Massachusetts Autism Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2023 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

Autism Commission Members Present: Jane Ryder (DDS), Carolyn Kain (EHS), Elizabeth Morse (DDS), Janet George (DDS), Emma Vazquez for Rep. Christine Barber (HOU), Hannah Mori for Sen. Joan Lovely (SEN), Rep. Joseph McKenna (HOU), Heidi Gold for Ann Reale (EOE), Kate Ginnis (EHS), Kathy Sanders (DMH), Kate Biebel for Toni Wolf (MRC), Christine Hubbard, Russell Johnston (DESE), Bronia Clifton (DHCD), Emily White (DPH), Sacha Stadhard, James Vander Hooven, Jo Ann Simons, Michele Brait, Jennifer Chebator for Katherine Canada (DCF), Laurie Anastopouos, Janet Barbieri, Heather Morrison for Vincent Strully and Amy Kershaw (EEC)

Meeting Minutes: Dianne Lescinskas (EHS)

Approval of the Minutes from September 15, 2022

Commissioner Ryder called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Autism Commission meeting on September 15, 2022. Ms. Simon made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. White seconded the motion. Ms. Kain asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes and seeing none, a roll call was done with all members approving the minutes. The minutes from December 15, 2022, were approved.

**Discussion and Vote on Autism Commission Report**

Ms. Kain shared a PowerPoint presentation where she highlighted updated and additional information added to the report. The draft report was reviewed and discussed at the last meeting in December.

* Update on Global Pandemic and the pivoting of state agency work and response
* Keeping data from 2019 report
* Study on ASD – the comments on this report are reflected in the minutes from December – the data is not available and not possible to include in this study/report
* A Working Group was formed to discuss the study – the first meeting was scheduled for Feb. 27th – discussion will be on data of DEI
* Each agency has committed to improve data collection and process – it is reflected in the report
* DESE included appendices, collecting data in the aggregate – the working group will look at this information
* DPH and EI services – they provide specialty services and have collected data that will be included in the annual report
* DDS has outlined changes they are making to data collection
* MRC – they have provided data that is included in the annual report – they will also share this data with the working group
* MassHealth will be collecting data to understand disparities
* Ms. Kain reported that she moved the update on data collection process information to the beginning of the report to address the study and data

Ms. Kain asked if anyone had additional questions or concerns on the Annual Report; hearing no concerns, Ms. Kain asked if there was a motion to approve the 2022 Annual Autism Commission Report. Ms. Simon made a motion to approve the annual report and Ms. Kershaw seconded the motion. A roll call was made with all members present approving the motion.

Commissioner Ryder announced that the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kate Walsh, will begin on March 1 – she is currently the CEO of Boston Medical Center.

With no other further business to discuss, Commissioner Ryder asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Simons made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Dr. Sanders seconded the motion, motion approved unanimously.