



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's "Back to School" Update

August 20, 2004

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

This is the Department of Education's annual "Back to School" package containing timely information for you as you prepare for the new school year. In this letter I have five announcements and seven items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu/.

Message for the New School Year

I am delighted to note that Massachusetts has again received widespread acclaim for our students' SAT and MCAS test results. This is an outstanding achievement.

The challenge we face going forward now, however, is to move beyond the expectations of the past - those of preparing students for the tests and helping them to meet the minimum standard. We must redirect our efforts to assist as many students as possible to reach higher levels of performance, where the knowledge and skills so crucial to individual success in this global economy are found. To succeed, we must work together to identify ways of motivating more students to become actively engaged in their learning so they will stay in school and improve their personal and career opportunities. During this year I will continue to emphasize the need to raise standards even higher, and I invite your input on ways to achieve this goal.

Military Recruiters: Access to High School Campuses

I want to remind you about provisions under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 that require local education agencies (LEAs) to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they provide to postsecondary institutions and prospective employers, and to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses and telephone listings of high school juniors and seniors for the purposes of recruiting and informing young people about scholarship opportunities. These two laws include provisions for parents to "opt out" of allowing schools to provide information about their children to military recruiters. Helpful guidance on this issue from the U.S. Department of Education can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/ht10-09-02.html>.

New Charter Schools

Six new charter schools - Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter School in Adams with a temporary location in Williamstown, Boston Preparatory Charter School in Boston, Hill View Montessori Charter School of Haverhill in Haverhill, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School in Lynn, Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter School in Barnstable, and Salem Academy Charter School in Salem - will open their doors to students for the first time this fall. I welcome these schools into our education community and wish them every success in delivering high quality education programs for their students.

MCAS Performance Appeals

If you have new information such as senior year final GPAs for students in the Classes of 2003

and 2004 who have not yet earned their competency determinations, please consider filing or re-filing MCAS Performance Appeals. Also, please remember that I have the authority to waive any of the four eligibility requirements (having taken the test(s) three times, attained a minimum score of 216, maintained good attendance, and participated in tutoring opportunities) if you include a written justification. For filing information go to www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/.

Data Collection

New & Closed Schools

If public or private schools in your districts will be opening or closing or if your public schools are undergoing grade span changes, please notify us at doeadmin@doe.mass.edu by September 1.

Updated School Contact Information

Please ensure that the contact information in your district and school profiles is correct in your directory administrations. Review your information at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>.

School Safety & Discipline Report

While we are wrapping up the collection of the 2003-04 school year data, we are also preparing for the 2004-05 collection. In response to district feedback, we have modified the incident report. A draft version of the form is posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/schedule.html>. Please review and provide questions and suggestions by 9/1/2004 to data@doe.mass.edu. If you haven't already, please first read the Frequently Asked Questions document posted at http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/guides/ssdr_faq.html to see if your question or suggestion has already been addressed.


Fall Data Collection Trainings

The Information Services group will be providing training in late September on SIMS, the School Safety & Discipline Report, and other data-related topics. More information will be available within the next week or two at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/>.


Here are seven items that have been posted at www.doe.mass.edu/:

1. Legal and Major Religious Holidays in Massachusetts for 2004-2007

2. Superintendent Checklist for 2005 and Schedule for Submitting District Reports

3. Statewide Assessments for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students in 2004-2005

4. Title IIB Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant Opportunity

5. Registration for TestWiz Training

6. Gifted and Talented Professional Development Competitive Grant Opportunity

7. Summary: 2003-04 MEFA Student Art Contest



I anticipate that School Year 2005 will be a productive and satisfying one for students, educators and parents, and I look forward to continuing improvement in schools across the Commonwealth.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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EVENTS CALENDAR

September 2004						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

Legal Holidays; Accommodation for Religious Observances

To: Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 6, 2004

With this memo I am enclosing a list of Massachusetts legal holidays and major religious holidays for the 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. School officials have said these documents are useful in planning the school calendar, accommodating students and staff who observe religious holidays, and determining possible days of low attendance. For information on other religious holidays observed by members of religions represented in your school community, I encourage you to contact local clergy.

State and federal law require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of holy days. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151B, section 4 (1)(A) addresses this issue with respect to employees. With respect to students, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, section 2B reads in relevant part as follows:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution...who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with any opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

Schools may meet their obligation to accommodate students by excusing individual absences for religious observance, or by adjusting the school calendar to provide a school year of at least 180 school days, while taking into account possible days of low attendance due to religious holidays.

Please share this information with your school building administrators. We hope you will find it helpful.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

September 2004						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

Holiday Observances in Massachusetts (Statewide Legal Holidays are in Bold)

	2004-2005 School Yr.	2005-2006 School Yr.	2006-2007 School Yr.
Labor Day	Mon., Sept. 6	Mon., Sept. 5	Mon., Sept. 4
Rosh Hashanah*	Thu., 9/16-Fri., 9/17	Tues., 10/4 - Wed. 10/5	Sat., 9/23-Sun., 9/24
Yom Kippur*	Sat., Sept. 25	Thurs., Oct. 13	Mon., Oct. 2
Sukkot*	Thu., 9/30-Fri., 10/1	Tues., 10/18-Wed., 10/19	Sat., Oct. 7
Columbus Day	Mon., Oct. 11	Mon., Oct. 10	Mon., Oct. 9
Ramadan**	Mid-October	Mid-October	Mid-October
Veterans' Day	Thurs., Nov. 11	Fri., Nov. 11	Sat., Nov. 11
Eid al-Fitr**	Sun. Nov. 14	Thurs., Nov. 2	Tues., Oct/ 24
Thanksgiving	Thurs., Nov. 25	Thurs., Nov. 24	Thurs., Nov. 23
Chanukah*	Wed., Dec. 8	Mon., Dec. 26	Sat. Dec. 16
Christmas Day	Sat., Dec. 25***	Sun., Dec. 25****	Mon., Dec 25
Kwanzaa	Sun., Dec. 26	Mon., Dec. 26	Tues., Dec. 26
New Year's Day	Sat., Jan. 1***	Sun., Jan. 1****	Mon., Jan 1
Eid al-Adha**	Jan/Feb	Jan/Feb	Jan/Feb
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Mon., Jan. 17	Mon., Jan. 16	Mon., Jan 15
Presidents' Day	Mon., Feb. 21	Mon., Feb. 20	Mon., Feb. 19
Ash Wednesday	Wed., Feb. 9	Wed., Mar. 1	Wed., Feb. 21
Evacuation Day (Suffolk County only)	Thurs., Mar. 17	Fri., Mar. 17	Sat., Mar. 17
Palm Sunday	Sun., Mar. 20	Sun., April 9	Sun., April 1
Passover *	Sun., 4/24-Mon. 4/25 Sat., 4/30-Sun.-5/1	Thurs., 4/13-Fri., 4/14 Wed., 4/17- Thurs., 4/18	Tues., 4/3-Wed., 4/4 Mon., 4/9-Tues., 4/10
Good Friday	Fri., Mar. 25	Fri., April 14	Fri., April 6
Easter	Sun., Mar. 27	Sun., April 16	Sun., April 8

Patriots' Day	Mon., April 18	Mon. April 17	Mon. April 16
Memorial Day	Mon., May 30	Mon., May 29	Mon., May 28
Shavuot*	Mon., June 13	Fri., June 2	Wed., May 23
Bunker Hill Day (Suffolk County only)	Fri., June 17	Sat., June 17***	Sun., June 17****
Independence Day	Mon., July 4	Tues., July 4	Wed., July 4

* According to the Massachusetts Lawyers Diary and Manual "In addition to dates noted, observant Jews celebrate the second, seventh and eighth days of Passover; the second, eighth and ninth days of Sukkot; and two days of Shavuot. All Jewish holidays begin at sundown, the evening prior to the day of the holiday".

**Due to the lunar calendar these are only approximate dates.

***Under G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 18, legal holidays that fall on a Saturday are observed on that day.

****Under G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 18, a legal holiday shall be observed the day following when said holiday shall occur on Sunday

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SUPERINTENDENTS' CHECKLIST: SCHOOL YEAR 2004-2005

(This checklist is continually updated. Please email changes/suggestions to www@doe.mass.edu)
More information on data collections at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/schedule.html>.

August-November

Items to Submit to DOE

- | | COMPLETION/ DUE DATE |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Update Directory Administration about school and district contact information..... | September 30,
as necessary thereafter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Openings/Closings, notify DOE via downloadable forms.....
@ http://www.doe.mass.edu/inforservices/data.diradmin/ | September 30,
as necessary thereafter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> End-of-year Pupil and Financial Report (for prior school year)..... | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special education circuit breaker claim form..... | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Consolidated Planning documents for <i>No Child Left Behind</i> | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Data Forms for Title V Innovative Programs..... | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District Technology Plan..... | November 17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 1 SIMS data..... | October 28 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Private School Report..... | November 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School & District Staff Report..... | November 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Safety & Discipline Report. Final data due at end of school year..... | Ongoing |

Other Items Not Submitted to DOE

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Five-year Asbestos Audits completed, to be placed in the principal's office..... | August 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CORI checks on new hires completed (MGL c. 71, s. 38R)..... | August 30,
as necessary thereafter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radon testing completed in schools, as needed..... | August 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water testing completed in schools, as needed..... | August 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights Coordinator appointed for academic school year (603 CMR 26.00)..... | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights and Equal Education notices sent to all staff, notifying of training dates (603 CMR 26.00)..... | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee/minimum wage information notice sent to all school employees..... | September 30 |

- School Council elections for parent, teacher, and community representatives..... September 30
- Student Records Notice to Parents: Annual notice regarding release of directory information
(603 CMR 2.07(4)(a) may be included in the school/student handbook.....
- Annual Evacuation Training for students (See Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000, Section 363.)..... October 30
- Annual Multi-hazard Evacuation Plan for each school completed..... October 30
- Bus evacuation drills and vehicle evaluations conducted by chief of police..... October 30
- Crisis/Evacuation Team for each school appointed by principals..... October 30
- Schools' Multi-hazard Plans reviewed annually review by superintendent of schools, fire chief
and police chief..... October 30
- Sex education course information and opt-out information sent to parents/guardians (MGL c. 71, s. 32A)... September
- Student Handbook published, including anti-hazing notice to students
(MGL c. 269, s. 19 and 603 CMR 33.00; MGL c. 71, s. 37H)..... September
- Nutrition Program Reports and Claim Forms (school lunch/breakfast) sent to parents/guardians..... October 30
- Playground/PE safety check completed by chief of police and DPW.....
- Training on schools' physical restraint policy within the first month of every school year and
within a month of new employee hires..... October 30

December- March

Items to Submit to DOE

- December 1st SIMS data submitted to DOE – Special Education Students only..... January 6
- School-Attending Children Report (not submitted by charter and regional voc/tech schools)..... March 1
- Charter Schools Claim Form submitted by each charter school..... March 1

Other Items Not Submitted to DOE

- Notification of Public Hearings on annual budget by School Committee..... January-May
- Individual Professional Development plans leading to re-certification should be individually maintained... March 1

April-July

Items to Submit to DOE

- Regional Student Advisory Council members election affidavits submitted to the DOE

(MGL C.15, S.1E).....	April
<input type="checkbox"/> March 1 SIMS data.....	March 24
<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Performance and Achievement data. For October Report to USED.....	May 15
<input type="checkbox"/> State and Federal entitlement grants, competitive grants, and planning documents.....	June 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Revocations: Notice to Department regarding employee matters that might give cause for revocation of educator license (603 CMR 7.14(7)).....	June 30 as necessary during the school year
<input type="checkbox"/> School Choice Participation vote by school committee certified.....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> School Choice Claim Form submitted by receiving districts.....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> SIMS End-of-year data sent to DOE.....	July 14
<input type="checkbox"/> School Safety & Discipline Report – final data.....	July 30
 <u>Other Items Not Submitted to DOE</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> School and District “Report Cards” sent to parents as required by Title I of the ESEA of 2001.....	August 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Accommodation Plan (keep on file)	April 15
<input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse reporting requirements sent to school personnel informing of their responsibilities (MGL c. 71, s. 37L).....	September
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of teachers and other educators completed (MGL c. 71, s. 38; 603 CMR 35.00).....	June 15
<input type="checkbox"/> School Improvement Plans for each school submitted to and approved by superintendent and school committee MGL c. 71, s. 59C).....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Advisory Member appointed to local School Committee (MGL C.71, S.38M).....	May 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) NCLB, Title IID, Sec.2414, notifications sent to parents and employees.....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment policies reviewed, updated, and posted as needed.....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education reimbursement for Medicaid sent by districts (ongoing)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Universal Health Precautions, reviewed annually with all staff.....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Handbook Review by principal and school council and submit to DOE (MGL c. 71, s. 37H).....	June 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire drills completed annually by Fire Chief, bringing total to eight (8) drills each year	



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 - Test Items
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 - 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Statewide Assessments for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students in 2004-2005

Updated 8.31.04

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

Copy: Directors of English Language Learner Programs

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 20, 2004

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with important information on new required state assessments for LEP students and to describe preparations that must occur before administering assessments to these students in fall 2004.

I encourage you to share this information with your faculty and staff, particularly those involved in the instruction of LEP students. Should you have questions or need assistance, please contact the Department's Student Assessment Office at (781) 338-3625.

The Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA)

In the 2004-2005 school year, the Massachusetts Department of Education will administer the new Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) in order to evaluate the English proficiency of all LEP students in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The MEPA tests are based on *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners* available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark.pdf>. Additional information on the purpose, content, structure, and reporting for MEPA will be posted in early fall to the Department's English Proficiency Assessment web page at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/epa/>.

Title III of the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) requires states to report annually on the English proficiency **performance** and **progress** of LEP students. In addition, Chapter 386 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2002 (known as "Question 2") requires English language learners in Massachusetts to participate in assessments of English language proficiency. The MEPA program is administered in order to comply with these state and federal assessment requirements, and to:

- provide data and resources to strengthen curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment;
- measure the progress made by LEP students toward English proficiency; and
- identify LEP students who have achieved proficiency in English.

The MEPA consists of two assessments:

- the **Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment-Reading and Writing (MEPA-R/W)**, which replaces the Language Assessment Scales-Reading/Writing (LAS-R/W); and
- the **Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O)**, which assesses proficiency in both Comprehension (Listening) and Production (Speaking).

For the 2004-2005 school year only, MEPA tests must be administered twice to **all** enrolled LEP students in **both** fall 2004 and in spring 2005, as described below in Table 1.

Table 1
2004-2005 School Year MEPA Administration Schedule

Test	Dates of Administration	LEP Students Required to Participate
MELA-O:Comprehension (Listening) and Production (Speaking)	Fall 2004: September 20-October 22, 2004	All LEP students enrolled in Grades K-12
MEPA-R/W:Reading and Writing	Fall 2004: October 18-22, 2004 (October 8: schools receive test materials)	All LEP students enrolled in Grades 3-12
MELA-O:Comprehension and Production	Spring 2005: February 28-April 8, 2005	All LEP students enrolled in Grades K-12
MEPA-R/WReading and Writing	Spring 2005: March 28-April 8, 2005	All LEP students enrolled in Grades 3-12

After the 2004-2005 school year, all MEPA assessments must be administered annually to **all** enrolled LEP students each spring. Fall MEPA testing will be conducted **only** for those LEP students who are newly enrolled and therefore did not participate in the previous spring's testing (for both MEPA-R/W and MELA-O).

MEPA-R/W

The Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment for Reading and Writing (MEPA-R/W) consists of a reading sub-test and a separate writing sub-test for LEP students in grades 3-4; grades 5-6; grades 7-8; and grades 9-12. Each sub-test is expected to take an average of 90 minutes to administer.

Each MEPA R/W sub-test (Reading and Writing) consists of three test sessions. LEP students are required to participate in **only two of three test sessions** in each sub-test. Between now and the end of September, principals should determine which two sessions are most appropriate for LEP students both for the reading and writing sub-tests. Criteria to consider in making this determination include:

- performance scores on previous LAS-R/W components that were provided to districts electronically via the Department of Education security portal
- results of other assessments of English language proficiency used by the district
- observations by staff working closely with LEP students regarding their proficiency level in terms of the English Language Proficiency Level Descriptors presented in Chapter III of *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners*, which is posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark.pdf>.

Separate decisions must be made for reading and writing regarding which test sessions will be given to each student. Guidelines for making these decisions are described below in Table 2.

Table 2
Guidelines for Assigning LEP Students to MEPA-R/W Test Sessions in Fall 2004

For the **MEPA Reading** assessment:

School should consider administering:	If student's reading skills are considered:
Sessions 1-2	Beginning to early intermediate (consideration should be given to Proficiency Level Descriptors in <i>Benchmarks and Outcomes</i> and previous LAS Reading sub-test score)
Sessions 2-3	Intermediate to transitioning (consideration should be given to Proficiency Level Descriptors in <i>Benchmarks and Outcomes</i> and previous LAS Reading sub-test score)

For the **MEPA Writing** assessment:

School should consider administering:	If student's writing skills are considered:
Sessions 1-2	Beginning to early intermediate (consideration should be given to Proficiency Level Descriptors in <i>Benchmarks and Outcomes</i> and previous LAS Writing sub-test score.
Sessions 2-3	Intermediate to transitioning (consideration should be given to Proficiency Level Descriptors in <i>Benchmarks and Outcomes</i> and previous LAS Writing sub-test score)

MELA-O

The Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) assesses proficiency in Comprehension (Listening) and Production (Speaking). The MELA-O must be administered to all LEP students enrolled in grades K-12 in fall 2004. MELA-O requires that each LEP student be observed and evaluated over a period of time by a qualified administrator (QMA) or trainer (QMT). For a current list of QMAs and QMTs, please visit the Department's web page at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2004/news/0223melao_lep.html

Principals will be required to report the MELA-O scores for LEP students in grades 3-12 on the MEPA-R/W *Answer Booklet*. Directions for reporting grade 3-12 MELA-O scores will be provided in the Fall 2004 MEPA-R/W *Principal's Manual*. Principals will also be required to report MELA-O scores for students in grades K-2. Directions for reporting K-2 MELA-O scores will be provided this fall.

Fall 2004 MEPA Administration Workshops

The Department will conduct morning MEPA Administration workshops for principals from September 29 to October 7. These sessions will provide detailed information on MEPA-R/W test administration, and can accommodate both the school principal and the school's designated LEP coordinator. MEPA Administration workshops are scheduled for September 29 to October 7, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the following locations:

- September 29 - Pittsfield
- September 30 - Springfield
- October 1 - Worcester
- October 4 - Andover
- October 5 - Braintree
- October 6 - Braintree
- October 7 - Hyannis

Please note that MCAS reporting workshops will be offered in afternoon sessions at these same locations. Registration information will be posted soon at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>.

Preparation for Fall MEPA Administration

In the coming weeks, I encourage principals and their staff to make preparations for the MEPA assessments

this fall. Please be sure to:

1. **Assign LEP students to the most appropriate two-session sub-test of the MEPA-R/W** (either sessions 1 and 2, or sessions 2 and 3), based on consideration of the criteria outlined in Table 2 on the previous page.
2. **Order MEPA-R/W test materials.** By September 2 (Updated 8.31.04), principals will receive a Department mailing with instructions for ordering MEPA-R/W test materials online. Responses must be received by September 17 (Updated 8.31.04).
3. **Ensure that your district or school has the capacity to conduct the MELA-O for all enrolled LEP students.** During the past two years, the Department has provided extensive training for MELA-O administrators and trainers. Review the list of qualified administrators posted at http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2004/news/0223melao_lep.html. If you find that your district does not have the capacity to administer the MELA-O in fall 2004 to **each** enrolled LEP student, I encourage you to make arrangements with one or more qualified administrators from a neighboring district to help you conduct the MELA-O this fall.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your assistance in conducting these important new assessments.

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Office for Mathematics, Science, and Technology Engineering (OMSTE)

Title IIB: Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant Opportunity

To: Superintendents of Schools
From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Date: August 20, 2004

I am pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MMSP) Program, funded through Title II, Part B of the federal education act, No Child Left Behind.

The purpose of the MMSP is to increase the number of highly qualified teachers in the Commonwealth and to ensure that teachers continue to receive quality professional development in order to improve classroom teaching and student achievement. MMSP partnerships must include a high need district and a mathematics, science, or engineering department from an institution of higher education.

Each MMSP partnership will develop and implement an effective and sustained course of study for inservice teachers of mathematics, science, and technology/engineering and integrate the course of studies into schools of education and/or arts and sciences at institutions of higher education.

Last year, the Department awarded eight partnerships across the state for a three-year period. Partnerships in Year 1 ranged from approximately \$50,000-200,000. This year, due to an increase in program funding, approximately \$200,000 is available to fund one or more partnerships on a competitive basis. The deadline for submission will be Friday, September 17, 2004.

The RFP is located on our website at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants05/rfp/150B.html>.

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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



Friday, August 20, 2004

Registration for TestWiz Training Sessions

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 20, 2004

As you know, spring 2004 MCAS student-level data files have been posted to the Department's Security Portal. TestWiz version 9.12 is now available on the [TestWiz](#) website (on the MCAS software page) to facilitate using these data.

Training sessions on using TestWiz have been scheduled September 13-29 in regional locations throughout Massachusetts. Separate introductory and advanced training sessions have been scheduled to accommodate new users and those familiar with the software. You may register at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/>. Please contact TestWiz at (800) 842-0077 if you have any questions regarding the training sessions.

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Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2005

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Curriculum Coordinators, and Other Interested Parties
From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Date: August 9, 2004
Subject: [Gifted and Talented Professional Development Competitive Grant Program](#)

I am pleased to inform you of the new state funded Gifted and Talented Professional Development grant program. It will focus on leadership in providing services to gifted students. The Department seeks innovative proposals that focus on important topics such as raising the achievement of gifted students and establishing effective policies for challenging students at all levels.

I urge you to collaborate with experts in the field of gifted education in Massachusetts and in other states to present a professional development program either online, in a series of regional forums, or a combination of both.

If you have questions about this program, please contact Susan Wheltle, Director of the Office for the Humanities, at 781-338-6239 or swheltle@doe.mass.edu.

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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



Friday, August 20, 2004

Lt. Governor Healey Congratulates MEFA Contest Winners



August 2004

Dear Superintendents and Principals:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), please accept my sincere appreciation for your assistance in promoting the first annual College Savings Art Competition, *"What Do I Want To Be When I Graduate From College?"*

Nearly 4,000 entries were received from elementary school students across the state. The winning drawings were selected by a panel of judges including a noted Boston area artist and representatives from MEFA, Fidelity Investments and the Department of Education.

On July 22, Lt. Governor Kerry Healey awarded prizes to and congratulated the 9 talented young artists at a special State House ceremony (please view the attached photo). First-place winners each received \$5,000, second-place finishers were awarded \$2,000, and third-place winners received \$1,000. The award monies have been deposited directly into a U.Fund account established for each winning student.

The winners include three **grade 3** students from the West Parish School in Gloucester, the Heritage School in Charlton and the Foxboro Regional Charter School in Foxboro. The **grade 4** winners hail from the General John Nixon Elementary School in Sudbury, the Holy Name School in Springfield and the Holy Name School in Chicopee, and the **grade 5** winning artists are from

the Center School in Peabody, the Gerena School in Springfield, and the Thompson School in Arlington. I encourage you to visit our web site at www.mefa.org/contest/ to view the winning drawings.

Once again, thank you for your support of this meaningful program.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Graf
Executive Director
MEFA

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