



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

May 5, 2005

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

I have 2 announcements and 6 items for your review in this update.

Driver Education

The Department of Education and the Registry of Motor Vehicles have signed an interagency agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) to ensure that all driver education programs, whether operated by private driving schools or public high schools, meet consistent standards established by the Registrar. The content of driver education course curriculum, and the standards for licensing driving instructors and granting driver education certificates to students who complete an approved program, are matters within the expertise of the Registrar. The interagency agreement is intended to enhance the consistency and quality of driver education throughout the Commonwealth, for the benefit of students and the public.

This agreement affects only those public high schools that provide driver education directly, with public school staff providing the instruction. Based on the information we have received, most high schools in Massachusetts that provide driver education do so through arrangements with private driving schools. If your school district or high school has such an arrangement, the agreement does not affect it.

Superintendents and principals whose school district or high school provides driver education directly, rather than through arrangement with a private driving school, should review the agreement and note the expectations outlined in it, which require driver education programs to meet the uniform standards by September 1, 2005. The full text of the agreement is available at http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/news05/mou_rmv.html

If you have questions about the agreement and its applicability to your driver education program, please contact one of the following people at the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

For answers to questions about oversight and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on driver education:

Rachel Madden, Deputy Registrar of Motor Vehicles
Phone: (617) 351-9915

For answers to questions from principals and other school staff about driver education curriculum and standards:

Michael Deveney, Assistant Director, Vehicle Safety and Compliance Services
Phone: (617) 351-9328







Biodiversity Days 2005

The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) is announcing the revival of Biodiversity Days, a week of biodiversity exploration for citizens and school children across the state, June 4 through June 12, 2005.

Educators are invited to participate in this week of discovery and learning with their students. Teachers may incorporate Biodiversity Days in the school day and offer take-home activities for students to do with their families. In addition, outdoor explorations associated in-classroom activities can help implement the learning standards in the Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework, and strengthen classroom lessons.

To register, contact Anita Pritchett, MACC Program Coordinator at anitapritchett@maccweb.org or call 617-489-3883. For more information, visit their website at www.maccweb.org, and follow the link for Biodiversity.

Here are 6 new items posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. New Requirements for MCAS Alternate Assessments in 2006

2. Summer 2005 MCAS Retest Opportunity

3. Notice of Public Comment, Proposed Amendments to Agricultural High School Regulations, 603 CMR 45.00

4. Reminder about School Safety and Discipline Report Deadline

5. Technology Workshops on NCLB Title IID Grants and NetSmartz Program

6. Recruitment for Board of Education Advisory Councils


Thank you for all of the great work that you do for children as we begin to wind down another successful school year.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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New Requirements for MCAS Alternate Assessments in 2006

To: Superintendents and Administrators of Charter Schools, Educational Collaboratives, and Approved Private Special Education Schools, and Other Interested Educators

From: David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

Date: May 5, 2005

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) will require annual statewide MCAS assessments in reading and math in grades 3-8 and in grade 10 beginning in 2006. In addition, new discipline-specific science and technology/engineering tests will be added at the high school level.

Opportunities must be provided to students with significant disabilities to take alternate assessments in each content area scheduled for assessment. I am providing you with information needed to conduct these alternate assessments beginning in the 2005-2006 school year.

I have adopted what I believe is a balanced approach to statewide alternate assessment that meets the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* and provides maximum benefits and opportunities to children, parents, and teachers.

Overview

The MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) has been administered annually since 2001 to all students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS testing, even with accommodations, but who are still required to participate in MCAS. The MCAS-Alt portfolio contains evidence of the student's academic performance over the course of a school year, based on the state's Curriculum Frameworks. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams are responsible for determining how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS in each content area scheduled for assessment.

Additional information on MCAS Alternate Assessments, including the *Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* (updated annually), is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/. Training on the MCAS-Alt is provided by the Department each year to school staff.

New Requirements for MCAS Alternate Assessments Beginning in 2006

As in previous years, the 2006 MCAS-Alt will consist of a portfolio for each student compiled over the course of the school year. However, changes have been made to the content areas that must be assessed each year, as NCLB requires. In addition, based on feedback from test development experts and special educators who have worked with the Department over the past year to develop these new guidelines, the contents of each portfolio will be streamlined where possible, as shown in the table attached to this memorandum.

In each content area, **specific strands and learning standards have been identified for assessment. In many cases, fewer pieces of evidence will be required for submission in each portfolio.** This new requirement is intended to provide documentation that students with significant



disabilities are receiving instruction in important areas of the curriculum, and that their academic progress is reported each year.

Beginning in 2006, the minimum submission for each MCAS-Alt portfolio must include the following evidence for each strand/learning standard listed in the table:

- **one data chart** indicating the student's accuracy and independence in performing tasks related to the learning standard identified in the strand;
- **two pieces of primary evidence**, such as work samples, videos, or photographs, that measure the same skill as the data chart; AND
- additional evidence at the discretion of the teacher that supports or describes the student's performance.

The expanded scope of these new assessments represents both a challenge and an opportunity for all of us. Teachers, administrators, and parents will now be able to track the progress and performance of individual students from one year to the next. Teachers will be able to build upon their collection of previous data in the portfolio and plan instruction accordingly in order to provide evidence of their students' improvement over time.

I recognize the significant work involved in creating student portfolios and want to ensure that the portfolio process is beneficial to students and manageable for teachers.

Thank you for working together with us to meet these important goals.

Attachment. [Table: 2006 MCAS Alternate Assessments](#)

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

New Requirements for MCAS Alternate Assessments in 2006

**2006 MCAS Alternate Assessments:
Content To Be Assessed / Evidence Required in Each Student Portfolio**

Grade	Content Area		
	Reading/ELA	Math	Science and Technology/Engineering
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4¹ • ELA Learning Standard #8² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Patterns, Relations, and Algebra 	
	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 • Composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Data, Statistics, and Probability 	
	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8; and 3 in one Composition learning standard	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Measurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any three Science and Technology/Engineering strands
	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each selected strand
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Patterns, Relations, and Algebra 	
	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8	6 pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	



7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 • Composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Data, Statistics, and Probability 	
	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8; and 3 in one Composition learning standard	6 pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number Sense and Operations • Geometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any three Science and Technology/Engineering strands
	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8	6 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand listed above	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each selected strand
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Learning Standard #4 • ELA Learning Standard #8 • Composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any three Math strands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One science discipline: Biology; Chemistry; Physics; or Technology/Engineering
	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 each in LS #4 and 8; and 3 in one Composition learning standard	9 total pieces of evidence: 3 in one learning standard for each strand selected	9 pieces of evidence: 3 each in three different learning standards in the selected discipline

¹ Learning standard #4 - Vocabulary and concept development; acquiring and using words

² Learning standard #8 - Understanding a text; identifying facts and ideas; interpreting information



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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Summer 2005 MCAS Retest Opportunity

To: High School Principals and Directors of Alternative Adult/External Diploma

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 5, 2005

I am pleased to announce the opportunity for students in the classes of 2003, 2004, and 2005 who have not yet attained a Competency Determination to participate in the MCAS retest administration this summer.

Test Administration Schedule

The summer 2005 retest will be held according to the schedule below.

Tuesday, August 2	Wednesday, August 3	Thursday, August 4
Mathematics Retest Sessions 1 and 2	ELA Retest Day 1 Composition and Language and Literature Session 1	ELA Retest Day 2 Language and Literature Sessions 2 and 3

Summer Retest Sites

The retest will be administered at the following five sites:

- Madison Park High School, Boston
- B. M. C. Durfee High School, Fall River
- South Lawrence East School, Lawrence
- Van Sickle Middle School, Springfield
- Forest Grove Middle School, Worcester

Further Details

More information about registering students and application procedures for test administrators will be provided under separate cover.

Please contact Jodie Zalk, Coordinator for the MCAS Summer Retest Administration, at (781) 338-3625 or via e-mail at jzalk@doe.mass.edu with any questions.



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Education Laws and Regulations

Notice of Public Comment

Pursuant to its authority under M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B and c. 74A, § 21, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the Massachusetts Board of Education is soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to the Agricultural High School Regulations, 603 CMR 45.00.

The proposed amendments will update the regulations to refer to G.L. Chapter 74A, enacted in 2000, and to clarify that state-funded agricultural high schools are subject to the Board's regulations on vocational technical education, including the regulations on licensure of vocational technical superintendents.

Copies of the proposed amendments are available on the Department's web site at www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/ or by calling 781-338-3400. Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted by mail to: Legal Office, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148; by e-mail to legal@doe.mass.edu; or by fax to 781-338-3390. The deadline for submission of public comment is Friday, June 10, 2005. The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments at its regular monthly meeting scheduled for June 28, 2005.

View proposed amendments  

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**Proposed Amendments to Agricultural High School Regulations
603 CMR 45.00**

**For initial consideration by the Board of Education: April 26, 2005
Period of Public Comment: through June 10, 2005
Anticipated final action by the Board: June 28, 2005**

Proposed amendments are indicated by ~~strikeout~~ and underscore. Only the sections of the regulations that are proposed for amendment are included here.

45.01: Authority, Scope and Purpose

- (1) 603 CMR 45.00 is promulgated pursuant to the authority of the Department stated in M.G.L. c. 74A, §21.
- (2) The provisions of 603 CMR 45.00 shall apply to the governance and operation of Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute.

Deleted: St. 1997, c. 48, § 7A, as inserted by St. 1998, c. 300, § 21, to issue regulations for the implementation of that statute
Deleted: High School

45.03: Programs of Study and Admission

- (4) With the exception of sections 3, 4, 5, 5A, 5B, 7, 7C, 8A, 23, 24, 32, 37A, 37B, 37C, and 37F, the provisions of M.G.L. c. 74 shall apply to agricultural high schools. M.G.L. c. 76, § 12B, shall not apply to agricultural high schools or students enrolled at such schools.
- (5) With the exception of section 4.03 (6) (b), the Vocational Technical Education Regulations, 603 CMR 4.00, shall apply to agricultural high schools.

Deleted: M.G. L. c. 74,
Deleted: §§
Deleted: and

45.04: Governance

- (1) The board of trustees of each agricultural high school shall have all the powers and duties conferred by law upon regional school committees to the extent that such powers and duties are not inconsistent with statute or other provisions of 603 CMR 45.00.
- (2) The board of trustees of each agricultural high school shall appoint a director, who shall be licensed as a vocational technical superintendent pursuant to 603 CMR 4.00. The director shall have all the powers and duties conferred by law upon school superintendents to the extent that such powers and duties are not inconsistent with statute or other provisions of 603 CMR 45.00.

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 45.00: M.G.L. c. 74A, § 21.

Deleted: St. 1997, § 7A as amended



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Data Collection

School Safety and Discipline Report

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Principals

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 2, 2005

The School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR) on line application has been available since the beginning of the school year. Information for the entire 2004-2005 school year must be submitted by July 30th. I am reminding you of this deadline now because many districts have not yet entered any information.

The SSDR collects information regarding drug and violence related incidents and disciplinary actions occurring during the 2004-2005 school year as required under state and federal regulations.

- The incident level form must be completed each time a violence or drug related incident occurs on school property.
- The discipline form must be completed each time a student is suspended for a violence or drug related incident, or is excluded for more than 10 school days, regardless of the reason.
- In addition, the discipline form must be completed each time a student with disabilities is suspended or removed to an alternative setting, regardless of the reason.

Several districts have opted to submit an electronic file instead of using the on line application. If your district is also planning to submit a file, please contact Helene Bettencourt at hbettencourt@doe.mass.edu.

The SSDR sample forms and instructions can be found on our web site at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/schedule.html>. If you have any questions please contact Data Collection at 781-338-3282 or data@doe.mass.edu.

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Educational Technology

Technology Workshops on NCLB Title IID Grants and NetSmartz Program

To: Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives
From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Date: May 5, 2005

I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education will offer two technology workshops:

- Tuesday, May 24, 1 to 4 p.m. - Northampton (Clarion Hotel)
- Thursday, May 26, 9:00 a.m. to noon - Worcester (Holiday Inn)

These workshops will provide information on two important programs:

- **NetSmartz Program**
NetSmartz is an interactive, educational safety resource from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. This web-based program uses age-appropriate 3-D activities to teach children and teens how to be safer when using the Internet. NetSmartz is available to the public at <http://www.netsmartz.org/> and <http://www.netsmartzkids.org/>. In the near future, the Department and other state agencies will provide a direct link to these websites from their homepages.
- **No Child Left Behind Title IID Entitlement and Competitive Grant Programs**
The Department of Education will provide information on the FY 2006 NCLB Title IID Entitlement Standalone Grants (Fund Code: 160) and the Title IID Competitive Grants (Fund Code: 170B). The presenters will provide technical assistance to help school districts apply for the technology grants.

Please register online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=107> to participate.

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The Board of Education Advisory Councils

Recruitment for Board of Education Advisory Councils

To: Educators, Parents, and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 20, 2005

The Massachusetts Department of Education is seeking candidates to serve on the Board of Education Advisory Councils. These councils were established by the Education Reform Act of 1993 to advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters relevant to their areas of focus in the implementation of education reform in Massachusetts. Members of these councils serve without compensation. Each council meets 4 - 6 times per year at times and locations determined by its members. All appointments will be for a three-year term and regular attendance is required.

The Board and I are committed to establishing advisory councils that will work actively to help improve public education programs and advance student achievement. We encourage applications from educators, parents, students, business leaders, and other community members who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to education reform, as well as interest, experience and expertise in the subject matter of the particular advisory council.

Through diverse membership on each advisory council, we seek to draw on the perspectives and experiences of a wide range of constituents in order to strengthen public education. After reviewing applications, I plan to make appointment recommendations to the Board at the September meeting.

Interested parties should submit a letter of intent along with a resume either by mail to: Dr. Lurline Muñoz-Bennett, Office for the Humanities, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, no later than July 8, 2005; or by email to advcos@doe.mass.edu. For more information, please contact Lurline Muñoz-Bennett directly at Lmunoz-bennett@doe.mass.edu or by telephone at 781-338-6285.

Listed below are those councils with three or more membership vacancies. In cases where these vacancies call for specific representation, it is noted:

- Adult & Community Learning Services: adult educators, business/union, and civic-minded representatives, particularly from central and western Massachusetts.
- Arts Education: candidates may be from all areas and levels of arts education as well as parents, practicing artists, and representatives from community arts organizations, particularly from western and central Massachusetts.
- Braille Literacy: educators, parents, students, and community representatives with expertise or developed interest in the teaching of the blind and visually impaired, particularly in the area of Braille literacy.
- Community Service Learning: educators, parents, students, and community representatives with expertise in community service learning.
- Educational Technology: no membership vacancies this year.
- English Language Learners/Bilingual Education: educators, parents, and community representatives with expertise in bilingual education.
- Gifted and Talented Education: school administrators, representatives from higher education, and parents, teachers, and community members with expertise or developed interest in gifted education.
- Global Education: teachers, parents, and community representatives with expertise or developed interest in global issues (e.g. economics, world cultures, and environmental science).
- Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services: educators, health professionals, parents

and community representatives who are knowledgeable about health education and human services in the public schools. We have a particular need for new members who are school nurses or physicians; school counselors, psychologists, or social workers; or professionals who work with youth in suicide prevention, substance use prevention, or youth programming.

- Life Management Skills and Home Economics: representatives who are well informed and committed to the continuing development of students through Health/Family and Consumer sciences education; parents, students, school student support and guidance professionals; representatives of higher education programs that involve Health/Family and Consumer Sciences certification and licensure programming, and business/civic representatives in Health/Family and Consumer Sciences related career areas to assist in these programs in the public schools under Education Reform.
- Mathematics and Science Education: mathematics and science educators of Pre-K through grade 12 and/or in higher education, as well as parent and community representatives with expertise and/or a developed interest in any of these disciplines.
- Parent and Community Education and Involvement: Pre-K through grade 12 and higher education educators, community and business partners, parents, students, and others who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to education reform, as well as interest and experience in parental and community involvement.
- Racial Imbalance: parents of children in grades Pre-K through grade 12 from all regions across the state, educators, civic leaders, community group representatives, persons with knowledge and understanding of the Racial Imbalance Law, choice program directors, educators, school committee representative.
- Special Education: additional parent representation, a transition representative, and a person from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies, with special consideration to candidates from central and western Massachusetts.
- Technology/Engineering Education: technology education directors, educators and engineering professionals, as well as parent and community representatives with expertise and or a developed interest in this discipline. (Note: the focus of this council is on applied technologies such as engineering design, construction, and transportation, but not instructional technology as in computer applications.)

For more information about the Board of Education Advisory Councils visit our web site at www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac.

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