ortega