

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, September 22, 2015
8:30 a.m.- 1:05 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
James Morton, Boston
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

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

Chair Paul Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He welcomed newly appointed members Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty to the Board. Chair Sagan thanked former members David Roach and Vanessa Calderón-Rosado for their service to the Board and the Commonwealth's students. He said the Board discussed statewide MCAS results and PARCC at last night's special meeting.

Commissioner Chester welcomed Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty to the Board. He updated the Board on the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, state ballot initiatives, charter school matters, an educator preparation initiative called Candidate Assessment for Performance, and his launch of an organizational review of the Department. He said the U.S. Department of Education has approved Massachusetts's educator equity plan, and also has rated the state as meeting all federal special education requirements. Commissioner Chester provided the Board with a document outlining the history of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Chair Sagan commented that Massachusetts has been and will continue to be a leader in curriculum standards and thanked the Commissioner for providing the history of the standards and for correcting misinformation that has been circulated about the current standards.

Secretary Peyser welcomed Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty and expressed appreciation to David Roach and Vanessa Calderón-Rosado for their service. He said the Baker-Polito administration announced preschool expansion grants this week to expand access for low-income families in five cities through a partnership between the public and private sectors. Secretary Peyser said as the Board continues its discussion of PARCC and MCAS, we need to recommit to a system of standards, assessments, and accountability that continues the improvements seen over the last 20 years. He said achievement gaps must be addressed by building on education reform, not by abandoning those commitments.

Katherine Craven stepped out of the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Comments from the Public

1. Janine Matho, of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, addressed the Board on charter school applicants.
2. Christina Shaw Fitanides, of Massachusetts Advocates for Children, addressed the Board on the autism endorsement regulations.
3. Roger Desrosiers, of the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education and a member of the Civic Learning and Engagement Working Group, addressed the Board on the Commissioner's recommendations.
4. Alan Melchior, of Brandeis University and a member of the Civic Learning and Engagement Working Group, addressed the Board on the Commissioner's recommendations.
5. Gerry Mroz addressed the Board on student assessment.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the June 23, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on Holyoke Public Schools

Commissioner Chester introduced Holyoke Superintendent and Receiver Stephen Zrike and Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston. Chair Sagan thanked Mr. Zrike for taking on the role of receiver and thanked Department staff for their work in Holyoke.

Superintendent Zrike thanked the Department for their expertise, support, time, and partnership. He also thanked the Executive Office of Education and Governor for their support. Mr. Zrike said it is still early in the turnaround process, and he has been out in the community speaking with educators, parents, students, and community members. He said families have great pride in Holyoke and while there are pockets of excellence, academic performance is very concerning. He said there is mistrust of the schools within the parent community and low staff morale. Mr. Zrike said he is looking at how best to use resources within the district and ensuring students have more options at the high school level.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Superintendent Zrike said the district made individual calls to Dean Vocational-Technical High School incoming ninth graders over the summer, and is working to re-engage current students and students who are at risk of dropping out. In response to Ms. McKenna's question regarding breakfast in the classroom, Superintendent Zrike said the EOS Foundation is meeting with principals this week to discuss the initiative. Mr. Moriarty applauded the Department's work with community members through the "community conversations" and said the quality of the discussions and organization of the meetings was the finest he has seen, and should continue. Commissioner Chester said he has been in the district and noted that community members previously opposed to the receivership have been very complimentary of Superintendent Zrike and the work that is underway. Chair Sagan extended the Board's appreciation to Superintendent Zrike.

Proposed Revised Science and Technology/Engineering Standards

Commissioner Chester thanked Secretary Peyser, Chair Sagan, and Penny Noyce for their input on the standards. He said the Board will continue the discussion of the proposed standards today and at the October meeting, when he will recommend a vote to seek public comment. Ms. Noyce said the Department team did an excellent job preparing and revising the standards. She said most of the changes to the draft standards discussed in May concerned tone, formatting, and clarification of intent. Secretary Peyser said the revisions also balance knowledge of vocabulary with knowledge of practice. Jake Foster, the Department's STEM Director, presented additional details about the revised standards. Ms. McKenna requested a "tracked changes" version comparing the May draft to the September draft. The Commissioner said he would send it to Board members within the next week.

Regulations on Autism Endorsement for Educator Licensure, 603 CMR 7.00

Commissioner Chester said the Board received a number of additional comments on the proposed regulations in June, which the Department took into consideration and then made further revisions. Commissioner Chester summarized four areas that had received comment from the public and the Board. He said a major revision involves opening the endorsement initially only to licensed special education teachers, and then the Department will seek input on whether and how the endorsement should be made available to general education teachers in the future. Commissioner Chester said he continues to believe the endorsement should be open to general educators, to encourage inclusion of students with autism. He said research shows special education students who are educated in inclusive general education classrooms have stronger outcomes. Commissioner Chester said language was also added to clarify that the endorsement is voluntary, and the licensure office will work to align the timing of renewals.

Ms. McKenna commended the changes and said the regulations landed in the right place. She said general educators should have this endorsement available but with a different process that may include additional coursework. Mr. Doherty said he is disappointed that the Department did not meet with the Massachusetts Teachers Association earlier to review the additional changes. Senior Associate Commissioner Johnston said the Department will engage with the MTA and other stakeholders in the next phase. Chair Sagan encouraged the Department to err on the side of over-communication.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G-1/2, as amended by Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner. The amendments establish standards for the Autism Endorsement.

Provided, further, that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education direct the Commissioner to seek input from stakeholders on the use of the endorsement in the field and educators' experience with the endorsement, including whether and how it should be expanded to general education teachers in the future to promote inclusion of students with disabilities in general education programs.

The vote was 9-0-1. Ed Doherty abstained.

Amendment to Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9) (Enable Better Planning for School Districts and Charter Applicants)

Commissioner Chester summarized the proposed amendment to the Charter School Regulations, which went before the Board in the spring for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. He said the Department received only one comment, and it was in support of the proposed change. The Commissioner said the revised regulation is a small modification that will provide applicants and school districts clear expectations regarding timelines and eligibility.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 89, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the amendment to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9), as presented by the Commissioner. The amendment would enable better planning for school districts and charter applicants; it addresses the calculation of the list of school districts performing in the lowest 10 percent on statewide assessments for purposes of awarding charters and for determining the net school spending caps for individual districts.

The vote was unanimous.

Committee Appointments and Update on National Association of State Boards of Education

Chair Sagan appointed Penny Noyce, James Morton, and himself to the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee. He appointed Penny Noyce as the committee chair, and directed the committee to review the current evaluation criteria this fall, welcoming input from all Board members.

Chair Sagan appointed Katherine Craven, Ed Doherty, Margaret McKenna, Michael Moriarty, and Mary Ann Stewart to the Budget Committee. He said he would attend committee meetings if he is able to do so. He appointed Katherine Craven as the committee chair.

Chair Sagan appointed Roland Fryer, Secretary Peyser, Donald Willyard, and himself to the Charter School Committee. He appointed Roland Fryer as the committee chair.

Chair Sagan nominated James Morton as the Board's Vice-Chair.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect James Morton to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.

The vote was 9-0-1. James Morton abstained.

Chair Sagan said Mary Ann Stewart is a candidate for the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Northeast Representative. Ms. Stewart and Mr. Willyard reported on the NASBE new member conference that they attended in July. Mr. Willyard said the conference was informative, and noted that some other state boards have a committee on legislation. Ms.

Stewart said it was eye-opening to meet members from other states. She said if elected as Northeast Representative, she would attend NASBE meetings four times a year and would update the Board periodically. Chair Sagan extended the Board's good wishes to Ms. Stewart and asked her to vote on behalf of Massachusetts at the NASBE annual meeting in October.

Katherine Craven returned to the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Response to Recommendations from Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement

Chair Sagan said civic learning and engagement is an important topic and the Board is committed to it, while also recognizing we should not over-promise what we will do. Commissioner Chester said he hears the urgency of the working group and the Department is determining how best to implement some of the recommendations. He said he would come back to the Board this fall with a more specific plan, including on the recommendation to set up more advisory councils beyond the ones already established by statute.

Mr. Willyard said the State Student Advisory Council chose civic learning as a priority and suggested the Department work with the SSAC on the recommendations. Ms. McKenna said the Board endorsed the report and recommendations as a priority and civic engagement is a critical cornerstone of public education. She said she would like to hear more in October and suggested establishing an advisory committee. Chair Sagan suggested the Budget Committee look at the cost of implementing some of the recommendations. Ms. Craven said the committee would do so. Secretary Peyser said this is a resource question; not an issue of whether to proceed, but a question of how and when. He requested a timeline for the development of a history/social science assessment as well as the framework review. Commissioner Chester said he will have a further report at the October meeting.

Student Assessment

Commissioner Chester recapped the topics that the Board covered at its special meeting on September 21, including statewide MCAS results and PARCC preliminary results. Bill Bell, the Department's Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of PARCC costs. He said the PARCC computer-based assessment in grades 3-8 costs \$24 and the paper assessment costs \$34 per student. Commissioner Chester committed to providing the Board with benchmarks for what would be in a Request for Proposals for new MCAS development and cost estimates. In response to Chair Sagan's question, Mr. Bell said the cost of the PARCC assessment is holding steady, and additional computer-based tests would bring the cost down; however, the testing contract needs to be renegotiated next year.

Mr. Fryer asked about the economies of scope if Massachusetts were to adopt PARCC. Commissioner Chester said the main cost of test development was paid for by a federal grant. Mr. Fryer suggested separating the discussion of PARCC into two areas: governance and quality of the test. In response to Ms. McKenna's question, Mr. Wulfson said the consortium owns the intellectual property and PARCC, Inc is managing it on behalf of the member states. In response to Secretary Peyser's question, Mr. Wulfson said Pearson provides the online platform to deliver the PARCC test, and all consortium states use that platform. Commissioner Chester commented that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium uses a different model than PARCC: UCLA holds the intellectual property and each state finds its own vendor. He said the 18 SBAC states varied greatly in their experience with the SBAC test, and the PARCC test administration in FY2015 was smoother and more successful than SBAC.

Secretary Peyser requested information comparing services and costs between PARCC and MCAS contracts. Mr. Morton requested more information on the governance structure and on districts' readiness for online assessment. Commissioner Chester said he will provide additional information in advance of the Board's October meeting. Ms. Stewart asked how the assessment would affect teaching and learning. Commissioner Chester noted the recent study of the Lexington Public Schools that former Superintendent Paul Ash commissioned, in which state assessment results helped to shine a light on achievement gaps that need to be addressed, even in high-performing districts.

Associate Commissioner Carrie Conaway presented information from studies and surveys on PARCC. She said a 2014 principal survey comparing MCAS and PARCC showed: 71% believe PARCC will be more demanding; 40% believe it will better assess students' ability to think critically, 30% "about the same;" 40% believe it presents test material in a format relevant to today's students, 25% "about the same." She said a teacher survey conducted by TeachPlus reported that 72% of teachers believe PARCC is a higher quality assessment than MCAS and 67% believe PARCC does extremely or very well at measuring critical thinking skills.

Ms. Conaway said PARCC survey results showed most administrators reported that students had sufficient time to complete the computer and paper test. She said according to PARCC survey results from students who took the computer-based test, they reported that few or none of the questions asked about things they had not learned in school this year (82% ELA, 79% math); many say that the test was easier than or the same as their school work (62% ELA, 52% math); and almost all said they finished early or on time (92% ELA, 92% math).

Ms. Conaway presented on the AIR studies on school and district assessment practices. She said the studies included a statewide survey of superintendents in October 2014, interviews of district and school staff in a representative sample of 35 districts in winter 2014-15, and case studies in four districts in spring 2015. Ms. Conaway said the results showed the most common uses for local assessments are addressing student academic needs such as diagnosis and placement and measuring progress; and the least common uses are student preparation or practice for state assessments and predicting student performance on state assessments. Commissioner Chester said districts should be reviewing their use of assessments to ensure they are useful and that educators are using the results to improve student achievement.

Ms. Noyce asked what can be drawn from the studies. Commissioner Chester said the studies should raise district awareness around their use and frequency of assessments, as well as assist districts in taking inventory of their own assessment practices.

Margaret McKenna left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said the school year is off to a great start for the four Level 5 schools, which are in year two of implementing their turnaround plans. He said the schools held at least three weeks of professional development for educators over the summer. Mr. Johnston informed the Board of leadership changes at the Dever and Parker schools.

In response to Ms. Stewart's question about family and community engagement, Mr. Johnston said the schools have strengthened their strategies from engagement to outreach in the communities and neighborhoods, and the quarter 1 reports will include details from each school. In response to Mr. Morton's question, Mr. Johnston said the Morgan School (Holyoke) has expanded its pre-kindergarten program with support from the pre-school expansion grant.

Update on Foundation Budget Review Commission and on Redefining the Low Income Metric for K-12 Education Data

Roger Hatch, Director of School Finance, provided the Board with an update on the Foundation Budget Review Commission, created by the Legislature and charged with reviewing the Chapter 70 formula's assumptions and factors. He said the foundation budget, used in calculating Chapter 70 state aid and charter school tuition rates, represents the minimum spending level for each district to provide an adequate education, given the specific grades, programs, and demographic characteristics of its students. Mr. Hatch said the commission's preliminary report found that actual spending on employee health insurance is generally higher than the current foundation budget allotment for such costs, and recommended: increasing the benefits rate; benchmarking active employee insurance to GIC municipal average; adding in retiree health insurance; and applying a separate inflation factor. He said the commission also found that districts spend much more on special education tuition for out-of-district special education placements than the current foundation budget allotment for that cost, and recommended increasing the cost rate to capture the total costs that districts bear before circuit breaker reimbursement is triggered.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson provided an update on the measurement of low income status for K-12 students. He reminded the Board that the traditional metric, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, is no longer available for schools participating the USDA Community Eligibility Program. He said the Department is using data from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services databases, having discussions with stakeholders to minimize transition impacts, and monitoring what other states are doing. Ms. Craven asked that the Department keep the Massachusetts School Building Authority apprised about any changes.

Process and Timelines for FY2017 Budget

Commissioner Chester reviewed the timelines for the next fiscal year's budget and the Department's annual state spending from FY08-FY16. He said the Board's Budget Committee will meet to discuss budget priorities and recommendations.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:05 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

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

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monday, October 19, 2015
4:05 p.m.- 7:10 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

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

Member of the Board Absent:

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Commissioner Chester welcomed Board members to the meeting. He acknowledged the retirement of Associate Commissioner Elizabeth Davis and introduced acting assessment director Michol Stapel. Commissioner Chester made the following statement regarding PARCC:

Our September discussion, along with the substantial public input that we have received, has helped me to hone my thinking about the recommendation that I will be making to you for our November MCAS-PARCC decision. While we purposefully designed a decision timeline that would allow Massachusetts to have two years' experience with PARCC before deciding the future of our assessment system, over the past several months I increasingly have been concerned that in our effort to gather both deep and broad analysis and perspective on MCAS and PARCC, it could be easy to lose the forest for the trees. There is the danger that substantial and extensive input, sometimes contradictory, can lead to decision paralysis wherein the status quo becomes the default position. It is my goal to pull us out of the trees so that we can appreciate the forest.

Three core understandings have emerged for me:

- 1) current MCAS has reached a point of diminished returns in terms of driving more ambitious curriculum, instruction, and learning;
- 2) in important ways, PARCC is a substantial advancement over MCAS in terms of
 - a) elevating expectations for student performance, b) signaling more ambitious curricular and instructional expectations of our schools, c) providing a more engaging assessment experience, and d) aligning with expectations of colleges and employers; and

3) the path we take must ensure that Massachusetts ultimately controls our testing program.

I have been thinking about two doors: #1, MCAS or #2, PARCC. I am now exploring Door #3: MCAS 2.0.

I will spend a minute or two on each of these three understandings.

Current MCAS and the point of diminished returns

MCAS has served the Commonwealth well. I cannot imagine that the success of the last two decades – as Massachusetts’s K-12 achievement has reached the tops among states and competitive internationally – would be possible without a high quality assessment that provides feedback on student, school, district, and state achievement and progress. In 2015, MCAS was administered for the 18th year. MCAS was a terrific 20th century assessment. We have better understandings now than one or two decades ago about learning progression in mathematics, text complexity and the interplay of reading and writing, and the academic expectations of higher education and employers.

Now that we have the benefit of two decades of experience and we have upgraded our learning expectations (curriculum frameworks and content standards), it is time to upgrade our assessments to a new generation. As we look to the Commonwealth’s next-generation assessment, we have the opportunity to build on these understandings. Perhaps my greatest concern about continuing with MCAS as it exists now is that we have reached a point of diminished returns. The time I spend in schools as well as the attestations we have heard from many educators and citizens have led me to realize that, too often, the response to MCAS is instruction designed to teach students to succeed on the test rather than instruction designed to meet the learning standards.

PARCC is a substantial advancement over MCAS

We started down the MCAS 2.0 path in 2008 – looking to develop performance-based components, online testing, and other features. When the recession hit, we tabled that initiative but we were able to join other states to access US Department of Education funding to build PARCC, with Massachusetts leadership and involvement. Over \$100 million went into test development and we now have the results of our two-year “test drive.”

As our discussion today and tomorrow will illustrate, in important ways PARCC sets a higher bar than MCAS for student performance. This is particularly true as students move up the grades into middle and high school. This higher bar is not simply about being harder. At least equally important is that PARCC provides more opportunity for critical thinking, application of knowledge, research, and connections between reading and writing. As I travel around the Commonwealth, I see more and more schools that are upgrading curriculum and instruction to be consistent with our 2010 frameworks, which in turn are represented in the PARCC assessments. At this point, the effort I am observing – and that you have heard testimony regarding – is not about succeeding on the test, but rather, about aligning curriculum and instruction to the expectations for critical thinking, application of knowledge, research, and connections between reading and writing.

As well, the online experience is a qualitatively different assessment experience than taking a paper-and-pencil test. The online environment is a more engaging experience (students

prefer the online environment by almost a two-to-one margin); the introduction of video and audio increases accessibility for many students, including students with disabilities and English language learners; and the online setting mirrors the digital world that is ubiquitous in students' lives and futures. Finally, the PARCC development effort we have been involved in is designed to assess our updated understanding of learning progressions in mathematics, text complexity and the interplay of reading and writing, and the academic expectations of higher education and employers.

Ensuring the Commonwealth's control of our standards and assessments

Public comment, as well as the Board's discussion, have helped me to understand the importance of ensuring the Commonwealth's control over our standards and assessments as we move forward. While Massachusetts has exercised a leadership role among the consortium states, any path forward to MCAS 2.0 that includes PARCC must be a direction over which we control.

To be confident that a course that involves PARCC is one in which we exercise ultimate agency over the direction of the Commonwealth's assessment program, I am considering a new model – Door #3 – that takes advantage of our access to PARCC development in the construction of MCAS 2.0. A model exists; Louisiana has taken a similar route. This path would involve our own contractor. Using PARCC as starting point for MCAS 2.0 would allow us to move faster and start further along towards MCAS 2.0.

Ms. Noyce asked what the new option would mean and how we could recoup our value and maintain control. Mr. Doherty asked if Massachusetts would formally end its relationship with the PARCC consortium. Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts has to figure out the best way forward. He said if remaining in the consortium means we would not have running room to customize the test, then that is not the right path. Mr. Fryer asked if PARCC is the best path to MCAS 2.0. Commissioner Chester said PARCC is a substantial advancement over the current MCAS and Massachusetts would be able to take advantage of PARCC development in which we have participated. Ms. McKenna commented that the Mathematica study took her aback and said she is glad to hear more about the third option.

Secretary Peyser introduced the presentation on the Mathematica study. He said the Executive Office of Education commissioned a study to analyze how well MCAS and PARCC predict college performance. He introduced Ira Nichols-Barrer and Brian Gill to present the findings. Mr. Gill said the researchers compared PARCC and MCAS relationships to first-year college students' grades and the students' assignment to remedial coursework; they then compared PARCC and MCAS test scores and success in reaching "college ready" or "proficient" levels. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said the student volunteers were randomly assigned to take MCAS or PARCC in Spring 2015. The sampling included 866 students at 11 public colleges and universities. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said MCAS and PARCC predict grade point average and remediation equally well. He said in English language arts the study found that college ready on PARCC is about the same as proficient on MCAS, and in mathematics the PARCC college ready standard is a higher standard than MCAS proficient. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said in summary, both MCAS and PARCC predict college readiness, scores on both exams provide a similarly useful way to predict college grade point average, and the exams differ in ways beyond predictive validity.

Chair Sagan asked what can be drawn from the predictive validity scale. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said .5 is considered moderate to strong. Mr. Fryer discussed assessment cut points. Ms. McKenna said SAT and student grades combined are better predictors than either one is alone.

Secretary Peyser introduced Dana Ansel, Henry Braun, and Andrew Ho to discuss the PARCC/MCAS comparative report. Ms. Ansel said the report synthesizes the academic research on MCAS and PARCC, breaking out relevant considerations without making any recommendations. Ms. Ansel and Mr. Ho highlighted the following:

- MCAS and PARCC are different assessment systems and create different incentives for classroom practices.
- Increasingly, a single test is used for multiple purposes. There is a need to balance the objectives you are seeking to achieve.
- There is no major finding that one test is superior to the other. Both meet technical standards.
- MCAS proficiency in 2013 is a different standard than it was in 2004.
- MCAS is limited by the item format.
- Consider which system sends the clearest signals to students, teachers, parents, and the public and choose a test that will prompt educators and policymakers to intervene when needed so students can become successful.

In response to Mr. Fryer's question, Mr. Braun said there is evidence that teachers have been changing their practice since the adoption of new standards in 2010, which brought a higher level of critical thinking. He said he believes PARCC is a test worth teaching to so he is an advocate for it.

Margaret McKenna left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Chester welcomed Higher Education Commissioner Carlos Santiago. Commissioner Santiago said the Board of Higher Education's academic affairs committee is also having conversations about PARCC. He said during his two years in Massachusetts he has been shocked by the high remediation rates and low success rates for students in public higher education. Commissioner Santiago said higher education campuses are looking at ways to address the issue including revising developmental requirements and piloting the use of high school grade point averages in lieu of Accuplacer testing. He said higher education has been collaborating with elementary and secondary education, beginning with the adoption of a joint definition of college and career readiness, and more recently with PARCC development including a professional judgment study, standard setting, and other activities.

In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Commissioner Santiago said faculty who were involved in the judgment study advocated giving students clear signals at an early stage to help them meet the standards for college readiness. He said students need support structures, mentoring, and active advising. In response to Secretary Peyser's question, Commissioner Santiago said higher education is studying whether PARCC could replace the need for Accuplacer testing, while recognizing that campuses also need to get better at addressing remediation.

Commissioner Chester introduced Laura Slover, Chief Executive Officer, and Jeff Nellhaus, Director of Assessment of PARCC, Inc. Ms. Slover said PARCC was established by chief state school officers to develop a next-generation assessment. She said Massachusetts served an outsized role and Commissioner Chester has been the intellectual leader elected by other chiefs to serve as the board chair of the consortium. Ms. Slover said 5 million students in 12 states took PARCC in spring 2015, 4 million on computer.

Mr. Nellhaus said states have led the development of the assessment. He said the English language arts (ELA) assessment incorporates extended writing prompts, reading and writing across grades, and scores for reading and writing. He said MCAS offers extended essays only in three grades and does not break out reading and writing in the ELA tests. Mr. Nellhaus said PARCC asks students to solve real world problems in mathematics and the computer-based test has interactive and engaging items.

Ms. Slover said PARCC offers quality and affordability. She said no state starting from scratch could get the same value in development and administration, since \$186 million has gone into developing PARCC over five years. She said the costs are currently \$24 per student for online testing and \$32 for paper testing. Ms. Slover said PARCC has 30,000 test items in an item bank that could support four years of testing. She said states left the consortium due to politics, not the quality of the test. She noted that Louisiana has customized PARCC and the Bureau of Indian Affairs is joining. Ms. Slover said PARCC, Inc. is prepared to support Massachusetts with what works best for the Commonwealth.

Mary Ann Stewart left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Chair Sagan asked what it would mean to be part of the consortium but customize the assessment. Ms. Slover said the PARCC governing board has set three tiers: Tier 1 is the governing board states, Tier 2 states use the full assessment but are not part of the governing board, and Tier 3 states use PARCC content with a different testing vendor. She said cost differs because governing board states have devoted more time and effort to development. In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Ms. Slover said the testing contract goes through 2017-2018. Chair Sagan noted the MCAS contract has to be rebid next year. Mr. Nelhaus said that each year, a full form of the PARCC assessment at each grade would be released along with long and short responses, so that teachers can use the materials to improve instruction. He said the consortium states have a good history of working together to make adjustments, such as the reduction in testing time. In response to a question about schools' readiness for computer-based assessments, Mr. Nellhaus said schools and states can rise to the occasion; for example, in New Mexico, 93% of the students took the PARCC tests online. He added that a paper version of the tests would be available to states as long as they need it.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board