



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

February 18, 2005

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

I have five announcements and three items in this update posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

NCLB Report Card Assistant

The Massachusetts Department of Education has developed the online *NCLB Report Card Assistant* to help you prepare your report cards in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. As outlined in Section 1111(h)(2), districts are required to prepare and disseminate school and district report cards annually. The *NCLB Report Card Assistant* provides districts with data required by law and maintained by us, and you have the option of adding other, non-required information, as well. The use of this application is not mandatory; you may use whatever system is most convenient to produce report cards with the required information.

Please note that it is your responsibility to disseminate report cards to parents in your districts, and I am asking you to distribute these by March 30, 2005. Please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/reportcard/> for more information.

Please note that the educator data is not yet available in the Report Card Assistant. We have recently completed the collection of the District & School Staff Report and are processing the data at this time. The data will appear in the application on or before March 18, 2005.

MCAS Performance Appeals

Students in the Class of 2005 and beyond are required to meet the Board of Education's 95% minimum attendance rate in both their junior and senior years to qualify for an MCAS Performance Appeal. If you plan to ask me to waive the attendance rate for any student, please include the rationale for the waiver when you submit the appeal.

Blocked Emails

To ensure that emails sent to you by the Department of Education are not blocked by your anti-spam software, please ask your IT or Email Administrator to be sure that the following email domains and/or IP addresses are not blocked: doe.mass.edu, doemass.org, list1.doe.mass.edu, 134.241.180.8, or 134.241.180.10.

Massachusetts Jewish War Veterans of the USA




For fifty-one years, the Massachusetts Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America has conducted a recognition program for Massachusetts high school students who are active in promoting citizenship, community and leadership. This prestigious program, "Classmates Today - Neighbors Tomorrow," is a great opportunity for high school educators and guidance counselors to identify students who exemplify the ideals of community service. Students who are selected for recognition will receive honorary awards and in some cases, cash prizes. The "Classmates Today - Neighbors Tomorrow" program will be offered again in the fall and I

encourage your participation. I will provide you with more details on the 2006 program in the coming months. For more information, please call 617-727-2963.

Military Child Education Coalition

Texas Education Commissioner, Dr. Shirley J. Neeley, has asked me to inform you about the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), a new initiative that reinforces concern and support for National Guard and Reserve families. This program focuses on the educational needs of students whose parents are called to military duty. It offers educators throughout the country specialized training in recognizing the unique needs and challenges of "suddenly-military" children, for the purpose of providing stronger support for these students in school. Please contact Dr. Mary M. Keller at www.MilitaryChild.org or call 254-953-1923 for more information.

Three additional items are included in this Update:

1. The Commissioner's Statement on the SJC Decision in Hancock v. Driscoll

2. The Commissioner's Statement on Special Education Regulations

3. "Preserve America" History Teacher of the Year Announcement


All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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EVENTS CALENDAR

February 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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	1	2	3	4	5

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

 Past 30 days Past 90 days Date Range

Start:

End:

**For Immediate Release****Tuesday, February 15, 2005****Contact: Heidi B. Perlman 781-223-1902 (cell)**

Statement from Education Commissioner David P. Driscoll on Today's SJC Decision on Hancock vs. Driscoll

Malden - "This historic decision is a direct result of the hard work of our school districts, Department of Education staff, our Governors and legislators and the demonstrable progress our students have made over the past decade.

Particular credit should be given to Deirdre Roney and the rest of our litigation team, and to Department personnel who provided the compelling evidence that proved to the courts that we are meeting our responsibilities to our children.

While some may see this as a time to celebrate, I see it as a time to accept the full responsibility given to the Governor, Legislature and the Department of Education to complete the work at hand, and get as many students as possible to higher levels of achievement.

The Court has affirmed that we are meeting our Constitutional duty, but our job is far from done. This Commonwealth, the very birthplace of American public education, needs to come together around our public schools. Given the ever increasing demands of the global economy, it's never been more important for our children to not just graduate, but to strive and reach higher levels of achievement than ever before."

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Education Laws and Regulations

Statement from Commissioner Driscoll on the Proposed Revisions to the State Special Education Regulations:

February 16, 2005

In reflecting on the importance of the public comment process and the need to strengthen the practice of special education for students with disabilities in Massachusetts, the Department and Board have reviewed the proposed changes to the state special education regulations that were released for public comment in December 2004. The public comment we have received to date has made clear that many of the proposed changes deserve more discussion. I want to be sure that any changes we make to these regulations are carefully considered, widely understood, and will contribute to improving special education programs for students.

I have determined, therefore, that the most important area of the state's special education regulations that warrants immediate revision is the Department's procedures related to assignment of school district responsibility (primarily in new proposed Section 28.10). All other proposed amendments will be considered through a series of sponsored meetings and public forums during the rest of this calendar year to discuss and consider areas of the regulations that may need revision, consistent with state and federal law.

I encourage you to review the [proposed changes](#)  to the regulations included related to the assignment of school district responsibility and to submit written comment via e-mail to spedregscomment@doe.mass.edu, or by mail to Special Education Regulations, Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 01248. The deadline for submission of public comment is **Tuesday, March 1, 2005**.

[Revised Overview - 2/16/05](#)

Proposed Revisions to the State Special Education Regulations

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Educator Recognition Programs

Preserve America History Teacher of the Year

To: Superintendents, Principals, and History Department Chairs

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 2005

I am pleased to announce that nominations are open for the second annual national *Preserve America* History Teacher of the Year program to honor outstanding teachers of American history across the country. One American history teacher from each state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and Department of Defense schools will be selected. The Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year will automatically be the state's candidate for the National *Preserve America* History Teacher of the Year to be selected and honored in the fall either in Washington, D.C. or New York City. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and *Preserve America* sponsor the award. The Gilder Lehrman Institute, founded in 1994, promotes the study and love of American history. Increasingly national and international in scope, the Institute's programs and initiatives serve audiences ranging from students to scholars to the general public. *Preserve America* is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve America's cultural and natural heritage.

History teachers K-12 are eligible for nomination and will be selected based on the following criteria:

- At least three years of experience in teaching American history;
- A deep career commitment to teaching American history;
- Evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom; and
- Close attention to documents, artifacts, historic sites, and the other primary materials of history.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History will honor each statewide winner with an award of \$1,000 and a "History Teacher of the Year" plaque. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History will also present the winner's school with an archive of primary historical materials for use in the school library or resource center.

The National History Teacher of the Year will be selected from the state winners by a panel of prominent historians. The winner, together with the nominating supervisor, will be flown to Washington D.C. or New York City for the national recognition ceremony.

I encourage you to read and disseminate the attached [nomination procedure](#) and to nominate outstanding American history teachers in your district/school. **Nominations/Applications must be postmarked by Thursday, April 28, 2005.** For further information, visit our website at www.doe.mass.edu/eq/recognition/ or contact Deborah Walker at djwalker@doe.mass.edu or phone 781-338-3347.

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Educator Recognition Programs

Nominate an Outstanding American History Teacher for *Preserve America* History Teacher of the Year

History teachers K-12 are eligible for nomination. Winners will be selected based on several criteria:

- At least three years of experience in teaching American history;
- A deep career commitment to teaching American history;
- Evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom; and
- Close attention to document, artifacts, historic sites, and the other primary materials of history.

Eligibility

- Any full-time middle school or high school teacher who teaches American history as his or her primary subject may be nominated.
- Any full-time elementary school teacher who focuses on American history within the framework of his or her elementary school program may be nominated.
- Nominations may be made by a department head, principal, or superintendent.

Procedure

Nomination packages must be submitted in the following document order:

- The nominee's curriculum vitae;
- A full letter of nomination outlining the candidate's career achievement and specific evidence of his/her excellence as a history teacher, including the candidate's effectiveness in improving students' knowledge of American history;
- One letter of support from the candidate's immediate supervisor;
- A one-page statement of the candidate's educational philosophy;
- A listing of American history courses taught by the candidate over a period of at least three years - elementary school teachers should list American history topics and the grades in which those topics were taught;
- A sample lesson plan, not to exceed three pages;
- A sample extended project assigned to students, demonstrating use of primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, etc. (please do NOT send student work); and
- A short video demonstrating a **classroom-teaching segment** (maximum 8-10 minutes).

If you have questions about eligibility or procedures, contact Deborah Walker at djwalker@doe.mass.edu or phone 781-338-3347.

Please submit an **original plus four copies** (5 total) of written materials and **one video**, **postmarked by April 28, 2005**, to

Deborah Walker
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

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