



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission

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Meeting Minutes

Oct 15, 2024, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83421971270>

*Please note that this meeting will be recorded. The meeting will be held via teleconference in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law and COVID-19.

Commissioners in Attendance: Gary Chu, Karen Chen, Moana Bentin, Marilyn Park, Bethany Li, Jennifer Rubin, Meena Bharath, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Tuyet Tran, Emma Chen-Banas, Gary Yu, Richard Chu, Rakashi Chand

Staff in Attendance: ED Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Policy Director Jennifer Best, Communications Director Lizette Sta. Maria, Communications Coordinator intern Monita Seng, Pacific Islander Coordinator intern Brissa Hunter, Program & Research Director Shubhecchha Dhaurali

Others in Attendance: Colin Chan, Jill Norton, Katie Yue-Sum Li, Puja, Tim Warren

Youth Council in Attendance: Lindell Valsote, Aden Huang, Mirei Saneyoshi, Ying Kay Leung, Elianna Umana Kimura

1. Call to Order

Commission Chair Gary Chu calls the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Commissioners Check-in

Communications Director Lizette Sta. Maria introduces new Communications Coordinator Monita Seng.

Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia asks for polling resources.

Commissioner Karen Chen reminds everyone of the last day to register to vote and ways to check voter registration status.

Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia joins around 6:04 PM.

Commissioner Tuyet Tran joins around 6:05 PM.

Commissioner Gary Yu joins around 6:06 PM.

Commissioner Emma Chen-Banas joins around 6:06 PM.

3. Public Comment on Ballot Question 2

Discussion: Public comments and feedback on Ballot Question 2 regarding the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

Jennifer Best facilitates the Ballot Question 2 discussion. Question summary: This proposed law would eliminate the requirement that a student pass the MCAS and other assessments in order to receive a high school diploma.



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Jill Norton, a representative for the No on 2 perspective, shares a story of a child who was behind in literacy. MCAS scores showed that he did not meet the standard for his grade level despite teachers allowing him to move on to the next grade. While Massachusetts is one of eight states that require a standardized test, it is also one of two states that don't have other standardization requirements. Jill is a proponent of this objective measure.

Tim Warren is the representative for the Yes on 2 perspective. Educators support this question at about 90%. The diagnostic data will not go away with a Yes on 2 vote. The MA curriculum is currently narrowed towards teaching the MCAS and less on real-world skills. The MCAS does not test all of the standards needed for graduation. Test-taking skills are not transferable. They do not accurately assess whether students are ready for higher education or the workforce. The MCAS will still be administered. The question is, how can we stop the barrier of a student graduating from high school? Students of color, students who speak English as a second language, and students with learning differences are most affected.

Several Commissioners shared personal perspectives on MCAS, expressing concerns about its limitations in measuring a broad range of student skills and questioning its role as a graduation requirement. While some saw value in MCAS for standardized measurement and funding allocation, others highlighted its potential to impede students' focus on career-related skills and contribute to stress. Discussions included the advantages and drawbacks of MCAS concerning student support, resource allocation, and educational goals.

Members of the Youth Council also shared their opinions on MCAS, as most are directly affected by the requirement. Some agreed with MCAS as a standardized measurement that could increase equity in funding, others recognized the harm it causes, especially for recent immigrants.

Members of the public shared their perspectives on MCAS. The members of the public present overwhelmingly supported eliminating the MCAS requirement as they have seen it harm their students and children, especially those who are not fluent in English.

Commissioner Karen Chen leaves at 6:32 PM.

Commissioner Rakashi Chand joins at 6:39 PM.

4. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes – Sept 17

Commissioner Moana Bentin makes a motion to approve the September 17, 2024 Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Gary Yu seconds.

Yes: Moana Bentin, Marilyn Park, Meena Bharath, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Gary Yu, Emma Chen-Banas, Tuyet Tran, Gary Chu, Richard Chu, Rakashi Chand

Abstain: Jennifer Rubin

The vote passes.

5. Employment Lawyer



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ED Yasmin Padamsee Forbes and Chair Gary Chu updated that they are looking at quotes for an employment attorney to create HR guidelines.

6. Pacific Islanders Toolkit

Pacific Islanders Coordinator Brissa Hunter provides an overview of the Pacific Islander Toolkit.

Discussions included reflections on why some Pacific Islanders may feel distant from the term "AAPI." PI members of the Commission highlighted perspectives on feeling distinct from the broader AAPI identity, suggesting the importance of recognizing unique Pacific Islander experiences within the community.

Commissioner Tuyet Tran leaves at 7:23 PM.

7. Meetings with the Asian Caucus, HHS, and Governor's Office

ED Yasmin Padamsee Forbes and Chair Gary Chu provide an update on various meetings and events to be held this week and next.

Old Business

8. Reports

a. Sub-Committee Reports

Moana Bentin reports on the Unity Dinner Subcommittee

1. Awards nominations deadline Sunday, 10/20
2. Encourage each Commissioner to bring in one sponsor by 11/1
3. An invitation to Michelle Wu as keynote speaker was submitted today, 10/15
4. The next subcommittee meeting is the following Monday, 10/21, at noon. A meeting invitation coming soon

Jennifer Best updates that the small grants application was launched and will remain open until 11/11.

Jennifer Best announces that the Key Issue area discussion will be held at 3 PM tomorrow, 10/16.

Rakashi Chand announces the Diwali celebration planned with Meena, Yasmin, and Lizette at the State House on 11/1 at 11 AM.

b. Staff Report

9. Future Agenda Items Suggestions

Gary Chu: More community discussions and informational reports

Moana Bentin: Streamline communications going out to Commissioners, remind people of Google Drive

Commissioner Moana Bentin makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rakashi Chand seconds.



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Yes: Moana Bentin, Marilyn Park, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Gary Yu, Richard Chu, Rakashi Chand, Gary Chu

The vote passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 7:53 PM.



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