



**David P. Driscoll**  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's Updates

### September 20, 2001

Dear Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives, and Principals:

### A Message About Safety

Since last week's devastating attacks, I have visited schools in several districts. What I have witnessed in most cases is an inspiring level of support and caring for students and for each other. I want to thank you and your staff for your hard work to reassure students that they will be kept safe in school and that respect for diversity, particularly towards our Muslim and Arab neighbors at this time, is not only expected, it is paramount. There is no room in our schools for disrespect and intolerance.

At <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news.asp>, I have posted a message from Governor Jane Swift on Hate Crimes along with an extensive list of trauma support resources. I urge you to review this critical information to assist you in taking continuing proactive measures to address our children's emotional needs. Public and private schools can get more information on the U.S. Department of Education web site at <http://www.ed.gov/>.

I want to also recommend an excellent resource for teachers, particularly history and social science teachers, to help students and educators gain a greater understanding of the historical, geographical, religious, political and economic issues that have led to this tragedy. The New York Times Company's digital division has collected selected articles from last week for teachers and students and has also included lesson plans. The link is located at [www.nytimes.com/learning/terrorism/](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/terrorism/).

### MCAS Item Analyses

I am aware that some school districts are missing a large number of responses to short answer and/or open response questions. Harcourt has identified the cause of the problem and will resolve it before any MCAS results are released. To assist in this matter, in addition to reporting other discrepancies, schools should report cases of missing data by identifying the school, grade level and subject in which there are large blocks of missing responses. It is not necessary to report the names of individual students in these cases.

### The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, supported by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, is accepting applications through the next two months for the 2002 Awards for Middle Level and High School Youth Volunteers. For information, go to [www.prudential.com](http://www.prudential.com), or [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org) or call 1-888-450-9961.

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Listed on our website at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu) are the following items:

1. *What Can Massachusetts Businesses Do For High School Students?*



2. Two MCAS Memos:

- a. MCAS Alternate Assessment - Required Subjects and Training for Administrators and

Educators



b. Policy on Grade 10 Retest Participation



3. Statewide Information Management System (SIMS) Training Dates and Locations



Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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# What Can Massachusetts Businesses Do For High School Students?

*a publication of the Massachusetts Department of Education*

Fall 2001

**Improve  
your  
company's  
productivity  
and bottom  
line**

**Increase your  
pool  
of qualified  
future  
workers**

**Develop  
high-skilled  
motivated  
workers**

**Gain and  
retain more  
loyal, and  
re-energized  
employees**



# Education Reform Is Workforce Development



*“When high school students enjoy meaningful connections of their classroom learning with the world of work, they often become more engaged in learning.”*

**David P. Driscoll**  
Commissioner  
of Education

**T**he **Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993** required, for the first time in state history, that students graduating from high school in the future would be required to meet two conditions:

- ◆ Satisfy all of the requirements of their local school district (especially coursework and attendance) and
- ◆ Pass state tests in core academic subjects.

MCAS was designed to be the state test for Massachusetts; and the Commissioner and Board of Education determined in 1998 that students in the Class of 2003 would need to pass two state Grade 10 MCAS tests – English and Math. These students are now juniors. Many need extra help to meet this standard.

**A study of 5,400 companies** shows that businesses which actively engage their local school system experience 50 percent less turnover among young workers (18 to 25 years old) than businesses that do not actively participate in their local school system.



A Massachusetts initiative has mobilized thousands of employers and schools to join efforts at unprecedented levels. The initiative provides business with a structure to participate in the education process.

# Turning the Workplace into a Learning Place

Providing information and experiences to attract, inspire and excite students to the careers of your field.



## Student benefits

- ◆ makes classroom work relevant to students
- ◆ allows them to make more informed decisions about their future
- ◆ motivates students by connecting class work with their lives
- ◆ provides students focus for college
- ◆ expects the student to know and do
- ◆ sets context for education
- ◆ requires teachers to understand the needs of business
- ◆ creates opportunities for students to apply academic principles
- ◆ focuses students on developing the competencies for success
- ◆ turns a young person's job into a learning experience
- ◆ provides supervisors with a tool for working with young employees



## Employer/employee benefits

Here are some of the values of a structured school mentoring program that has community mentors and tutors as part of it:

- ◆ there is academic gain to be made when a trained tutor assists students one-on-one or in a small group, under the guidance of a teacher;
- ◆ many of our at-risk students need adults in their lives, role models who build relationships that connect kids to school;
- ◆ successful adults in college or employed in local businesses show students the application of the academic material they are learning to the world of work and higher education;
- ◆ the more people from the community get into our schools, the more they will see how challenging is the work and how many wonderful efforts are being made to help students learn.



# 6 Actions

## What Can Employers Do?

When we look to communities to support students and schools, we are asking Massachusetts businesses large and small to consider six actions. These are:



- 1 expand teacher externship opportunities, and develop with the teachers structured mentoring programs for employer-based activities that complement class lessons;
- 2 expand summer of work and learning opportunities;
- 3 consider sponsoring school-based or work-based tutoring programs;
- 4 use the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan to structure the student's experiences at the workplace;
- 5 consider releasing a small percentage of employees weekly (perhaps 2 to 3 percent of staff at a site) to assist teachers as tutors in high schools one-half hour a week;
- 6 work cooperatively with the schools so that students who need after-school tutoring time are not required to begin their work day until their school commitments are fulfilled.



*“Structured work-based learning opportunities, connected to classroom teaching, help students acquire the necessary skills to compete in higher education and high performance workplaces.”*



### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

#### ✓ The Massachusetts School-to-Career Initiative

contact: The Massachusetts Department of Education • Office for School-to-Career Transition, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 • tel: 781.338-3902 • fax: 781.338-6759 • email: [kwestrich@doe.mass.edu](mailto:kwestrich@doe.mass.edu)

✓ **MCAS** visit [mcasinfo.com](http://mcasinfo.com)  
✓ **Tutoring and Mentoring Opportunities** visit [mcastutors.com](http://mcastutors.com)

**Kim McLaughlin**  
Deputy Director  
Department of Labor



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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### MCAS Alternate Assessment - Required Subjects and Training for Administrators and Educators

#### Memorandum

To: Superintendents and Leaders of Charter Schools, Principals, Directors of Charter Schools, Chapter 766 Approved-Private Schools, Institutional Schools, and Collaboratives

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: September 20, 2001

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the subjects that are required for the MCAS Alternate Assessment and to inform you of training sessions that will be held in October and early November for administrators and teachers. Please inform appropriate staff of the training sessions.

#### Required Subjects for the Alternate Assessment by Grade

Subjects required for the MCAS Alternate Assessment are consistent with the subjects required for the standard MCAS test. Students taking the MCAS Alternate Assessment will not be assessed in Science and Technology/Engineering at grade 10.

Grade	Subject
Grade 3	Reading
Grade 4	English Language Arts Mathematics
Grade 5	Science and Technology/Engineering History and Social Science
Grade 6	Mathematics
Grade 7	English Language Arts
Grade 8	Mathematics Science and Technology/Engineering History and Social Science
Grade 9	-----
Grade 10	English Language Arts Mathematics

#### Training on the MCAS Alternate Assessment

## **1) Training for Administrators**

Sessions will be tailored to principals, special education administrators, coordinators, and supervisors and provide a summary and update of the MCAS Alternate Assessment. Topics will include an overview of the administrator's roles and responsibilities, scoring and reporting, and a discussion of the kinds of support teachers may need. A registration form is available on the Department website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas). Dates and locations of each half-day session follow:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Tuesday October 9	Ferncroft Hotel Danvers	8:30 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday October 10	Sheraton Monarch Springfield	8:30 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday October 11	Wyndham Hotel Westboro	8:30 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Friday October 12	Holiday Inn Mansfield	8:30 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## **2) Training for Educators**

Training sessions will be tailored to teachers and related service providers and provide an update on the MCAS Alternate Assessment. Topics will include a review of procedures and requirements, revisions to the MCAS Alternate Assessment, instructions for organizing the portfolio, information on how portfolios were scored, and the availability of new curriculum resources. The 2002 Educator's Manual for MCAS Alternate Assessment will be distributed. Optional training on the "electronic portfolio" will be offered from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. during the first five days only. A registration form and directions are available on the Department website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas).

Sites and dates of the training sessions are listed below. All sessions will take place between **1:00 and 4:30 p.m.**

<b>Session #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Mon. October 15	Springfield Marriott
2	Tues. October 16	Crowne Plaza Natick
3	Wed. October 17	Sheraton Colonial Wakefield
4	Thurs. October 18	Holiday Inn Mansfield
5	Fri. October 19	Sheraton Hyannis Resort
6	Mon. October 22	Doubletree Hotel Lowell
7	Tues. October 23	Four Points Hotel Leominster
8	Wed. October 24	Sheraton Monarch Springfield
9	Thurs. October 25	Wyndham Westboro
10	Fri. October 26	Hilton Dedham
11	Mon. October 29	Doubletree Hotel Lowell

12	Tues. October 30	Four Points Hotel Leominster
13	Wed. October 31	Sturbridge Host Hotel
14	Thurs. November 1	Wyndham Hotel Westboro
15	Fri. November 2	Sheraton Hotel Plymouth

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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### Policy on Grade 10 Retest Participation

#### Memorandum

To: Superintendents and Leaders of Charter Schools, High School Principals, Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools, Institutional Schools, and Collaboratives

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: September 20, 2001

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with guidelines for participation in the December retest program and other related matters.

#### Students Eligible to Participate

Students eligible to participate in the December 2001 MCAS Grade 10 Retest Program include students in the class of 2003 who have not yet earned a minimum scaled score of 220 on the grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts and/or Mathematics test(s). This includes students in the class of 2003 who:

- transferred to your school from a private school or a school in another state or country and did not participate in the MCAS tests in spring 2001;
- did not participate in the grade 10 MCAS tests in spring 2001 for medical reasons
- did not participate in the grade 10 MCAS tests in spring 2001 because they were identified as LEP and were in United States schools for fewer than three years;
- participated in the grade 10 MCAS Alternate Assessment in 2001, did not score at the *Needs Improvement* or higher level on the English Language Arts and/or Mathematics test(s), and are now designated by their IEP or 504 Team to take the standard MCAS test(s).

#### A Student's Right to Participation

Students who failed one or both of the grade 10 MCAS tests required for graduation have the **right** to take the retest(s). The Education Reform Law states, "If a particular student's assessment results for the tenth grade do not demonstrate the required level of competency, the student shall have the right to participate in the assessment program the following year or years."

#### Notice to Students and Parents

Included in the shipment of 2001 MCAS test results, will be a letter addressed to the parents/guardians of students who took the grade 10 MCAS tests last spring. The letter will explain the state's new graduation requirements and a student's right to participate in the December retests if he or she did not receive a score of 220 or higher on the grade 10 English Language Arts and/or Mathematics test(s). Please include the letter in the mailing of grade 10 results to parents.

We also plan to send you a form that you *may* use to obtain the signature of any parent/guardian whose child is eligible to participate in the December retests, but chooses not to participate. I encourage you to keep signed forms on file in the event that there is any question about whether the student was given the opportunity to participate in the December retesting program.

## Other Test Participation Issues

- Students who failed both tests in the spring of 2001, but prefer to take only one retest in December, may do so.
- Eleventh graders who participated in the 2001 grade 10 MCAS tests in previous years and scored 220 or higher on the ELA and/or Mathematics test(s), *may* participate in the **spring 2002** tests. This optional testing opportunity is being provided for students who wish to improve their 2001 grade 10 MCAS scores for any number of reasons, including qualifying for a Certificate of Mastery. These students **may not** participate in the 2001 December Retest Program because those tests are not designed to measure and report student performance at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels. At this time, twelfth graders who scored 220 or higher on an MCAS exam may not retake that particular test.

## Shipment of Materials for the December Testing Program

The number of test booklets and other materials that will be shipped to schools for the December 2001 MCAS Retest Program will be based on the number of students in each school who did not pass the 2001 MCAS grade 10 tests in spring 2001. In the near future, the Department will send a form to schools requesting that they indicate the number of special versions of the test (i.e., large print, Braille, Spanish/English - Mathematics only) needed to administer the December retests. To learn more about the retest program, school-based teams should plan to attend a [test administration workshop](#) scheduled for November.

## 2001 MCAS Retest Program Schedule

The grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts and Mathematics retest administration is scheduled for December 10 - 14, 2001. Specific dates for each session are posted on the Department website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cal3.html>.

If you have any other questions about the 2001 December MCAS Retest Program, please call the Office of Student Assessment at (781) 338-3625. Thank you for working with the Department to implement the first administration of the December retesting program.

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## Fall Training for SIMS and Directory Administration

To: IMS Contacts  
From: Maureen Lovett  
Date: September 18, 2001  
Subject: SIMS Training October 3-11

Congratulations to all of you who have submitted your files for the 3rd transmission of the Massachusetts Data Collection System (MDCS). This has been the largest participation with 94% of the students being reported. That high percentage speaks to the effort and hard work exhibited by you and your staff.

Over the past few months, the Department has been reviewing the SIMS data and sending comparison information to districts displaying how the information would be reported when the respective smart forms are removed.

With the completion of the first year of SIMS data and the ISR and Foundation Enrollment comparisons, the Department will be offering SIMS training sessions throughout the state during the first two weeks of October. We encourage the attendance of any staff involved with data entry, data analysis, transmission of the 35 data elements, and SASID assignment to attend (SSR and MSR).

In addition, we will be going over Directory Administration. This application is the tool used to update information on schools and districts, personnel and contact information. It is also the application that districts use to set up district passwords for the security portal that is the access for all SIMS applications.

Each session will be 3 hours long, 1 hour for Directory Administration and 2 hours for SIMS with breaks included. Each site will have 2 training sessions during the day, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Staff need attend only one. The agenda follows:

### Training Agenda:

#### Directory Administration - first hour

- Functionality and Roles
- School Profiles
- How to add/edit/delete users
- Bulk Upload

## **Break SIMS**

Functionality  
Reporting & Enrollment Status  
SIMS Applications during school year  
MDCS Notes  
Review of unacceptable codes/data discrepancies

## **Q & A**

To attend the session, determine which training site is most convenient from the list below. Then contact Christine Teixeira at 781-338-3607 or email her at [cteixeira@doe.mass.edu](mailto:cteixeira@doe.mass.edu). When doing so please state the number of staff, which training session date & time, and which site they will be attending. Christine will confirm your reservation by sending you directions to the location.

## **Training Schedule**

October 2, 2001 Theodore Herberg Middle School, 501 Pomeroy Ave., Pittsfield  
October 3, 2001 Essex Agricultural School, 562 Maple St., Hathorne  
October 4, 2001 Bay Path Vocational School, 57 Old Muggett Hill, Charlton  
October 5, 2001 Lincoln School, Ballfield Rd., Lincoln  
October 9, 2001 Taunton High School, 50 Williams St., Taunton  
October 10, 2001 Barnstable High School, 744 West Main St., Barnstable  
October 11, 2001 Professional Development Center, Springfield

It is important that those attending bring their copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Data Standards Handbook Version 1.1, Published 2/14/00 (Complete 100 pages, PDF). If they do not have one then they may obtain it from the Department's web site: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/administrative/sims/DOEHandbook1\\_1.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/administrative/sims/DOEHandbook1_1.pdf).

People are encouraged to bring any questions or problems they have had during the last 3 transmissions regarding the applications or student reporting.

Once more, we would like to thank you for all your cooperation during the rollout of the SIMS project. As we enter a new school year of reliance on SIMS data, we would like to encourage you to participate in this very important training session.

Thank you for your continued assistance and effort.