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## Commissioner's Updates

February 22, 2000

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

As you know, I have restructured the Department of Education News Page to provide direct access to items in my [bimonthly updates](#). There are now two versions of each of the documents attached to updates: Portable Document Format (PDF) and Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML).

HTML documents provide fast and easy access and do not have special system requirements. PDF documents are better for printing because they always display exactly as created, regardless of fonts, software, and operating systems. PDF documents do require a plug-in for your browser. This is free software available at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>. Additionally, we maintain a special webpage to assist you with PDF documents at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/resources/pdf.html>.

I urge you to encourage your administrators, school principals and private Chapter 766 school providers to read these bi-monthly notices on our website for the latest news that is continuously being revised.

In this letter I have five matters to address and five items for your review:

### **Finance**

Preliminary Chapter 70 aid and local spending requirements for FY 2001 will be available on the web on Friday, February 25, and individual district packets will be mailed to you the week of February 28.

### **Recertification Workshop**

Traditionally, we have held several workshops throughout the state to provide technical assistance on important new information. However, we have found that holding multiple training sessions presents many logistical and scheduling difficulties for you and your staff, so we have a new plan to provide information on the recertification regulations. On Tuesday, March 23, in Marlboro, we will hold one workshop and use MCET to tape the entire meeting. We will then make the video available to all schools. I anticipate that the Marlboro audience will raise questions that are common to educators everywhere, and it is my hope that you will show the videotape at a faculty meeting. I welcome your feedback on this approach.

### **Communication**

I recently met with the Executive Board of the Superintendents Association and received valuable feedback on the gap in communication between the implementation of a myriad of new initiatives of the Board and the Department, and the inability of districts and schools to absorb it all. After we complete the certification regulations and the

framework revisions, we need to take stock of where we are and how we fit all of these initiatives together.

## MCAS in Perspective

I have had the pleasure of visiting the five schools that had the largest percentage increase in MCAS scores and whose principals received \$10,000 awards from the [Partnership Foundation established by Bill Ederly](#), former President of State Street Bank. We videotaped the visits, and I plan to have a video that captures many of the common elements found in the schools. While they all have clear strategies for including the standards and item analyses of MCAS results, the overall approach is one of serious learning in a happy environment where students are encouraged and supported. We need to share strategies that incorporate the MCAS program, which is necessary but only a part of the overall educational process.

## Math Curriculum Framework

I will address in some detail the Mathematics Framework in the next update in two weeks.

This letter includes five items:

1. Invitation to the recertification forum to be held on March 23 in Marlboro  
[ No longer available ]
2. Request for responses for administrator training institutes to support beginning teachers  
[ No longer available ]
3. [Sample template for use in planning individual professional development activities](#)
4. [Announcement that the Board of Higher Education's Fourth Annual Arthur Gelb College-to-School Report will be available March 6.](#)
5. The Walt Disney Corporation website, [disneylearning.org](http://disneylearning.org), for information on nominating a teacher for Disney's annual American Teacher Awards

I appreciate your continuing commitment to improve student achievement.  
All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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**Record of Approved Professional Development Activities for Primary Area**

Professional Development Activity	Professional Growth Goal (Goal Number)	Content PDPs	Other PDPs (pedagogy or professional skills)	*Date Approved & Supervisor's Initials	Date Completed

\*The Supervisor's initials indicate that the professional development activity is consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district and is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning.

**Record of Additional Professional Development Activities for Elective PDPs**

Professional Development Activity	Professional Growth Goal (Goal Number)	Content PDPs	Other PDPs	Date Completed

Use additional copies of this form if necessary.

This document and other Department of Education documents and publications are available on our website at [www.doe.mass.edu/recert](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Educator's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Certificate Number

**Initial Review and Approval**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The signature below indicates that 80% of this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan is consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district and is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**First Two Year Review**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The signature below indicates that this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan was reviewed.

*Please check one.*

\_\_\_\_\_ The Plan remains consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Plan was reviewed and amended.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Second Two Year Review**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The signature below indicates that this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan was reviewed.

*Please check one.*

\_\_\_\_\_ The Plan remains consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Plan was reviewed and amended.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Final Endorsement**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The signature below indicates the supervisor has reviewed this educator's Record of Professional Development Activities and the reported activities are consistent with the approved professional development plan.

Supervisor's Name (print)	Title	Signature
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## FOURTH ANNUAL ARTHUR GELB COLLEGE TO SCHOOL REPORT

The Board of Higher Education's Fourth Annual *Arthur Gelb College-to-School Report* will be available on the web for viewing beginning March 6, 2000. The report provides data on the performance of June 1997 Massachusetts high school graduates who enrolled in the fall of 1997 as freshmen at one of the 28 Massachusetts public higher education institutions.

The *Gelb Report* is designed to promote discussion about the academic performance of Massachusetts' high school graduates in public higher education and to increase direct communication between college and high school faculty. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to ensure the successful transition of students from secondary to public post-secondary education.

The report provides several items of particular interest to individual high schools, including:

- The number of 1997 high school graduates who attended a public higher education institution full-time<sup>1</sup> in Massachusetts.
- The comparison of average weighted high school GPA with average college GPA at four-year institutions.
- The percentage of all students who returned in fall 1998 to the public system and the percentage who returned to the same institution.
- The average number of credits and average college GPA earned by returning students.
- A comparison of high school performance (range of average weighted high school GPA) with average earned college GPA, average number of earned credits, and retention rate at four-year institutions.
- The percentage of students in community colleges enrolled in remedial coursework and the percentage of those who returned in the fall of 1998.

To protect the confidentiality of individual students, we provide data only on those schools that had more than five high school graduates returning to a public college or university campus in Fall 1998. Because of this fact, your high school may not be listed in this report.

For the high schools that met the confidentiality criteria, an individualized report on their graduates' performance after one year of attendance at a public college or university campus will be mailed directly.

We have included a comments form at the back of the report and encourage you to send your comments about the report to the Board of Higher Education.

The *College-to-School Report* can be reached at the following website beginning March 6, 2000: <http://www.mass.edu/ir/index.htm>

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled taking 12 or more college credits are designated full-time.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELORS**

Effective for the fall of 2000, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will have new admissions standards for its four-year public institutions. This guide provides detailed information on frequently asked questions about admissions standards and equips guidance counselors with the knowledge needed to effectively counsel students about them.

The Implementation Guide for Guidance Counselors can be reached at the following website:  
<http://www.mass.edu/access/implementationGuide2000.pdf>

### **THE MORE YOU KNOW...THE FARTHER YOU'LL GO!**

New admissions standards for Massachusetts State Colleges and the University of Massachusetts went into effect for the Fall of 2000. This information brochure is designed to help students and parents learn about these standards, so that they can plan to meet them.

The New Admissions Standards Information Brochure can be reached at the following website: <http://www.mass.edu/access/theMoreYouKnow.html>

Please feel free to download, copy, and distribute all of the above information as widely as possible.



# Disney Learning Partnership

Welcome to Disney Learning Partnership, a philanthropic arm of The Walt Disney Company supporting creative teaching strategies and engaging approaches to learning. Please explore our site to learn more about creative classrooms and innovative learning models that promote student success.



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Promoting creativity in teaching.



Free resources for educators.



Funding and tools for teachers.

Bringing families and teachers together.



Schools making a difference.



Click on this image to view a short video clip about the work of Disney Learning Partnership and the many teachers we touch.

## highlights

Check out our Teacher Center! Free lesson plans, workshops and examples of outstanding student projects as well as advice from master teachers – they're all here along with a host of other resources.

Volume Two of The Creative Classroom Series, "The Power of the Creative Classroom," is now available. Do you want to learn more about how creative environments can empower students? [Request your free copy today.](#)

Calling all parents! Get information on what your child should be learning and how you can help. We have resources in both English and Spanish for parents of children at every age level in our [Teacher / Parent Connections area.](#)

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