



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

February 24, 2004

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:


This update includes three announcements and six items located at www.doe.mass.edu.

TestWiz: Language Acquisition Scales (LAS) Reporting Update

TestWiz has been updated so that TestWiz reports more closely reflect the hard copy LAS reports received by districts. To download the latest version (8.9b) of TestWiz for LAS reporting, go to www.testwiz.com/las/index.html. LAS data will not have to be re-imported after installing the latest version, but you will be notified that the tests need to be re-scored. By allowing TestWiz to do the re-scoring, your reports will be adjusted automatically.

The updated version of TestWiz will allow you to import LAS data that you may not have previously imported. Please note that TestWiz has been programmed for the LAS tests administered in the spring of 2003. It has not been programmed for the fall 2003 LAS tests that were scored locally.


Department of Public Health Workshop on Mold Prevention in Schools

On Tuesday, March 16, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the Department of Public Health will be conducting a workshop for school employees entitled, "Mold Prevention and Remediation in Schools." For more information, please review this [flyer](#) .

MEFA Art Competition of Elementary School Students

With the support of the Department of Education, Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) Executive Director, Thomas Graf, announces an elementary school art competition for students in grades 3, 4 and 5. Entitled, "What Do I Want to Be When I Graduate from College?" the contest theme highlights careers after college. Students across the Commonwealth will be invited to submit one drawing or painting illustrating what they hope to be when they graduate from college. Winners will be announced in June and monetary prizes earmarked for college savings will be awarded to students with the top entries in each grade. Detailed information is being sent to school principals this week. For more information, go to www.mefa.org/contest or contact Deborah Raye at (800) 449-6332, ext. 4803. The artwork submission deadline is April 15.

In this update are six items:

1. Updates regarding the Spring 2004 testing of LEP students 
2. Opportunity for Local On-Site Licensure Renewal



3. [March 22 Technology and Policy Institute in Marlborough](#)



4. [Spring Technology Conferences: Agenda and Registration](#)



5. [MCAS Appeals: Memorandum on School Attendance](#)



6. [Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery](#)



I hope that you have had some opportunity to rest and relax during the February holiday break.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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School and District Accountability

Updates regarding the Spring 2004 testing of LEP students

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 24, 2004

Re: Updates regarding the Spring 2004 testing of LEP students

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide several important updates regarding the Spring 2004 assessment of LEP students, including English proficiency assessments scheduled for April. As you know, federal and state law now require the annual assessment of the English proficiency of all LEP students enrolled in public schools as well as those educated in private settings with public funds. Please share this important information with faculty responsible for coordinating English proficiency assessments.

Important Update on LEP Assessment Participation Requirements

As you may have learned, the U.S. Department of Education announced last week a new policy regarding the federal mandate for the assessment of LEP students. The Department's new policy does not affect requirements for student participation in English proficiency tests-all enrolled LEP students must participate in these tests as previously announced-but it does impact LEP participation requirements for MCAS.

LEP students in their first year of enrollment in U.S. public schools (i.e., students not enrolled prior to the 2003-04 school year), now have the option of taking the Grade 3 Reading and English language arts tests (grades 4, 7 and 10). All LEP students, without exception, are required to participate in MCAS Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering tests scheduled for their grade, regardless of the number of years they have been enrolled in the U.S. LEP students who are in their second year of enrollment or beyond (i.e., enrolled in U.S. schools in 2002-03 or before) must participate in all MCAS testing, including the Grade 3 Reading and English language arts tests (grades 4, 7 and 10).

A revised version of the [Requirements for the Participation of Students with Limited English Proficiency in State-Mandated Assessments: Spring 2004 Update](#) will be available next week.

English Proficiency Tests Required for LEP Students: Spring 2004

The table below summarizes the English proficiency assessments that will be administered to LEP students in April 2004.

English Proficiency Assessments Required for LEP Students: Spring 2004			
LEP Students Required to be Tested	English Proficiency Assessment	Number and Length of Test Sessions	Test Administration Window
Grades K-12	Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) (to be administered only by Qualified MELA-O Administrators and Trainers (QMAs and QMTs))	N/A (classroom observations)	April 1-30, 2004

Grades 3-12	Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) Question Tryout	Reading = one 45 minute session Writing = one 45 minute session	April 12-16, 2004
Grades 3-12	Language Assessment Scales Reading/Writing (LAS R/W)	Reading = one 45 minute session Writing = one 45 minute session	April 26-30, 2004

Plans to Ship EPA materials to Schools for April Testing

Materials required for MEPA Question Tryout and the LAS R/W administration will be shipped to schools based upon LEP enrollment data submitted to SIMS in October 2003, plus a 15% overage. The table below shows the dates that shipments are due to arrive in schools. If schools do not receive an adequate supply of materials by the dates shown below, principals should immediately contact the appropriate Service Center to ensure an adequate supply of materials in time for test administration. In order to anticipate where materials will be needed, principals are asked to immediately call the Service Centers below if one or more LEP students have been enrolled in a grade that had no enrolled LEP students prior to October 2003.

Resource Information Related to Administration of English Proficiency Assessments

- **MELA-O**

As you know, the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) is the instrument required for the assessment of listening and speaking skills in English for LEP students in grades K-12. The MELA-O is administered based on classroom observations, which are to be conducted in April 2004.

Since the MELA-O **must only** be administered by a Qualified MELA-O Administrator or Trainer, the Department provided additional trainings this winter to ensure that local districts have the necessary capacity to administer the MELA-O to all enrolled LEP students this April. A list of educators qualified to administer the MELA-O and a list of educators qualified to both administer the MELA-O and to train other educators to do so, will be available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas (under MCAS Headlines), beginning March 1, 2004.

- **Spring 2004 MCAS Workshops**

Information on the participation of LEP students in the MCAS and English proficiency assessments will be presented at the spring MCAS workshops, to be held March 8-16. We encourage principals and coordinators of English proficiency assessments to attend; information on registering is posted on the Department's website at (www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2004/news/0130workshops.html).

If you should need further assistance, please contact the Department's Student Assessment Services Unit at (781) 338-3625. Thank you and best wishes with the upcoming spring 2004 assessments.

Spring 2004 English Proficiency Test Materials		
Test Materials to be Shipped	When Materials will arrive in Schools	Service Center Numbers to Call to Request Additional Materials
MEPA Question Tryout	By April 1	1-866-812-6433
LAS R/W	By April 8	1-888-630-1102
MELA-O	Qualified MELA-O Administrators and Trainers (QMAs and QMTs) are in possession of all necessary materials	Not applicable

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NEWS SEARCH

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Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



Friday, February 20, 2004

On-Site Support for License Renewal

To: District Superintendents, School Principals, Human Resource Directors and MTA/MFT

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education


Date: February 20, 2004

June 17th of this year holds great significance for the majority of our veteran educators and school districts. Approximately 80,000 Massachusetts pre-K to 12 educators are required by law to renew their licenses by this date. Some good news is that almost 15,000 educators have already renewed their Professional level license thanks to an easy to use online application and an "early incentive" to do so. Another viable option is for educators to come to Malden and renew their professional level license(s) at a renewal lab session (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/registration.asp>). In the lab session, a knowledgeable staff person aids the educator through the simple six-step online application.

While the steps taken above will make the license renewal process simple for many educators, the Department recognizes that it may not be enough. We are pleased to announce that additional training and support will take place for educators throughout the Commonwealth. If you are interested in becoming a "Master Trainer" please visit:

http://www.comm-pass.com/Comm-PASS/Scripts/xdoc_view.idc?doc_id=015921.

Master Trainers will be trained by staff in the Office of Educator Licensure and will conduct renewal workshops throughout Massachusetts. Educators who may be uncomfortable completing the renewal online are encouraged to attend. This option will allow your staff member to renew online and to learn the skills and knowledge to assist colleagues with their applications online.

For this process to be successful we need your assistance. If you have an interest in hosting a workshop and you have a computer room/lab that can comfortably accommodate at least 20 people, please complete the [attached form](#) , which may be submitted by mail to Jean Anthony, Department of Education, Office of Educator Licensure, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, by e-mail to janthony@doe.mass.edu or by fax at 781-338-3391.

Please note that completing the online license renewal application leads to an almost instant granting of a new license valid five years from the date of expiration (new expiration date of June 17, 2009 for most educators). Applications and payments received via the mail may experience a delay due to volume and processing time.

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SCHOOL DISTRICT PROVIDED SUPPORT

District Accessibility to a Computer Lab(s) with a minimum of 20 Computers

Thank you for expressing interest in hosting a license renewal computer lab. If your school is selected as a site for a training the Department will be in contact with you.

Please enter the names of schools in your district that can provide access to computer labs consisting of a minimum of 20 computers. Trainings will assist educators within your district and neighboring districts to renew their licenses online.

(make additional copies if necessary)

School District: <hr/>
Name of School: <hr/>
Address: <hr/> <hr/>
Contact Person: <hr/>
Phone#: <hr/>
E-mail address: <hr/>
Capacity of Computer Lab: <hr/>

Forms should be completed and returned by March 5th to:

Jean Anthony
Department of Education
Office of Educator Licensure
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

Or via e-mail at: Janthony@doe.mass.edu



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Educational Technology

Massachusetts Policy & Technology Institute

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel
 Marlborough, MA
 March 22, 2004

The Massachusetts Department of Education in coordination with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), and Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD) and the Center for Digital Education are currently working on this year's Institute.

This year, we are delighted to have Deputy Commissioner, Mark McQuillan, Massachusetts Department of Education open the Institute.

To register for the event please go to <http://www.centerdigitaled.com/events/conference.phtml?confid=178>.

We encourage the participation of superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, and technology directors.

Agenda

8:30 am Registration	
9:15 am Welcome	Marina Leight, The Center for Digital Education
9:20 am Opening Remarks	Mark McQuillan, Deputy Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Education
9:45 am Data, Data, Data!	<p>An executive summary of the data needs assessment conducted by the University of Massachusetts for the Department of Education. This presentation will include a conversation for school districts about strategies for data collection, analysis and reporting.</p> <p><i>Maureen Chew, Chief Information Officer, MA Department of Education</i> <i>Paula O'Sullivan, Information Services Director, MA Department of Education</i></p>
10:45 am Break	

<p>11:15 am Learning Management Systems: What are the benefits for schools and districts?</p>	<p>An exciting update about content, standards and improving the classroom experience for everyone.</p> <p>This session will announce and highlight the exciting partnership between non-profit JES & Co, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and Intel. This will be a demonstration session about what new content tools are now available and how they can be used in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Terry Smithson, Intel Americas Education Marketing Manger</i> <i>Diny Golder, Executive Director, Founder, JES & Co.</i> <i>Jeff St. Germain, VES Manager, MA Department of Education</i> <i>Mathew Maennling, VES Professional Development Manager, MA Department of Education</i></p>
<p>12:15 pm Lunch</p>	
<p>1:15 pm The National Education Technology Plan</p>	<p>The U.S. Department of Education has been working on the national education technology plan tentatively scheduled for release at the end of June. The department will share the thought process and information gathering projects to date on the plan as well as solicit feedback from Massachusetts.</p> <p><i>Susan Patrick, Acting Director, Office of Education Technology, United States Department of Education (invited)</i></p>
<p>2:00 pm Break</p>	
<p>2:15 pm Centralized Online Systems</p>	<p>Information to think about when considering the cost effectiveness, efficiency and the impact on learning and teaching with centralized technology solutions.</p> <p><i>Moderated by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS)</i></p>
<p>3:00 pm Adjourn</p>	

"Many days I work and work. Sometimes wondering what my peers across the state or even the nation are doing. How do I stack up? What are they doing/thinking? What long-range plans are they formulating? The Massachusetts Policy & Technology Institute provided me several answers to my questions. I was able to have extensive conversations with my peers, DOE officials, and national resources. I enjoyed the day and the speakers' insights. I welcome future engagements to further experiences and opportunities."

-Derek Dufresne, Technology Director, Town of Lunenburg, Mass.

"As this was the first event for us in Massachusetts and the Center, we were not sure what to expect. With only one notice we had an overflow crowd. Many who came expressed their strong desire to learn more about the whole area of data collection and technology policy resulting from new demands particularly from the U.S. Department of Education. This turned out to be a 'happening' and underscored the dilemma that even though there are dwindling budgets, the demand for more and better data is increasing and it generally falls to one person in most districts to try and sort it all out. This conference gave them a chance to express their concerns, learn a lot, and interact with others in the same predicament."

-David P. Driscoll, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Education



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Educational Technology

Conferences and Workshops Sponsored by DOE

The three Enhancing Education Through Technology conferences will focus on how technology supports the goals of No Child Left Behind. Presentations by Massachusetts technology grants recipients will give attendees an opportunity to:

- **Find out** how technology can help ALL students reach high standards in ELA, math, science, and other curriculum areas.
- **Discover** how districts are using online learning to increase access to courses.
- **Learn** about the new tools available on VES, the Department's free web portal.
- **Obtain** information about technology grants for 2004.

For more information about the funded technology projects that will be presented at each conference, select one of the agendas below.

Date/Time	Location	Agenda
Thursday, April 1, 2004, 1:00-5:30 p.m.	Northampton	
Thursday, April 8, 2004, 1:00-5:30 p.m.	Worcester	
Wednesday, April 14, 2004, 1:00-5:30 p.m.	Randolph	

Schedule:

- 1:00-1:30 Welcoming Remarks
- 1:30-2:00 Exhibits by Grants Recipients
- 2:15-3:00
 - Panel Discussions
 - VES Demonstration
- 3:15-3:45 Exhibits by Grants Recipients
- 4:00-4:45
 - Panel Discussions (repeated)
 - VES Demonstration
- 5:00-5:30 Information about technology grants for 2004; distribution of certificates of attendance

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School and District Accountability

Attendance Policies and MCAS Performance Appeals

To: Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives, Secondary School Principals and Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 24, 2004

Re: Attendance Policies and MCAS Performance Appeals

Regulations that govern MCAS Performance Appeals (603 CMR 30.05) state that "[students must have] maintained at least a 95% attendance level (no more than nine days of absence from school in a 180-day school year) during the school year prior to and the year of the appeal, provided that the superintendent may present evidence of circumstances such as a student's disability or serious illness that would justify an exemption from this requirement."

Regarding this requirement, I posted the following notice in September of 2003 at www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals:

"School year 2004 (beginning in September 2003) is the last year that districts may use local attendance policies when filing MCAS appeals. Beginning in September 2004, to qualify for the appeals process, students must meet the attendance rate established by the Board of Education. You are urged to notify juniors, students in the Class of 2005, that they must meet the state attendance rate of 95% to be considered for an MCAS performance or portfolio appeal."

I strongly encourage you to notify or remind students and parents about the 95% attendance standard that is required for MCAS performance appeals. Starting in September 2004, I plan to waive the 95% requirement **only** for students with circumstances such as a disability or serious illness. If the attendance requirement in your school district is lower than 95% and the student meets the local standard, that will no longer be grounds for a waiver, and the student will be ineligible for an MCAS performance appeal.

I encourage all school officials to review their local attendance requirement for students and raise the standard to 95% if the local policy currently sets a lower acceptable rate. In any event, please be sure to inform your students - particularly those who are juniors this year - that their attendance matters, most importantly for their own education but also for their eligibility for an MCAS performance appeal.



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Awards & Scholarships

The 2003-2004 Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Award

To: Superintendents, High School Principals, Charter School Directors, Collaborative Directors, Directors of Approved Private Special Education Schools, and Guidance Counselors

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Re: Stanley Z. Koplik Certificates of Mastery, Tuition Waivers, and the Adams Scholarships

Date: February 20, 2004

I wish to thank guidance counselors for helping high school students succeed academically and apply for the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Award, which recognizes academic achievement. **The Board of Higher Education has advised us that graduating seniors who receive this award will be eligible for a tuition waiver at Massachusetts public universities, state colleges and community colleges.** This waiver does not apply to fees, private institutions of higher education in or out of state, or to any reciprocal academic programs between Massachusetts public colleges and universities and out of state institutions of higher education.

A college or university student must maintain a GPA of 3.3 each semester for continued eligibility of the waiver for up to eight semesters. Each school sets its own fees and other expenses, and has its own GPA regulations and billing procedures. If you have questions, please contact the individual colleges and universities and not the Massachusetts Department of Education or the Board of Higher Education.

In the fall of 2003 the Department mailed information on the Koplik Awards to the heads of guidance at all public high schools and asked the school to identify one counselor to oversee the application process for the Koplik Awards. Approximately half of our schools had responded to this request by late January. If your high school has not yet designated a guidance counselor for this purpose, please contact Richard Salus, rsalus@doe.mass.edu, or 781-338-6252.

Finally, as you may know, Governor Romney has included in his House 1 budget proposal for FY05 the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Program, to be administered by the Board of Higher Education. The Legislature will take action on the FY05 budget later this year. We will notify you when there is more information about the proposed scholarship program. In the meantime, I encourage guidance counselors to inform students and parents about the Koplik Awards and the opportunity to pursue higher education at a public institution in Massachusetts.

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