

Riley tapped as new DESE commissioner

JEFFREY RILEY, THE STATE APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT/RECEIVER OF THE LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WAS CHOSEN AS THE next education commissioner by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education following almost two hours of deliberations at their meeting on Monday, January 29.



Riley was chosen in an 8-3 vote from among the three finalists who the Board interviewed and considered for the position. Under state law, the recommendation required a two-thirds majority vote of all members (Education Secretary James Peyser has a vote as a member of the Board), and the secretary decides

whether to appoint the recommended candidate or ask the Board to submit another candidate for consideration.

Three state board members—Margaret McKenna, Amanda Fernandez and Mary Ann Stewart—voted for Angelica Infante-Green, the deputy commissioner of the office of instructional support at the New York State Department of Education, citing her record of working with bilingual and special needs students.

Riley has overseen the operation of 35 schools serving more than 14,000 students as the Lawrence Public Schools superintendent/receiver since 2012. Prior to that, he worked for Boston Public Schools as academic superintendent/chief innovation officer. He has also worked in urban and

continued on page 2

MASC 2nd Annual Poverty Summit

School/community strategies that work

Massachusetts has one of the highest per capita incomes in the country, nevertheless more than 25% of the state's children are currently living at or below the poverty line. And every day, schools in Commonwealth communities large and small, urban, rural and leafy suburban, are trying to address the struggles that these children bring with them into the classroom.

It is well-documented that students in poverty are at greater risk of low academic achievement, social-emotional difficulties and health and substance abuse issues. As the challenges have become more apparent in recent years, teachers, administrators, school leaders and social service personnel have come together to develop strategies and supports to help students at risk. These interventions may be school or classroom-based or may involve partnerships with outside organizations. Their focus is to help students and families cope with the day-to-day and longer-term consequences of poverty.

MASC's upcoming SUMMIT ON POVERTY (March 9, 2018) will bring together school and agency practitioners, as well as one of the country's leading researchers on poverty and strategies that have shown great success in high poverty/high risk student populations. This year's program follows-up on last year's Poverty Summit with practical, implementable take-aways adaptable to

continued on page 2

MA leads nation in annual "Grading the States" report

MASSACHUSETTS FINISHED FIRST IN THE NATION for the fourth straight year in the Education Week Research Center's annual *Quality Counts 2018* report. On a scale of 1-100, the Commonwealth led with an overall B+ and a score of 86.8. Only four other states scored over 80: New Jersey (85.9); Vermont (84.1), New Hampshire (83.7) and Connecticut (83.0). This year's report is being released in three installments, the first of which "Grading the States" was designed to show what the high performing states did well, how low-performers are approaching improvement, and lessons for boosting the quality of K-12 education.

Across the nation, however, performance and progress remained relatively flat, with a national average of 74.5 and a C grade which is determined by a host of academic, fiscal and socioeconomic factors. This year's survey found continued substantial disparities between high and low-performing states, and though graduation and post-secondary participation rates are up, schools continue to struggle with wide achievement and funding gaps.

The overall score is determined by three discrete indices developed by the Research Center:

continued on page 3

YOUR OPINION COUNTS: DESE SEEKING INPUT ON REVISED HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORKS

On January 23, 2018, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to release the current draft of the 2018 Public Comment Draft of the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework for public comment. The comments will inform additional revisions to the framework. The Department invites educators, school leaders and members of the public to provide comments via the public survey and to participate in the upcoming outreach events.

The draft can be accessed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/FY2018/2018-01/item2-public-comment-draft.pdf>

The survey, which is estimated to take 10-20 minutes to complete is available January 23 - April 2, 2018 and can be found at: <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/Public-Comment-Draft-History-and-Social-Science-Framework-2018>

In order to gain additional public input, the Department, in partnership with the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies, will host conference calls and presentations by region across the state. These sessions will welcome participation by PK-12 and higher education faculty, administrators, the general public, students, and parents/guardians. Upcoming conference call sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, February 6 (3-4pm) and Wednesday, February 14 (3-4pm). Advance registration required. For more information on these and the regional presentations: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/hss.html>

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will vote on the formal adoption of the revised framework at its June meeting.

Poverty Summit continued from page 1



all varieties of school communities.

- Superintendents from three diverse MA districts will discuss strategies they have adopted, including professional development and support, to help students at risk succeed.
- Representatives from MA Community Action Partnerships (MASSCAP) agencies will describe their work in various communities and how they partner with school districts to provide supports for students and families.
- Learning about the Community Schools model of collaborating with outside organizations to benefit students and families.

The morning keynote will be an interactive session led by a nationally recognized education researcher/author/professor **William Parrett**, who will present his findings on high poverty/high performing school strat-

egies. The program will also feature a luncheon keynote from **MA Congressman James McGovern** who has long been in the forefront of issues around poverty and families in need; and a wrap-up session with MA school and agency leaders on growing the safety net.

Now more than ever, student achievement and school accountability are in full focus. Closing the achievement gap begins with addressing the challenges of the income gap. Register now to bring back to your district strategies that you can implement now and see the results.

TAKE NOTE: The POVERTY SUMMIT qualifies as a professional program and Professional Development Points (PDPs) will be given to eligible registrants.

Register online at www.masc.org

New DESE Commissioner continued from page 1

suburban educational systems as a teacher in Baltimore, Md., administrator at High Tech Academy at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Boston and principal of Tyngsboro Middle School and Boston's Edwards Middle School.

Riley had previously announced his intention to leave Lawrence at the end of the 2018 academic year. His starting date at the Department has not yet been announced. **NEWS FLASH: Riley has been invited to speak at MASC POVERTY SUMMIT.**

TREND WATCH: Cafeterias share unwanted food

A recent trend being reported in districts around the country is the emergence of "share tables." Instead of filling up trash containers with wrapped single servings of food that weren't selected by students during the day, districts are opting to put the food out on "share tables" where students are free to look over the items and take what they like. What remains on the table is often then donated to local charities.

The effort aims to eliminate food waste and provide extra nutrition to both hungrier kids and their families and to need residents in the communities. The U.S. Department of Education which oversees the federal lunch program has endorsed "share tables" as an innovative strategy that food service directors should consider. For districts that may be interested in trying this, state health code requirements are such that share tables cannot accept hot food or food that isn't in completely sealed containers/packaging.

Keeping Schools Cyber Secure

On January 31, MASC's Divisions IV and VIII hosted a very much "of the moment" program on cyber attacks, their impact on Massachusetts school districts, and a suggestion of policies to help districts deal with them. The session, held in Marlboro at Assabet Valley and coordinated by Division VIII Chair Don Erickson (Bay Path School Committee) was attended by more than 40 school committee members and administrators. Presenters included

Jim Quaqlia, Superintendent and **Michael Schantz**, IT Manager (Blue Hills Reg.); **Peter R. Carlson**,

Technical Solutions Consultant, AKUITY Technologies; **Mark Turner**, SOPHOS; **John LaFleche**, Superintendent and **Kenneth Desautels**, Technology Director (Bay Path Reg.); **Ernest Houle**, Superintendent (Assabet Reg.). To learn more about the program, contact Don Erickson at ericks4858@aol.com



tools for schools

GUIDANCE FOR ENSURING THE EDUCATIONAL STABILITY OF STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) have developed a joint memo and guidance to support the implementation of the foster care provisions outlined under Title I of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (find details at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=24765>). Please register to join one of ESE's informational webinars, which will be held from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on February 6 and 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on February 14. Foster care contact information for DESE and DCF is available on the Department's foster care page

continued on page 4

MA leads nation in annual "Grading the States" report **continued from page 1**

- The **Chance for Success index** uses a cradle to career perspective to examine the role of education in promoting positive outcome throughout an individual's lifetime. (MA and New Hampshire lead the pack in this category with grades of A- and scores of 91.7 and 90.7 respectively. The nation as whole earned a grade of C+.)

- The **School Finance Analysis** evaluates spending on education and equity in funding across districts within a state. (Wyoming, which consistently leads this category, is again at the top of the rankings with an A- and score of 91.4. Massachusetts trails eight other states with a grade of B and a score of 83.5.)

- The **K-12 Achievement Index**, last updated in 2016, scores states on current academic performance, change over time and poverty-based gaps. Results in this category rely largely on NAEP scores, graduation rates and AP exam scores. (In this category, MA posted the highest scores receiving a B (85.2). The nation as whole earned a C- for K-12 achievement.)

The states with the best overall grades typically perform well across many of the metrics, but especially on

indicators related to educational foundations in early childhood, thereby enabling children to enter the K-12 system ready to learn. MA and New Jersey lead the nation in early childhood preparation.

Research also confirms that children facing fewer risk factors, such as living in poverty, or confronted by violence, substance abuse or transience, are more likely to succeed academically. States with the top overall grades generally have higher family income levels and are clustered in more prosperous regions of the country, most commonly the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. New Hampshire and MA rank first and second in family income.

The school finance analysis examines education spending and equity in the distribution of funding across the districts within each state. The states with the highest overall grades tend to have relatively high spending, but they don't always rank near the top in equity. Some high performing, high spending states (including Vermont) are near the bottom in terms of equity.

According to the report's authors, the public is increasingly looking to ac-

countability for their state and district results and that the onus for driving student achievement will be on state-level policymakers. Since the new federal education law, ESSA, gives state leaders the latitude to develop customized accountability systems, much attention is likely to focus on how effectively current disparities are resolved.

The second and third installments of *Quality Counts* will be released in June and September and will examine in state-wide detail school spending and finance, including how evenly that money is spread within states and the role it plays in educational equity (June); in September, an analysis of student achievement data looks at the lifelong impact of factors such as family income, parent education levels, and pre-school access.

More detail on the reports is online at: www.edweek.org/go/qc18. For each state's performance on key indicators, go to: www.edweek.org/go/qc18shr.

For an analysis of the state of the states and a look at detailed grades in critical areas of educational performance: www.edweek.org/go/qc18map.

tools for schools

continued from page 3

(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/>).

LEAD IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

Funding for Massachusetts' Lead in School Drinking Water Program is still available for the 2017-2018 school year. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, through its partnership with the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, will provide technical assistance to ensure that public school districts can sample the taps and water fountains in their schools and to identify any results that show lead and copper concentrations over the action level.

The program is open to public schools and childcare facilities that have not previously participated. There is limited funding available; eligible applicants will be accepted as they apply and until funding has been exhausted. Information about the program and how to apply is available online at: www.mass.gov/assistance-program-for-lead-in-school-drinking-water.

May 29-30

SAVE THE DATES

“Liberating, Educating and Empowering Young Men of Color”

12th Annual COSEBOC Gathering of Leaders • Boston Park Plaza Hotel

Presented by Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC)
Co-Hosts: City of Boston; Boston Public Schools;
My Brother's Keeper Boston Program

For registration and full program details: www.coseboc.org

MASSACHUSETTS GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS COMPETITION:

Massachusetts is now accepting applications for the 2018 Green Ribbon School Awards. The program honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education that incorporates science, technology, engineering and math; civic skills; and green career pathways. Applicants may enter the competition as either

a school or a district. Massachusetts will select one or more schools or districts to be honored at the state level; those honorees are then elevated to the U.S. Department of Education, where they will have the opportunity to be honored as a national Green Ribbon School winner. Applications are due by March 15. For more information, visit DESE's Green Ribbon Schools website (www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/GreenRibbon)

masc

Boston, MA 02109

One McKinley Square

Massachusetts Association of School Committees