



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

June 5, 2003

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives

In this update I have 6 announcements and 8 items.

Question 2: Questions and Answers

The second working draft of English Language Education in Public Schools will be posted the week of June 9th at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/. I hope that you will review it and send your comments to me.

Regional School District Budgets

Requests for 15-day extensions or 1/12 interim budgets should be submitted by the district superintendent to Associate Commissioner Jeff Wulfson (fax 781-338-6530).


New Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant Program

I am pleased to announce that Congress has appropriated funds for the Mathematics and Science Partnerships program authorized under the USDOE Title II Part B of NCLB. The Massachusetts Department of Education will receive \$1.6 million dollars and will award grants on a competitive basis to eligible mathematics and science partnerships. A partnership must include an engineering, mathematics, or science department of an institution of higher education and a local school district with high need. In addition to these required partners, the partnership may also include: another engineering, mathematics, science, or an institution of higher education that offers an educator preparation program; additional local school districts, public charter schools, public or private elementary schools or secondary schools, or a consortium of such schools; a business; or a non-profit or for-profit organization of demonstrated effectiveness in improving the quality and content knowledge of mathematics and science teachers. We are in the process of developing an RFP for this program and it will be posted on our web site by early July. If you have any questions about this new program, please contact Barbara Libby, 781-338-3460, or blibby@doe.mass.edu.

District Induction Program Reports

The October 1, 2001, Licensure Regulations established a requirement that districts need to report to us annually the following information about the district's induction program: program activities; number and complete list of beginning teachers who are served; number and complete list of trained mentors; number of classroom observations made by mentors; number of hours mentors and beginning teachers spend with each other; hiring and retention rates for beginning teachers; and participant satisfaction [603 CMR 7.12 (3)].

At this time, we are finalizing a consolidated data collection process that will enable you to manage all of the diverse reporting and data requirements that we request of you, so I am asking you to maintain your records on induction program activities and participants for future submission. Please be advised that your data on induction programs are important since the information serves to document that beginning teachers have met this licensure requirement.

For more information about the Standards for Induction Programs or the reporting requirements, please view our [Guidelines for Induction Programs](#) . For assistance, please contact Sarah Younkin at (781)

Title IIA (Fund Code 140) -- Request for Continued Use of FY03 Grant Funds









In response to numerous inquiries, the Department has clarified with the USDOE that while Title IIA does not include a specific carry-over provision as does Title I, Title IV and Title V, Title IIA currently does allow recipients to request the continued use of FY03 grant funds that were not fully expended by the end of the FY03 grant year. The Department encourages districts to use its Title IIA funding in the fiscal year in which it is appropriated. However, if after filing final financial expenditure report (FR1), you determine that you have Title IIA funds that were not expended, you may request that the unexpended funds be made available for use in FY04.

Districts that are interested in making this request first need to file their 'FR-1' final financial expenditure report with us. Reconciled with the city or town accountant, this report should indicate the amount of unexpended funds. Districts will be asked to attach a check for the unexpended amount. For access to those unexpended funds again, you will need to submit a grant amendment to Kristin LaMonica. The amendment should include an explanation as to why the funds were not expended during FY03 and how they will be incorporated into the new grant to meet the priorities listed in the Title IIA RFP. The request may be made for unexpended FY03 Title IIA funds in excess of \$1,000. Please contact Kristin LaMonica, 781-338-3237, or klamonica@doe.mass.edu for assistance.

Dads Make a Difference

Strong families contribute to student achievement. In particular, fathers serve an important role in their children's education. The Department of Education is again pleased to participate in an annual recognition of fathering and families, Dads Make a Difference. The event this year will be held on the Boston Common, on Sunday, June 15, from 1-5 p.m. Please join more than 9,000 families along with sponsors including State Street Bank for an afternoon of fun and celebration. For information, call 617-451-0049, or visit www.dadsmakeadifference.com.

We have 8 items in this update:

1. Grade 10 and Retest (On or About June 19)

2. Grade 3 MCAS Reading Test Results (On or About June 10)

3. Notice on Missing Students in SIMS

4. Memo to Superintendents on 2002-2003 Year End Statistical Collection

5. Memo to Principals on 2002-2003 Year End Statistical Collection

6. Announcement of Openings Still Available at Summer Content Institutes

7. Announcement of Paraprofessional Assessment: Call for Nominees for Standard Setting Panel

8. Virtual Education Space (VES) Newsletter


As you wind down the final days of school year 2003, I hope that you, your teachers and students continue the productive work of teaching and learning while at the same time looking forward to plans for the summer ahead.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Spring 2003 MCAS Grade 10 and Retest Multiple-Choice Results

On or about June 19, MCAS grade 10 and Retest multiple-choice results will be available on the Department's Security Portal at Drop Box Central in the MCAS 2003 Data folder for your district. The updated version of TestWiz will be available (www.testwiz.com) to assist in importing these data files and creating reports.

If you have any questions regarding these MCAS results, please contact Robert Lee in Student Assessment Services at (781) 338-3583.

Contact your district-level Directory Administrator to gain access to the Security Portal. The list of district-level Directory Administrators for each district is available on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/diradmin/list.asp. If you have any questions concerning access to the Security Portal, please contact Carolyn Faria at (781) 338-3667.

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Upcoming Release of 2003 MCAS Grade 3 Reading Test Results

To: Superintendents and Directors of Charter Schools, Educational Collaboratives, Approved Special Education Private Schools, and Institutional Schools

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: June 4, 2003

I am pleased to announce that the results of the 2003 MCAS *Grade 3 Reading Test* will be reported in two phases:

1. On or about June 10, districts will receive individual student and item level results.
2. In September, districts will receive aggregate school and district results.

June Reporting Schedule

On or about June 10, districts will receive individual student and item level results. Materials to be provided at that time include the following:

- *Parent/Guardian Reports*
- Student labels
- *School Test Item Analysis Reports*
- *School Test Item Analysis Report Summaries*
- *District Test Item Analysis Report Summary*
- Student Data CD
- *Guide to the MCAS Parents/Guardian Report: Grade 3 Reading Test*

September Reporting Schedule

In September, the *School Reports and District Reports* will be shipped to districts. These reports will include aggregate performance level and raw score results at the district and school levels and results for subgroups of students (e.g., race/ethnicity, free/reduced price lunch, Title 1). For the first time, these reports will include Proficiency Index scores, which are used in the School and District Accountability System to evaluate Adequate Yearly Progress.

The *Grade 3 Reading Test* contained two open-response items, which were included to introduce students to the task of answering open-response questions and provide additional feedback about student performance to districts and schools. While results for those questions will not be included in the computation of performance level results, they will be included with the September reports.

Also included in *School Reports and District Reports* will be the results for students who participated in MCAS through the Alternate Assessment. Alternate Assessment portfolios were submitted on May 9 and will be scored during the summer.

In September, the Department will post a database of student results on the Department's Security Portal for each district.

If you have questions about these reports, please contact Student Assessment Services at (781) 338-3625.



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Information Services

Missing Students in SIMS

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: June 5, 2003

This email/letter is being sent to bring your attention to students in grades 9-12 missing from your SIMS data. I sent you a similar email earlier this year to address the missing students from the class of 2003.

Department staff have been analyzing the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data that has been submitted by districts over the last two years. With SIMS we are able to track individual students from October 1, 2001 and thereafter. Approximately 900 students in grades 9-12 were reported as enrolled on October 1, 2001 but were not reported at the end of the 2001-02 school year. An additional 6,800 students were reported at the end of the 2002 school year but not reported on October 1, 2002. We feel it is important to account for these students before final graduation and dropout statistics are generated and reported. In the future, graduation rates will be an integral part of the accountability system.

There are a number of reasons why these students would be missing from the files. They may have transferred out of state or to a private school over the summer, or they may have been foreign exchange students. If they dropped out or graduated over the summer, they should have been reported as such in October.

We are providing to you a list of the students whose last known status was enrolled in your district in grades 9-12. The students in your file represent two groups, as described above: 1) students who were reported on October 1, 2001 but were not reported at the end of the year 2002 and 2) students who were reported at the end of the year 2002 but not reported on October 1, 2002. This list will be available on the Department's security portal (www4.doe.mass.edu) by June 3rd in an excel workbook. Your staff with the security role of MDCS will be able to access the file by selecting "Drop Box Central" and then "SIMS File Exchange". I am asking you to download the list, identify for each student the reason they are missing and upload the completed list by 5:00pm July 18th.

After that date, Department staff will begin compiling the dropout statistics for each district. If we do not receive the list from you by that date and time, we will need to assume that the missing students were dropouts. Prior to dropout rates being released to the public, we will notify you of your district's final dropout counts.

As we move forward with SIMS and as school districts improve the accuracy of student reporting, we hope to discontinue requests such as these. In the meantime, I appreciate your attention to this matter. I know you share my interest in reporting accurate and complete information.

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2002-2003 Year End Statistical Collection

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: June 6, 2003

The following year-end statistical reports and files are required this year.

Report/File	Level	Format
1. SIMS End of Year Transmission	Student	File
2. Special Education Exit Data Report	District	Web-based form
3. Special Education Discipline Report	District	Paper
4. Revised Year-End School Indicator Report	School	Web-based form
5. Safe and Drug-Free Schools Report	School	Paper
6. Student Exclusion Record	Incident	Web-based form

The web based forms, instructions and worksheets will be available the week of June 9th at the following link and are due by July 18, 2003.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/forms/>

All of the web-based forms must be submitted electronically. This is the final year that the information contained in the Special Education Exit Data Report and Year-End School Indicator Report will be collected in the aggregate. This information has been added to SIMS v2.0 and will be implemented in Fall 2003. For your convenience, sample worksheet and instructions are available on our website at the following link;

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/forms/>

The window for the SIMS End of Year transmission will be open from June 2 - July 11, 2003. We will be releasing a new SIMS edit application that will be available from July 11 - August 8. This application will provide districts the opportunity to correct student information in their end-of-year SIMS file. This information will be used to calculate the 2003 dropout statistics, attendance rates, grade retention statistics, and 2005 graduation rates. As always it is imperative that your district's SIMS files contain accurate information.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Report (SDFSCA)

The NCLB legislation has changed how the Department must collect the information contained in this report. The SDFSCA report is now required by each school in the state, not just those that receive Title IV money.

2003 - 2004 Educator Data Collection

Included in this mailing is a draft version of the 2003 - 2004 Educator Data Collection Form. This new electronic collection will replace the School System Summary Report and will collect data at the school and district level. The data collected allows the state to comply with certain NCLB reporting requirements. This paper draft is being

provided so that district staff can begin organizing and collecting the requested information. Technical assistance sessions will be offered in October to assist district staff in submitting this information in November.

Directory Administration

The Directory Administration application continues to be the Department's single source of district and school directory information. Last Fall this information was linked to a superintendent and principal mailing label system that is available on our website. We are expanding the list of functions to include: School Business Managers, Title I Directors, Special Education Directors, Educational Technology Directors and District SIMS Contacts. We are requesting that your district information for the above functions be updated by September 2nd. After this date this information will be included in the Department's mailing label system to be used internally by Department staff and to be made available to the public.

If you need assistance in completing any of the year-end statistical reports or files please contact Data Collection at (781) 338-3282.

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2002-2003 Year End Statistical Collection

To: Public School Principals
 From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
 Date: June 6, 2003

The following year-end statistical reports are required this year.

Report	Level	Format
- Revised Year-End School Indicator Report	School	Web-based form
- Student Exclusion Record	Incident	Web-based form
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools Report	School	Paper

The web based forms, instructions and worksheets will be available the week of June 9th at the following link and are due by July 18, 2003.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/forms/>

Revised Year-End School Indicator Report

This is the final year that we anticipate the collection of the Revised Year-End School Indicator Report. As the table below indicates, several data elements of the report are being replaced by the Student Information Management System (SIMS) files to be submitted by your district. In order to comply with NCLB requirements we have added a truancy table to the web based form and to SIMS v2.0.

Method of Collection

SIMS End-of Year Transmission	Spring 2003 Web based form	Fall 2003 SIMS v2.0
Retention data	In-school suspensions	In-school suspensions
	Out-of school suspensions	Out-of school suspensions
	Truancy	Truancy

Student Exclusion Record

This report has been available since the fall for completion as the incidence of student exclusions occurs. On June 11th the submit button will be available for your Superintendent to submit the form for your entire district. The reports for your school must be complete or you must indicate that your school does not have any exclusions so that the entire district can be submitted.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA)

Report

The NCLB legislation has changed how the Department must collect the information contained in this report. The SDFSCA report is now required by each school in the state not just those that receive Title IV money.

As with all reports submitted to the Department, it is imperative that your school's reports contain accurate information. If you need assistance in completing any of the year-end statistical reports please contact Data Collection at (781) 338-3282.

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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Spaces Still Available for 2003 Spring and Summer Content Institutes

Content Institutes are graduate level courses offered free to Massachusetts' teachers. Participants are eligible for over 60 PDP's and graduate credits are offered for an additional cost (often at a reduced fee).

Many of the courses still have spaces for additional participants. The following institutes still have available openings for registrations: Institute #s 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 17, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 38, 40, 41. These numbers refer to their coding in the Content Institute Brochure. Many of the institutes will use instructional technology, graphing calculators and online interactive software. Spaces are filling quickly, so act now! The brochure is located at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/cinstitute/03/brochure.pdf>

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Massachusetts Charter Schools

Announcement of Paraprofessional Assessment: Call for Nominees for Standard Setting Panel

May 20, 2003

Dear Colleague:

As you know, on January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. The law specifies new employment requirements for instructional paraprofessionals working in a Title I-funded targeted assistance and school-wide program. (See the Department's [Working Draft on Paraprofessional Requirements](#).) One of the mechanisms by which paraprofessionals can fulfill the requirements of NCLB is to take and pass a formal assessment measuring one's knowledge of and ability to assist classroom teachers in reading, writing and mathematics. The Massachusetts Department of Education is endorsing the Praxis ParaProAssessment developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the ACT WorkKeys as the state's formal assessments for paraprofessionals under NCLB. Paraprofessionals that take and pass either one of these tests will have met the requirement of NCLB.

The Massachusetts Department of Education will conduct two separate standard setting studies for the ParaPro Assessment and ACT WorkKeys. These studies will help set the "passing score" for both assessments. We are asking your assistance in nominating both paraprofessionals and teachers who supervise paraprofessionals to participate in these important studies. Each panel must consist of 20 participants. The Department will select each panel based on a review of the professional experience information requested on the enclosed Biographical Information Form to ensure that panelists meet the criteria specified by each assessment organization.

ParaPro Assessment

The standard setting study for the **ParaPro Assessment** will take place on **Tuesday, July 22, 2003** from **9:30-4:00** at the **Best Western Royal Conference Center in Marlborough, Massachusetts**. ETS will pay for travel, meals, and lodging for one night, if they wish to stay in Marlborough.

For this study, I am asking you to nominate paraprofessionals and teachers currently working in a **Title I Program** from the following groups:

- Paraprofessionals (instructional only) with a high school diploma or a GED;
- Paraprofessionals (instructional) with an Associate's degree or two years of college;
- Teachers who directly supervise (instructional) paraprofessionals in a Title I Program

Nominees must have **10 or less years of experience** as paraprofessionals/teachers. Please nominate paraprofessionals/teachers from elementary, middle, and high school levels.


ACT WorkKeys

The standard setting study for the **ACT WorkKeys** will take place on **Monday, June 23, 2003** from **10:00-3:00** at **Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, Massachusetts**.

For this study, I am asking you to nominate paraprofessionals from the following groups:

- Paraprofessionals (instructional only) with a high school diploma or a GED;
- Paraprofessionals (instructional) with an Associate's degree or two years of college;

The ACT WorkKeys standard setting study will also consist of a job shadowing/interview prior to the study session. Three paraprofessionals from the study group will be asked to participate in this process.

Enclosed is the [nomination form](#)  for both studies. Please complete one form for each paraprofessional or teacher who supervises paraprofessionals being nominated and forward the forms no later than **June 13, 2003** to:

Rebecca Holmes
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

Phone: (781) 338-3228
Fax: (781) 338-3220

Further information will follow for nominees selected for participation.

I hope that you will nominate paraprofessionals or teachers to participate in this important professional effort. I am grateful for your assistance.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Information Services

VES Newsletter

June 2003

Greetings from the VES Team at the Department of Education!

The Commonwealth's Virtual Education Space: a set of online tools and resources designed to support education reform and promote teaching and learning in a standards based context.

We are pleased to announce the first of our new series of quarterly newsletters, our status update to you, the technology decision-makers in the Commonwealth's school districts.

As you may know, last November VES had become part of the Department of Education and we are happy to report that we have made great strides with our colleagues here at the Department. The integration fosters the alignment of VES with the DOE's goals, maintains customer support and furthers overall system improvements. Many thanks to Maureen Chew and her team for such a warm welcome!

New "VES Introduction Wizard" Launched

Now, when teachers and students log in to VES, they are greeted with a short "Introduction Wizard" that guides them through an easy, step-by-step mini-tutorial describing some of the tools and resources that are available within VES.

We hope you find this latest improvement to VES valuable! If you have feedback about the Introduction Wizard, contact the VES Help Desk directly at 1-866-VES-MASS or veshelp@ves.mass.edu. As always, we do appreciate your feedback!

VES Training & Adoption Update

In mid-March, for the first time since the launch of VES, an information package was mailed to all Superintendents and Technology Directors in Massachusetts. The package included a letter of support from Commissioner Driscoll, a summary of VES tools and resources and announced regional VES Administrator training events through June.

Since then, well over 100 VES administrators have come out to weekly "Overview Sessions" and "Administrator Training Session" to learn how VES can support schools and districts. To view the training schedule and to find a location near you, please visit <http://ves.mass.edu/newsandevents1.html>.

VES/DOE and MarcoPolo Partnership

In an effort to expand teachers' access to lesson plans, primary resources and education web sites, VES has integrated Marco Polo content in the Quick Search tool. The Department of Education and the MarcoPolo Foundation have partnered to bring you these excellent resources and VES is pleased to help teachers find authoritative resources in an instant.

MCAS Tutorial Extended to ALL High School Students

The Department of Education's MCAS tutorial for high school students is available for the second year through VES. Many school districts asked us to pre-load the 9th grade class to VES, and we are proud to announce that now all high school students can access the tutorial through VES to help prepare for the MCAS exam!

Students can easily self-register for VES accounts by visiting <http://ves.mass.edu> and clicking the "Student Registration MCAS Tutorial" button. In addition to gaining access to the MCAS tutorial, each student is given a personal folder in the VHD to store and access homework and school work from school, home or the local library.

Back-end System and Development Improvements

Continuing our architectural improvements, the VES technical team has been working to increase system availability and reliability, and during the summer months will dramatically strengthen VES back-end systems to provide improved service to VES users.

Next Steps

We encourage you to read the [overview of VES tools](#) and to visit the [News and Events](#) page to see a list of the upcoming training sessions across the state.

In closing, we want to thank you for your support and remind you that the customer service team is available to answer any questions at 1-866-VES-MASS or veshelp@ves.mass.edu. Keep an eye out for our next issue in late August.

Happy Summer!
-- The VES Team