KINDERGARTEN EXPANSION GRANTS

FY15 Grant Policies
The Line Item for the Kindergarten Expansion Grant is 7030-1002. Details about anticipated fiscal year 2014-2015 (FY15) grants and eligibility amounts will be provided later this spring, at a later stage in the FY15 state budget cycle.

At the time of this writing, the Governor’s proposed budget (House 2) and the House budget recommendations have been released. The Governor’s proposal for the 7030-1002 line-item was a total of $27,048,947, and the House recommendation was $23,948,947.

FY14 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant Tuition Related Policies

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) posted to the Kindergarten site the following FY15 Tuition and Lottery Policies, Sliding Fee Scale Policies, and Tuition Related Statement of Assurance. Please review the policies for updates and guidance.

- FY15 Tuition and Lottery Policies
- FY15 Sliding Fee Scale Policies - District Worksheet and Sample
- FY15 Tuition Related Statement of Assurance

Grantees who plan to charge FY15 tuition but have not yet submitted their Assurance Statement and sliding fee scale to the Department (ATTN: Mary Jane Crotty, LSS Unit) should do so two weeks before it is made available to families. (See top of the newsletter for the LSS Unit’s mail, email, and fax information). All grantees that charge tuition must submit a signed Statement of Assurance confirming that they are following the Department’s tuition policies. Grantees who have questions, or who have already alerted families of plans for tuition should contact their grant liaison or the LSS Unit for more information regarding tuition fees that may need to be reassessed.
**FY14 Quality Full-Day Grant Update (FC 701)**

*NAEYC Accreditation Update*

NAEYC Accreditation is a broad-based and rigorous accreditation system for programs serving children from birth through kindergarten. Researchers, policymakers and practitioners generally accept NAEYC accreditation as a comprehensive high standard for overall early childhood program quality.

**Revisions to Guidance Effective April 1, 2014** Programs with visits conducted on and after April 1 will be assessed according to revised "Guidance for Assessment."

**Revisions to Criteria Effective April 1, 2014** In response to recent changes in best practice in the field of early childhood education, NAEYC will revise five Early Childhood Program Accreditation Criteria, effective April 1, 2014.

**NAEYC For Families: Share This Resource with Parents** The NAEYC For Families website is an excellent resource to support your family engagement efforts.

**Upcoming Renewal Deadlines** NAEYC has developed a streamlined renewal process for programs accredited after September 2006.

*NAEYC Accreditation Waiver Option*

In order for districts to be able to focus efforts on implementing the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA), the Department will approve FY15 (2014-2015) Quality Full-Day Kindergarten (Fund Code 701) grantee requests to waive the requirement to pursue National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation (or the district's approved alternative to accreditation). Note that the planning and implementation of the MKEA, along with the documentation of the process, is considered progress towards meeting the criteria of the Assessment standard(s) as outlined in the NAEYC accreditation framework and towards the priorities of the alternative to accreditation options.

This waiver is only applicable to the requirement as described in ESE’s Quality Full-Day Kindergarten grant and does not change timelines that are stipulated through the NAEYC accreditation process (candidacy due dates, site visit dates, etc) or the alternative to accreditation options. Before requesting a waiver, we recommend that each interested district reach out to NAEYC (or the organization tied to the district's approved alternative to accreditation) to understand any implications for the district, both financially and with regards to timelines as put forward by the accrediting organization.

The process for submitting a waiver will be outlined in the FY15 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (Fund Code 701), which is expected to be posted late spring to early summer. If you have questions, please email them to us via achievement@doe.mass.edu.
Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant Workgroup

After several years of implementing alternative pathways to accreditation and continued concerns about the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation as a requirement of the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (Fund Code 701), the Department plans to create a Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant Work-Group. The goals of this workgroup are to define what a high quality kindergarten should reflect and develop recommendations on how the Department can create policies for the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant that support the implementation of high quality learning opportunities in kindergarten. More specifically, we anticipate that the workgroup will focus on the following tasks:

- reviewing both the NAEYC accreditation standards as well as the various alternatives to accreditation;
- identifying priority standards focused on high quality program and instructional opportunities in kindergarten;
- developing a draft program/instructional quality framework for kindergarten; and
- making recommendations to the Department regarding program quality policies that will be associated with the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant beginning in FY16.

We invite you to apply to be part of the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant Workgroup. In applying, you commit to the following:

- Attend an introductory meeting to be held on September 29, 2014 in Malden and a minimum of 3 half-day meetings of the workgroup over the next 9-12 months; the three additional meetings are scheduled on the following dates: November 3, 2014; January 12, 2015; and March 9, 2015. Locations for the 3 additional dates will be identified and we will notify members of the work-group;
- Participate in a subcommittee that will work together on a particular task in between meetings of the full workgroup;
- Assist the workgroup in developing a framework for kindergarten quality and policy recommendations; and
- Review draft recommendations prior to Department staff submitting them to senior staff for consideration.

If this is of interest, please complete the [online survey](#) by June 6, 2014. While we would like to invite everyone to participate, we want to keep the group size manageable in order to ensure completion of the work. As such, we will review the survey submissions and let you know about your participation by mid-June.

FY14 Transition to full-day Kindergarten Grant (FC 702)

Based on the FY14 state budget language, the Department offered districts with part-day kindergarten the opportunity to transition to full-day kindergarten with support from the Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (FC 702). The grant is intended to help districts with the preparation needed during FY14 (School Year 2013-2014) to open full-day kindergarten
classes in FY15 (School Year 2014-2015). After a competitive process, the Department awarded five districts the FY14 FC 702 grant: Billerica, Hopkinson Mansfield, Scituate and Stoneham.

REMINDER TO FC 702 GRANTEES: The Required Forms section of the FC 702 grant RFP requires a Letter of Assurance from the School Committee Chair demonstrating support for the grant proposal and commitment to opening full-day kindergarten in FY15. Please make sure to review the details again about this from the FY14 FC 702 RFP, and let us know if you have questions.

Please work with your school committee to submit this letter, if you have not done so, and send it in no later than May 15, 2014 to the Department, ATTN: Mary Jane Crotty, LSS Unit (see top of newsletter for mail, email, and fax information).

Please also review the newly released FY15 Tuition and Lottery Policies and the FY15 Sliding Fee Scale carefully to make fiscal plans for next school year if the district is considering charging tuition for the second half of the full-day kindergarten day.

Grant Amendments

If you need to amend the district’s FC 701 or 702 grant budgets, the deadline for submitting in the Amendment Request Form with revised budget pages is May 30, 2014. Details about the Department’s amendment process can be found on the Department’s Grants website.

The following two forms are necessary when submitting the amendment request:

- **Amendment Request Form:** In section III, put your original budget items in Column A, the previously approved budget amendment amounts in Column B (if applicable), the proposed amount to increase or decrease each line in Column C, and the totals (revised budget amounts) for each line in Column D.
- **Budget Pages:** Be sure of the following when working on the revision of the budget page:
  - reflect the new amounts as listed in Part III Column D of the Amendment Request Form.
  - revise the budget narrative to reflect the changes in the budget / budget narrative with descriptions of the proposed changes.
  - provide number of staff and FTEs in Line 1, 2, 3. and rates if used for stipends.
  - provide rates for consultants, etc in line 5.

Send three sets of the forms (at least one set having an original signature) to the Department, ATTN: Mary Jane Crotty, LSS Unit (see top of newsletter for mail, email, and fax information). After our approval signature is on them, an original set is required for the grants office; one set gets mailed back to the districts, and one set is kept in the program files.

**Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)**

The Department is collaborating with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) through EEC’s Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant funds, on the development and
implementation of a Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA). This initiative is focused on producing a common statewide measure of children’s school readiness, and helping teachers to use the assessment data to guide curriculum and instruction in order to implement the state learning standards.

Based on feedback from the past two years, the following changes that may have an impact on your district will occur in Year 3:

- All school districts in MKEA Cohort 3 will utilize the Teaching Strategies-GOLD System. School districts in Cohorts 1 or 2 using Work Sampling System (WSS) have the option to continue to administer it or switch to GOLD.
- Instead of assessing in all domains, school districts in all Cohorts will have the option to focus on assessing children in only two development areas, Social-Emotional and Cognitive domains for GOLD and Personal-Social for WSS.
- School districts in all Cohorts will focus on assessing children in full-day kindergarten classrooms.
- A waiver will be included in the FY15 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Funding Opportunity that provides districts with an optional, one-year waiver from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation or an alternative to accreditation.

During the months of May and June, EEC, ESE and the Readiness Centers will work together to develop a survey for cohort 1 and 2 districts regarding the MKEA and its connection to various Department- and district- initiatives, including Educator Evaluation and District Determined Measures (DDMs), report cards, Response-to-Intervention, etc. The goal is to gather information on how districts have used the MKEA data to inform and connect with other efforts. We will send the link out to the survey as soon as it becomes available.

EEC will continue to provide updated information about the MKEA initiative on its website. We hope these revisions will enable teachers to have more time to instruct and observe what young children show us through interaction, play, language and engagement about what they know and have learned.

**Kindergarten Regional Networking Meetings**

*Winter 2013-14 Kindergarten Networking Meetings*

The Department hosted three regional networking meetings in Worcester, Salem, and Fall River in January. We appreciate the help from colleagues in these areas in finding meeting spaces. At the meetings we reviewed and discussed drafts of an Early Childhood definition of College and Career Readiness and Social Emotional standards for preschool. Pam Roux, from EEC presented and answered questions on MKEA updates.
Spring 2014 Kindergarten Regional Network Meetings

The Department will host three spring regional networking meetings in May 2014. Please register and select the session you would like to attend.

    Thursday, May 22 (Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater)
    Wednesday, May 28 (Center for Educational Services, Northampton)
    Friday, May 30 (Department, 75 Pleasant St., Malden)

The online registration is now open. Please register by May 16, 2014. Final details will be emailed to participants.

Updates on Department Initiatives

Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences and Kindergarten Learning Experiences.

The Kindergarten Learning Experiences (ESE, 2008), and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences (ESE, 2003) have guided districts, programs and early childhood educators in the implementation of the state Curriculum Frameworks. Over the past few months we have been excited to have the opportunity to jointly align these guides as part of our work to develop a continuum of educational practice from birth to kindergarten. To date, the workgroup has revised the English Language Arts and the Math sections of the documents. We will be working on the Science and Technology/Engineering and the Social Studies and History sections in early fall 2014. If you are interested in assisting in this work please contact Mary Jane or Donna.

Revised Standards for Science & Technology/Engineering

The Massachusetts draft revised Science and Technology/Engineering standards are now available at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/review.html

Related documents presented with the draft revised STE standards include:

- Frequently Asked Questions regarding the release of the MA Draft Revised Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Standards
- Crosswalk of the 2001/2006 STE Standards and Draft Revised STE Standards:
  - Organized by Current Standards
  - Organized by Draft Revised Standards
- Strand Maps of Draft Revised MA Science and Technology/Engineering Standards
- Matrix of the Science and Engineering Practices (from NGSS)
- Matrix of Disciplinary Core Idea Progressions
- The Case for an Integrated, Grade-by-Grade Approach PreK-8
- Value of Crosscutting Concepts & Nature of Science in Curriculum
- Presentation: Overview of the MA Draft Revised STE Standards (PPT)
Please review the FAQ in particular. There are several considerations that schools and districts will want to attend to given that the draft revised STE standards are now public but will not be moved forward for adoption until the 2015-2016 school year. The FAQ highlights these considerations. These resources may be updated periodically and additional resources will likely be added over time.

Please email mathsciencetech@doe.mass.edu with any comments, suggestions, or questions related to the draft revised STE standards. Department staff will be compiling input and responding to questions while the draft revised STE standards are public.

**Service-Learning**

The Department is pleased to offer this service-learning professional development opportunity.

**Get Started with Service-Learning (2-days) – Register Here (by May 23, 2014)**
Monday, June 2 and Tuesday, June 3 (8:30-3:30 both days, registration available at 8:00am)  
Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, Boylston

This 2-day session is designed to prepare participants to implement a high quality service-learning project using KIDS Consortium’s award winning service-learning model. Participants will leave with tools, strategies and enthusiasm to implement a SL project in their school and community. At this 2-part session, participants will:

- Understand the difference between the KIDS model of SL and other community-oriented educational experiences;
- Understand the importance of community partnership(s), student ownership, and connections to learning objectives that define KIDS service-learning projects;
- Be impelled to incorporate SL into their teaching environment(s);
- Advocate for SL based on the impacts it has on students, teachers, and communities; and
- Learn tools and strategies to: (a) identify a high-quality SL project, (b) create a plan to incorporate SL into their classroom environment; and (c) implement a high-quality SL project for diverse learners.

These sequential sessions are designed to prepare participants to implement a high quality service-learning project using KIDS Consortium’s award winning service-learning model. Participants will leave with tools, strategies and enthusiasm to implement a SL project in their school and community.

Though the session is free of charge, participants must bring or purchase their lunches.
**Student Writing Samples, PK-12**

The **Department** is actively seeking samples of student writing from preK – 12 as well as new candidates to serve as reviewers for the **Writing Standards in Action Project**, posted at:

http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/wsa/

The project posts high quality student writing with supporting commentary that highlights the elements of effective writing found in each sample with the goal of supporting writing instruction. By highlighting examples of strong writing in actual student work, the project offers guidance for teachers, administrators, students and parents about the elements of quality written work. For example, the project materials may be used by teachers as the basis for discussion of current practice in writing instruction and alignment to the learning standards.

For further information, contact: Dave Buchanan via dbuchanan@doe.mass.edu

**An Invitation to Join Licensure Working Groups**

With the adoption of new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in 2011 incorporating the Common Core State Standards, instruction in language arts and mathematics must evolve in order to ensure that the Commonwealth’s students have the opportunity to master new, more rigorous expectations. An essential step in this instructional shift is alignment of training in educator preparation programs to ensure that incoming educators are prepared in the right content for which they will be responsible as teachers. To guide educator preparation programs in this alignment work, the Department will be revising the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) standards for Reading, Early Childhood and Mathematics licenses. We are looking for K-12 educators, professionals involved in preparing new educators, disciplinary experts from academia, and other interested individuals to apply to join one of three working groups. As part of our effort to move this work forward efficiently and thoughtfully, for each respective working group, we are seeking individuals with knowledge, experience and/or educational background related to the content area under review. If you are interested in serving on a working group please see this document with information about the work and application process.

**Transform Ed Prep in MA – Become an Ed Prep Reviewer**

This spring, approximately 7,000 candidates will complete an educator preparation program in Massachusetts; and by the fall, nearly 4,500 of these newly licensed educators will be employed in a Massachusetts public school. Tens of thousands of students will depend daily on the knowledge and skills of the teachers and leaders prepared in these programs.

Help the Department guarantee that educator preparation in Massachusetts results in effective educators ready to support the success of all students. Become an Ed Prep Reviewer; learn more, read the FAQ and apply if interested.
As an Ed Prep Reviewer, you will serve on a review team that is responsible for reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating evidence of program effectiveness. Newly recruited, selected and trained reviewers can expect to be part of a cutting-edge, innovative review process that is garnering national attention in the efforts to transform educator preparation.

This is an exciting and selective opportunity to:
Engage in a meaningful professional learning opportunity and earn PD points
Participate in the shaping of an evaluation process that impacts the readiness of our educators to deliver quality instruction both statewide and nationally
Collaborate with and learn from diverse education leaders and professionals
Reflect on and refine your own practice and content knowledge

Application deadline: Midnight, May 18th

Please forward this opportunity to friends and colleagues who may also be interested. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at edprep@doe.mass.edu

Curriculum Mapping Institute

Building on last summer's curriculum mapping institutes, the Department and the regional Readiness Centers will host a one-day institute for district curriculum teams on May 20, 2014. The session will focus on specific strategies around implementing and improving curriculum maps and provide strategies around action planning, improving map quality, linking mapping and professional learning communities, and progress monitoring. Cambridge Education, an organization that has supported curriculum mapping implementation efforts in several districts, will lead the session. Go to https://www.eventbrite.com/e/curriculum-mapping-implementation-and-improvement-institute-registration-11335816733 to register for the institute or an optional pre-institute webinar.

The Curriculum Alignment and Mapping Project, a Race to the Top funded partnership with the regional Readiness Centers, is creating a repository of curriculum map examples. If you are willing to share your curriculum map examples with other districts, please email them to Zach Smith at zsmith@lpvec.org.

Update on Initiatives from the Executive Office of Education

National Governor’s Association (NGA) Early Childhood Policy Academy

The Executive Office of Education was the recipient of the National Governor’s Association Policy Academy grant in June 2013. The purpose of the $25,000 grant award is to develop a birth-third grade policy agenda. The Departments of EEC, ESE, and Higher Education are working together to strengthen and align birth to grade three standards and assessments with an emphasis on social-emotional development and approaches to learning standards. The state team has been building on the focus on College and Career Readiness by developing a foundational
document which will highlight the critical impact of children’s development from birth to Grade Three on future success.

**Birth through Grade 3 Policy Forum: Developing Strategic Pathways to College and Career Success**

Massachusetts is one of six states participating in an early learning policy academy supported by the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. With the support of the NGA, Massachusetts is building a comprehensive birth through grade 3 policy agenda, one that will create healthy, dynamic, and positive environments within which our youngest citizens can thrive.

On Friday, May 16, 2014, educators, higher education representatives, local and state officials, legislators, business and community partners, parents and family members, and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to discuss strategies for enhancing early learning standards, developing new assessment strategies, increasing educator effectiveness, and increasing alignment between the early education and K-12 sectors.

Speakers include Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education; Thomas Weber, Commissioner of Early Education and Care; Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education; Richard Freeland, Commissioner of Higher Education; and Ralph Smith, Managing Director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

**Update from the Regional Education Laboratory at Northeast and Islands (REL – NEI)**

**Early Childhood Surveys on Use of Assessments and Implementation of Standards**

The Early Childhood Education Research Alliance (ECEA) at REL Northeast & Islands at EDC has created two surveys—one for educators and one for administrators—to help early childhood program leaders and decision-makers gather data to improve policymaking around child assessments, strengths and weaknesses of programs, and professional development, among other early childhood education challenges.

The surveys consist of three modules that separately address child and educator background characteristics, child assessment use, and early learning standards implementation. Survey modules may be administered at the same time or separately in approximately 10 to 15 minutes each.

Download the surveys and accompanying report, as well as adaptable MS Word versions, [here](#).

“Data about how early childhood educators and administrators use child assessments to inform instruction, talk with families about their children, or adjust programs is scarce, as is information about how they are implementing state early learning standards,” said Clare Irwin, ECEA researcher and REL Northeast & Islands principal investigator. “The greater availability of this
data, gathered through these quickly administered surveys, will allow program and state administrators and policymakers across the country to make better informed decisions to improve early-learning outcomes.”

The surveys were created partly to advance ECEA’s research agenda to improve early childhood programming and child outcomes and to serve as a resource to the broader early childhood education community. ECEA members from states and territories throughout the region contributed to their development: Manuela Fonseca (Vermont), Jennifer Louis (Massachusetts), Sarah Mahurt (US Virgin Islands), Kathleen Paterson (Vermont), Judi Stevenson-Garcia (Rhode Island), and Ellen Wheatley (New Hampshire).

Professional Development Opportunities at EEC

These first four items are available on: http://www.doe.mas.edu/kindergarten/download.

- Early Language Development Framework WIDA training
- Principal/Leadership Institutes funded by EEC and MESPA
- Post Master’s degree program
- New Start: Supporting Multilingual Children and Immigrant and Refugee Families Training Series

Professional Development Resources

Massachusetts has a new resource to support schools and communities in their efforts to improve young children’s learning and development—the Birth through Third Grade Learning Hub. The Learning Hub website provides ongoing analysis of Birth-Third initiatives across the state, including work to improve teaching and learning in grades PreK-3rd. The aim of the Learning Hub is to promote learning, exchange, and knowledge-building across communities. The more schools and communities know about the work of other communities, the better they will be able to design and implement effective strategies. Through blog posts, guidance documents, tools, videos, and collaboration with technical assistance providers, the Learning Hub facilitates sharing of promising practices and collaborative problem-solving directed towards common problems. Check out these recent posts on the Learning Hub blog:

- Boston’s collaboration with community-based preschools on implementing a new curriculum,
- Lowell’s use of common observation and assessment tools,
- Joint professional development between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in Somerville and Springfield, and
- Pittsfield’s community-wide strategy to improve reading proficiency.

The Learning Hub is currently supported by EEC Care and is produced by David Jacobson of Cambridge Education. It can be found at birth-third.net.
Nonie Lesaux, Stephanie Jones, and their research team at Harvard University have released the second issue of *Leading Early Educators* – part of a series of one-page briefs written for leaders dedicated to promoting children’s learning and development through high-quality early education.

**Learn More About Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!**

*Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!* is a coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy child development, universal developmental and behavioral screening for children, and support for the families and providers who care for them.

**The Evolution of Public Kindergarten**

This paper documents substantial changes in kindergarten classrooms between 1998 and 2006, using two large nationally-representative datasets.