



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

March 22, 2004

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

I have three announcements and four items listed in this Update:

NCLB Report Cards

As many of you know, April 1 was originally to have been the Department's target date for releasing its NCLB Report Card. Last week our information systems went down, making it impossible for districts to access their secure portals to work on the release of their report cards. As a result, we are now targeting April 12 as the date for public release of Report Cards. Districts are still given the discretion of when best to make this information available to parents, but for the purposes of offering a coordinated beginning of this process, April 12 is the date we have planned.

I hope that you will use this extra time to your advantage. To assist you in your planning, finally, I am also attaching two sample documents that may help your principals when communicating with parents. Both documents have been updated to reflect the new features of the Cycle III accountability system, and both are in the process of being translated into multiple languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, and Haitian Creole). These translated documents will be posted to the web next week.



[Sample Parent Letter](#)



[Questions Parents Frequently Ask About District Report Cards](#)

MCAS Performance Appeals

I wanted to provide you with some additional guidance on filing MCAS performance appeals. Please go to <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/default.html?section=news&flag=true> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/news04/0317reminder.html> for important filing information.

I also want to remind you about the student attendance policy that will be in effect beginning with students in the Class of 2005. Appeals will be granted only to students who meet the 95% attendance policy adopted by the Board of Education. I will continue to use my authority to waive the attendance requirement and any of the other three eligibility criteria; three-test minimum participation, minimum test score of 216, and MCAS tutoring participation, for extenuating circumstances.

Please share these announcements with staff members who prepare MCAS performance appeals for your students, and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Irlen/Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome

I have been asked to inform you about Irlen/Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, a sensitivity to light,

particularly fluorescent light, that can interfere with reading and written language. According to the Irlen Institute, research shows that it can lower test scores and impact a person's ability to function in school and work situations. Traditional means of diagnosing this syndrome are not successful but the Irlen Institute can diagnose and treat this syndrome using specific colored overlays. I have included details on the [Irlen Screening Program](#).

Here are four items posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. Recruitment of New MCAS Assessment Development Committees



2. Character Education Professional Development Opportunity



3. Division of Occupational Safety (DOS) Work Permit Forms for Youths Under Age 18



4. Applications for the 2004 Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards



All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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 - 1-866-MCAS220



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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Recruitment for New MCAS Assessment Development Committees

To: Superintendents, Principals, and Other Educational Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: March 19, 2004

The Department of Education is seeking classroom teachers, school and district administrators, and other educational leaders to serve as members of the MCAS Assessment Development Committees for the new assessments required by the federal [No Child Left Behind](#) law. The six new tests that will be developed are: ELA Grades 5, 6, and 8, and Mathematics Grades 3, 5, and 7. These tests will be field tested in the spring of 2005 and will become operational in 2006.

Members of the MCAS Assessment Development Committees are directly involved in developing MCAS test questions. We are looking for members with content expertise, familiarity with the Massachusetts [Curriculum Frameworks](#), and experience teaching students at the grade level to be tested. This is a professional development opportunity for educators who are interested in learning about large-scale, standards-based assessment and in contributing to the development of MCAS tests. I hope that you will share this information with members of your faculty.

For the 2004 development cycle, these committees will be six members each. Next year six new members will be recruited to each committee. The meeting schedule through August 2004 for the committees is shown below.

ADC Meeting Schedule through Summer 2004

Committee	Orientation	Spring	Summer
ELA 5	May 14	Wed. May 19-Thur. May 20	Mon. Aug. 2-Wed. Aug. 4
ELA 6	May 14	Tues. May 25 -Wed. May 26	Wed. July 21-Fri. July 23
ELA 8	May 14	Thur. May 27- Fri. May 28	Wed. July 28-Fri. July 30
Math 3	May 14	Tues. May 18	Mon. July 26-Tues. July 27
Math 5	May 14	Thur. May 20	Wed. July 28-Thur. July 29
Math 7	May 14	Fri. May 21	Mon. Aug. 16-Tues. Aug.17

The application process is described below. **The application deadline is Monday, April 12, 2004.**

Committee Members' Responsibilities

Assessment Development Committee members assist the Department of Education in the development of MCAS items and scoring guides. Responsibilities include reviewing MCAS items and other related materials for:

- alignment to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework and MCAS performance standards,
- developmental appropriateness,
- instructional worthiness.


Committee members are charged with reviewing all questions prior to field testing and making suggestions for refinements. Members also review the items after field testing when they are accompanied by actual test item performance data. In addition, ELA committee members review prospective reading passages and make recommendations regarding their use on future MCAS tests.

A criterion for selection is current employment by a Massachusetts public school or by a private school serving students served by public funds.

Reimbursement of Expenses


Transportation costs are reimbursed for all members and lodging is provided to members who live 70 or more miles away from the meeting site. For summer meetings, an honorarium of \$100 per meeting day will be paid to members

Application Procedure

[Applications](#)  must include the following three components:

1. **Current résumé** (including course syllabi if available)
2. **Statement of interest**
Brief statement (1-2 pages) that explains why the applicant wishes to serve and describes particular training and experience that will allow the applicant to contribute as an MCAS ADC member.
3. **Completed application form with Superintendent's signature of support.**

Upon selection, successful applicants will be asked to confirm their availability for all meetings announced herein. In calendar year 2004 the total commitment for ELA committees is eight days, including the orientation meeting on May 14, and three days this summer. The total commitment for Mathematics committees is seven days, including the orientation meeting on May 14, and two days in the summer. Appointments cover the period from the present through October of 2005.

The deadline for receipt of [applications](#)  by the Department of Education is **Monday, April 12, 2004**. Please see the attached application for further directions. Notification of acceptance will be sent by April 30, 2004.

If you have any questions, please call:
Jennifer O'Toole, ELA Lead 781-338-3263
Marcia Kastner, Mathematics Lead 781-338-3611

Thank you for your interest.

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**MCAS ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER APPLICATION:
English/Language Arts, Grades 5, 6, 8
Mathematics, Grades 3, 5, 7
Spring 2004**

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____

Current Position/Employer _____

Home Address (Street) _____

(City/Town) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

School Name _____ District Name _____

School Address (Street) _____

(City/Town) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

School Phone (_____) _____ School Fax (_____) _____

Years of teaching experience _____

Course(s) you now teach _____

Indicate the committee(s) to which you wish to apply: (please check all that apply)

- ELA, Grade 5
- ELA, Grade 6
- ELA, Grade 8

- Mathematics, Grade 3
- Mathematics, Grade 5
- Mathematics, Grade 7

Do you have any experience teaching students who have disabilities? If yes, please explain.

Do you have any experience teaching limited English proficient students? If yes, please explain.

Superintendent's Recommendation
I support the application of _____ to serve on the _____ MCAS Assessment Development Committee
Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____

Please note that this completed form must be accompanied by:

- A **current** résumé, and
- A **statement of interest** explaining why you wish to serve as a member of the MCAS Assessment Development Committee and describing any particular training and experience you have that will enable you to make a positive contribution to the committee's work.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the answers given here are true and complete, and that I am committed to attending ADC meetings as per the schedule provided.

Applicant Signature

Date

Please return this MCAS ADC application by mail or fax no later than **5:00 p.m. April 12, 2004** to:

MCAS ADC Grade Applications Student Assessment Services Unit Massachusetts Department of Education 350 Main Street	Phone: (781) 338-3625 Fax: (781) 338-3630
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Malden, MA 02148	
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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Character Education Professional Development Opportunity

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


From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: March 20, 2004

In recent years, character education, a feature of the No Child Left Behind Act, has come to the fore of our national agenda. Recognizing its importance, schools are seeking high quality resources and professional development for their faculty and staff. Toward this end, the Department and its partners in a federal character education grant offer your school an exciting opportunity for professional development during the 2004-2005 school year.

For the past three years, a federal character education grant has funded a partnership consisting of the Massachusetts Department of Education, Boston's Brighton High School, the Amherst and Ware Public School Districts, the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC) at Boston University, and the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. In the course of this grant, the partners have developed two models: (a) character education/service learning programs; and (b) character education/school-to career programs. The grant partners have learned that these programs have a significant, positive impact on both academic achievement and school climate and now wish to disseminate these initiatives to a broader audience.

Consequently, the members of the partnership will offer to schools at no cost full-day professional development sessions for faculty and parents. During these interactive workshops participants will learn from elementary, middle school, and/or high school administrators, teachers, and students about the approaches to character education they practice.

I have included a [brochure](#)  that explains more about the program's content and how to apply for a character education presentation in your school. The deadline for submission of applications is April 30, 2004. All schools that apply to receive the character education professional development day will be notified if they have been selected by June 1, 2004. I hope that the character education partnership can help further your community's character education efforts and look forward to working together toward common goals.

If you have any questions, please contact Richard Salus at 781.338.6252 or by e-mail at rsalus@doe.mass.edu.

publications include several books on adolescent development and service learning, as well as numerous journal articles focusing on prevention, collaboration across professions, and relationships of adolescents with caring adults. Dr. Kenny is the co-author of *Tools for Tomorrow*.

Robert Kumin

Since 1999, Robert Kumin has served as the Director of Community Service Learning and Character Education programs for the Hampshire Educational Collaborative in Northampton, MA. From 2001 to 2003, he was the Project Director for an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service to increase the involvement of students with disabilities in service learning. He has trained hundreds of teachers and administrators in service learning and character education in Western Massachusetts school districts, local conferences, and at five national conferences. Prior to his work at the Collaborative, Mr. Kumin was the principal of a middle school in Turners Falls, MA and of a K-8 school in Westmoreland, NH. He has also worked as an educational consultant, a middle school and community college English teacher, and director of educational projects for a Boston theater company. He has a C.A.G.S. in humanistic education and a Masters in Education from Boston University.

Bernice Lerner

Dr. Bernice Lerner is Acting Director at the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University. Dr. Lerner has worked with teachers from urban, rural, and suburban schools in several states. In addition to teaching courses on the Holocaust and character and ethics education, Dr. Lerner has given numerous presentations at conferences. Her recent book, *The Triumph of Wounded Souls* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2004) is a study of seven Holocaust survivors' lives.

Leonard J. Lubinsky

Leonard J. Lubinsky is President of Educator Coach & Consult, Inc. He is responsible for overseeing the Hampshire Educational Collaborative's teacher and administrator licensure program, supporting monitoring by the Massachusetts Department of Education's Early Learning Services office, and strengthening its

Community Partnership for Children Program. In addition, he provides coaching support to leaders of educational and nonprofit institutions. Mr. Lubinsky served as Superintendent of Schools for the Erving School Union #28 from 1974 to 1999 and as Executive Director and Senior Consultant to the Northeast Foundation for Children from 1999 to 2001. His professional and community leadership responsibilities have included service as President of the Connecticut Valley Superintendents' Roundtable and Chair of the Massachusetts Board of Education's Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Mary H. McCarthy

Mary Hansberry McCarthy is the Director of Service Learning and Character Education in the Hudson, MA Public School District, recognized as a district in the National Schools of Character Program by the Character Education Partnership. She works with Hudson's six schools, which are all models of service learning: Hudson High School and JFK Middle School are both National Service Learning Leader Schools and the four elementary schools are Massachusetts Service Learning Leader Schools. Hudson High School is also one of eleven First Amendment Schools through the First Amendment Center and the ASCD. She also coordinates local, state, and federal grants for character education and service learning. She has published articles in *Principal* magazine and in the University of Toronto's *Orbit* magazine and served as an advisor for the Character Education Partnership's *Eleven Principles Sourcebook: How To Achieve Quality Character Education in K-12 Schools* by Kathy Beland, Series Editor.

"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

Theodore Roosevelt

Learning the importance of maintaining a strong sense of values and principles is one of life's greatest lessons.

The Character Education Pilot Project



The Massachusetts Department of Education is proud to offer the **Character Education Pilot Project** professional development workshops presented by six accomplished educators. These workshops stress the importance of instilling values and principles in our young people by teaching community service, mutual respect, and promoting good character and integrity.

Please apply for this opportunity to have a Character Education Pilot Project workshop presented at your school for your faculty and parents.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

Introduction

The Character Education Pilot Project is a partnership of three school districts (Boston, Amherst, and Ware), Boston College, Boston University, The Hampshire



Educational Collaborative, and the Massachusetts Department of Education. It is in the fourth year of a five-year grant cycle. In the course of this project, the grant partners have developed and implemented character education programs serving the needs of their schools and communities. Because the school districts in the Character Education Pilot Project represent a cross-section of urban, suburban, and rural school districts, the Character Education programs serve diverse student, school, and community needs.

The fifth year of the grant requires that the Character Education programs that were developed in the three districts be disseminated to school districts across the state. This professional development opportunity is designed as a means of fulfilling that objective.

Professional Development

Character Education Pilot Project members will present professional development workshops across the state during 2004-05 school year at no cost to the schools selected to participate.

**Submit your completed application
by April 30, 2004 to:**

Richard Salus

Character Education Coordinator
Massachusetts Dept. of Education
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148

If you are interested in applying for a **Character Education Workshop** in your school, please answer the questions below in no more than two pages. Two copies of this application are due at the Department of Education by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 30, 2004. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Salus at 781-338-6252, or rsalus@doe.mass.edu

Application

1. School name and address
2. Grade levels
3. Contact person
4. Contact telephone number and email.
5. What topics has your school staff identified to be addressed in a character education workshop? Choose 1 to 3 of the following:
 - a. promoting academic achievement;
 - b. combatting bullying;
 - c. promoting social responsibility, tolerance, respect, and honesty;
 - d. linking literature and character education;
 - e. improving school climate and culture;
 - f. making life choices;
 - g. implementing *Tools for Tomorrow*, a program designed to help high school students internalize the connection between school and work.
 - h. other, please specify.
7. Explain why the topics in character education you selected are important to your school and how they align with your school's professional development plan.
8. Identify the number of participants.
9. Describe your plans for involving a broad group of participants (school council members, parents, school administrators, and classroom teachers).
10. List three to five dates in the 2004-05 school year when the full-day workshop can be held. Include a letter of support from the school principal.



Presenters

David Blustein

Dr. David L. Blustein is a Professor in the Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology at the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Professor Blustein received a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1985. He has been the Associate Editor of *The Counseling Psychologist* and currently serves on numerous other editorial boards. Professor Blustein has published over 65 journal articles and book chapters in career development, work-based transitions, the exploration process, the interface between work and interpersonal functioning, and the psychology of working. He is currently writing a book about the psychology of working to be published by Erlbaum Associates. In addition, Professor Blustein has consulted with state and national government agencies on issues pertaining to career development and the school-to-work transition process, and is the co-author of *Tools for Tomorrow*.

Maureen Kenny

Dr. Maureen Kenny is Associate Professor, Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Dr. Kenny's current work emphasizes the development of interventions that promote positive academic and psychosocial development among adolescents. Dr. Kenny's

[District/School Administration](#) > [Information Services](#) >

Department of Education's Security Portal Provides Access to Division of Occupational Safety (DOS) Forms

The DOE in cooperation with the Division of Occupational Safety (DOS) is now providing access to four work permit forms required for youths under 18 years of age.

In the past, work permits and related forms were obtained by Superintendents, or their designees, from the Division of Apprenticeship Training, and most recently, from the Division of Occupational Safety (DOS). Schools and Districts can now download these forms directly from the [DOE Security Portal](#), (listed as "Div. Occupational Safety Forms") rather than requesting them by mail. The "[Directory Administrator](#)" security role is required to download the forms.

Any questions about this new process can be directed to Lisa Price, Legal Counsel, DOS, at (617) 727-3452, ext. 108.

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NEWS SEARCH

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Monday, March 22, 2004

2004 Mass Literacy Champions Awards

The Massachusetts Literacy Foundation is pleased to announce the 2004 Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards Program in recognition of excellence in the field of literacy. Literacy Champions are eligible to receive \$3,500 in grants to be used for program and professional development. The deadline is April 16, 2004. For an application and more information, visit: www.massliteracy.org

[Flyer](#) 

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2004 Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards

The Massachusetts Literacy Foundation of Herald Media, Inc in partnership with Verizon Reads and Boston Partners in Education is now accepting applications for the...

Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards

Recognizing excellence in The field of literacy

If you or someone you know is an exceptional practitioner of literacy at any level, or in any setting, please review the following criteria and apply or nominate someone for the Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards today.

The purpose of the MLF Literacy Champions Awards program is to identify, publicly recognize and reward Massachusetts educators who have made significant contributions in literacy education.

These awards focus on Literacy as outlined in the National Literacy Act (1991): "Literacy is an individual's ability to read, write and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function in the job and in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential." This program also would like to specifically recognize the area of family literacy as outlined by the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (1996): "Family literacy is coordinated learning among different generations in the same family which helps both adults and children reach their full personal, social and economic potential."

The Massachusetts Literacy Champions Awards Program encourages and enables the best literacy practitioners in the Commonwealth to share their most promising practices with their peers. Ten Literacy Champions will be chosen from a competitive nominations pool by a panel of experts in the field. Winners will be announced in June.

Literacy Champions are eligible to receive \$3,500 in grants to be used for program and professional development. Awards are funded by the MLF and Verizon's "Check Into Literacy" program throughout the 2004-2005 school year, the Literacy Champions will collaborate as a group and share their work with each other and the rest of the state. Nominations can come from the applicant themselves or from any professional in the literacy field.

Literacy Champions Criteria:

- Applicant or nominee can be a professional practitioner or trained volunteer currently active in the educational field.
- Applicant or nominee must be currently involved in the creation and implementation of unique and promising literacy practices that have made a significant impact or contribution in the field of literacy.
- Applicant or nominee can be working at any level or in any setting in the educational literacy field.
- Applicant or nominee must be willing to share their best practices and work with their peers throughout the state.

For an application and more information visit the Massachusetts Literacy Foundation website: www.massliteracy.org

Deadline for Applications: April 16, 2004



2003 Literacy Champions with Governor Mitt Romney and Lt. Governor Kerry Healy at the MLF Literacy Champions Breakfast

Visit the MLF website at www.massliteracy.org to meet the 2003 Literacy Champions

