



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's "Back to School" Update

August 22, 2005

Dear Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

As we gear up for another school year, I am pleased to see that educators across the state are continuing to find ways to improve student achievement. While some people spent their summer at the beach I know of countless teachers and administrators who spent their summer at school, working on lesson plans, participating in professional development opportunities and thinking about what is best for children. You all deserve great credit for the excellent work that you do, and I look forward to yet another successful school year.

This is the Department's annual "Back to School" update containing information I hope will be useful to you as you prepare for the new school year. In this letter I have 6 announcements and 10 items recently posted on our website.

### Administrative Advisory SPED 2006-1

[Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -Initial Implications for School District Practices](#). The advisory was issued on August 1, 2005 and highlights several key changes in federal special education law that affect school district practice in the area of special education.

### MCAS Performance Appeals

The [MCAS Performance Appeals website](#) has been updated for the 2005-2006 school year. When filing academic performance appeals for students who have taken the Grade 10 MCAS Tests at least 3 times and have not yet been able to pass, be certain to thoroughly review the updated filing guidelines and use only the 2005-2006 appeal application and related cohort worksheet. For specific questions regarding MCAS performance appeals, please email [mcasappeals@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcasappeals@doe.mass.edu) or call 781-338-3333.

Additionally, I am recruiting new members to serve on the MCAS Performance Appeals Board. This group is comprised of several public high school educators who meet regularly to review the academic performance of students under appeal and recommend to me whether each one should be granted or denied. If you have outstanding high school principals, English and mathematics educators or guidance counselors who would be willing to meet monthly for up to three years, please encourage them to contact me at the above email address. This is an excellent professional development opportunity and a small stipend is awarded for service.

### ***High Schools That Work: Opportunity for Five High Schools to Join***

Massachusetts is one of 31 states that participate in the *High Schools That Work* school improvement initiative led by the Southern Regional Education Board. In all, 35 Massachusetts high schools have used this process to raise student expectations and achievement in the past 10 years. A competitive Request for Proposals that will allow five high schools to join the state network will be posted on our website shortly. High schools that offer at least one Perkins-eligible career technical program are encouraged to learn more about *High Schools That Work* and consider whether the key practices and resources would be helpful to school improvement

efforts.

An information session on the *High Schools That Work* process will be held on September 20 at 1 p.m. in the Hogan Center at Holy Cross. Information is also available on our website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/hstw/> or from the Southern Regional Education Board at <http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/hstwindex.asp>. To register for the information session or obtain additional information about the program, you can contact Maryellen McDonagh at [mmcdonagh@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mmcdonagh@doe.mass.edu).

## Data Collection

**Race/Ethnicity Data:** As noted in previous communications we will be expanding the collection of the race and ethnicity categories starting with the October 1, 2005 SIMS collection. Many districts have been working to prepare this information in anticipation of this change. Please refer to the [Race and Ethnicity FAQ](#) for additional information.

**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 by using the notification forms posted at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/diradmin/>.

**Directory Administration:** Please ensure that the contact information in your district and school profiles is correct in your directory administration. Review your information at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>. We would like to point out that we are now collecting contact information for the MCAS test coordinator and the Human Resources Director.

**Fall Data Collection Trainings:** The Information Services group will be providing training during the last 2 weeks in September. The trainings will cover SIMS, the School Safety & Discipline Report, and Directory Administration. For more information and to register go to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/>.

## America's Legislators Back to School Week

I would like to call your attention to "America's Legislators Back to School Week," a program designed for students to learn about legislative roles and the legislative process. Schools are encouraged to participate in this program any time during the school year, but the third week of September has been designated as the official "Back to School Week."

For information on this program and other civic education projects, visit [www.ncsl.org/trust/](http://www.ncsl.org/trust/) on the web, or contact Anne Ziaja, Legislative Education Director at the Massachusetts State House, 617-722-1380. Representatives may be contacted directly to arrange visits ([www.mass.gov/legis/](http://www.mass.gov/legis/)).











## Constitution Day

Last year President Bush signed a law establishing September 17 as Constitution Day. In recognition of this event, on Friday, September 16 schools around the country are being asked to simultaneously recite the Preamble to the Constitution along with a nationwide broadcast led by General Tommy Franks. The recitation will be broadcast over the Internet, allowing schools and legislators to participate along with military troops at home and abroad.

To learn more about Constitution Day, please read the [memo](#) I have attached to this announcement. To request educational materials or to get more information, look online at [www.constitutionday.com](http://www.constitutionday.com). I encourage you to take part in this important educational event.

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Newly posted items at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu):

1. 2005 MCAS Results: Schedule and Mode for Delivery of Reports  

2. Important MEPA Updates  

3. New Regulation on Access to Student Records by Non-Custodial Parents  

4. Notice of Public Comment - Proposed Amendment to 603 CMR 23.00, Student Records Regulations  

5. Legal Holidays; Accommodation for Religious Observances  

6. FY06 Foundation Reserve ("pothole") Program - application forms and instructions  

7. Department of Education Seeks Practitioners for School Panel Review  

8. Massachusetts Charter School Dissemination Program  

9. Opportunity to Host Brazilian Principals  

10. Constitution Day and Citizenship Day: September 17  


I hope you enjoyed your summer, and I look forward to working with each of you to make this another successful school year.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### 2005 MCAS Results: Schedule and Mode for Delivery of Reports

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

Copy: Principals

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 19, 2005

As you begin the school year, I am pleased to provide you with information regarding plans for the release of results from the spring and summer 2005 MCAS administrations. The sections below provide information about the upcoming schedule and modes for delivery of reports of results.

#### Reporting of Results: Schedule Highlights

- August 19     **Receipt of Spring 2005 Preliminary Test Item Analysis Results**  
 Districts will receive a shipment of paper Preliminary Test Item Analysis Reports. An electronic version of the data contained in the reports will be posted at the Department's Security Portal. To facilitate use of the raw score data in the reports, raw to scaled score conversion tables will also be posted on the Department's Web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/).
- August 22     TestWiz will be updated to include the raw score to scaled score conversion tables (available at [www.testwiz.com](http://www.testwiz.com)).
- August 26     **Deadline to Report Discrepancies (phase 1)**  
 Districts must report discrepancies in preliminary test item analysis results **no later than August 26** in order for changes to be incorporated in the *Parent/Guardian Reports* that will be delivered to your district in September. A memorandum containing instructions for reporting data discrepancies is posted to the Department's Web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/), and also will be sent to superintendents and principals via e-mail.
- August 31 (tentative)     **Public Release of Statewide Results**  
 Statewide results, including results of students participating in the MCAS Alternate Assessment, will be released via the Department's Web site ([www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/)).
- September 7     **Deadline to Report Discrepancies (phase 2)**  
 Districts must report discrepancies by **September 7** in order for changes to be incorporated in school and district summary MCAS reports and in AYP reports. (Refer to the memo posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/) for more information.)

September 20 **Receipt of 2005 Final Student, School, and District Reports:**

- **Grades 3-8 and 10 Scaled Score/Performance Level Results**
- **Grades 3-8 and 10 School and District Summary Results**
- **Summer Retest Results**

Final results are provided to districts according to the information in the table at the end of this memo. During the embargo period prior to the public release of results, districts should review their reports for any discrepancies as described above.

Please note that school and district reports for grades 3-8 will only be delivered online (see below). **Remember that student-level data contained in these reports are confidential. Superintendents and principals are responsible for maintaining the privacy and security of all student records and, therefore, must use discretion when forwarding and/or sharing these files.**

September 22 **Public Release of School and District Results**

(tentative) Districts and schools may release local results following the Department's public release. More information will follow.

November 4 **Receipt of Composition CDs**

Districts will receive one CD-ROM per school containing images of compositions that students at grades 4, 7, and 10 wrote during the spring 2005 MCAS administration.

Please note that the expected delivery dates listed above are subject to change if additional time is needed to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the results. I will keep you informed if we need to make any changes to the schedule.

A combined 2005 MCAS and AYP reporting schedule is posted on the Department's School and District Accountability Web page at [www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/cycleIVmid/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/cycleIVmid/).

## Mode of Reporting 2005 MCAS Results

I am pleased to announce that, for the first time, a number of MCAS reports will be released online. Instructions for accessing the online reports will be provided in September. Reports will be provided to districts as shown in the table below.

Type of Report	Delivery Mode		
	Grades 3-8	Grade 10	High School Science Pilot Test
District Report	Online	Paper	N/A
District Test Item Analysis Report Summary	Online	Paper	N/A
School Report	Online	Paper	N/A
School Test Item Analysis Report Summary	Online	Paper	N/A
Test Item Analysis Report	Online	Paper	Online
Parent/Guardian Reports	Paper	Paper	N/A
Student Labels	Paper	Paper	N/A

Please contact the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103 with any questions. As always, please direct policy-related questions to the Department's Student Assessment Services Unit at (781) 338-3625.

Thank you.



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# Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

## Important MEPA Updates

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

Copy: Directors of Sheltered English Immersion Programs

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 19, 2005

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with important information on required English proficiency assessments for limited English proficient (LEP) students. Included herein are updates regarding:

- Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 MEPA test administration schedule and participation requirements
- Ordering MEPA test materials for the fall 2005 administration
- Spring 2005 MEPA test results for schools and districts
- Database of MELA-O administrators and trainers

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

### ***Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 MEPA Test Administration Schedule and Participation Requirements***

For the 2005-2006 school year, only newly enrolled LEP students not tested in spring 2005, and **all** grade 3 LEP students must participate in the fall 2005 MEPA administration. The table below shows the schedule and participation requirements for administering the MEPA assessments during the 2005-2006 school year.

#### **2005-2006 School Year MEPA Administration Schedule and Student Participation Requirements**

Test	Dates of Administration	LEP Students Required to Participate
<b>MELA-O: Comprehension (Listening) and Production (Speaking)</b>	<b>Fall 2005:</b> October 3-October 28, 2005	All LEP students enrolled in Kindergarten; <b>AND</b> LEP students in grades K-12 who did not participate in Spring 2005 MELA-O, or for whom results cannot be obtained.

<b>MEPA-R/W: Reading and Writing</b>	<b>Fall 2005:</b> October 24-28, 2005	All grade 3 LEP students; <b>AND</b> LEP students enrolled in grades 4-12 who did not participate in Spring 2005 MEPA-R/W, or for whom results cannot be obtained.
<b>MELA-O: Comprehension and Production</b>	<b>Spring 2006:</b> February 27-March 24, 2006	All LEP students enrolled in Grades K-12
<b>MEPA-R/W Reading and Writing</b>	<b>Spring 2006:</b> March 20-March 24, 2006	All LEP students enrolled in Grades 3-12

### ***Ordering MEPA Test Materials for the Fall 2005 Administration***

You will receive a memorandum in early September containing detailed instructions and a password for online ordering of MEPA test materials for the fall 2005 administration. Please note that test materials must be ordered online no later than **Wednesday, September 21**, so that all LEP students are tested as indicated above. Please note that there will be no MEPA test administration workshops in fall 2005. Directions for administering the fall MEPA tests, including manuals, will be sent to schools with orders of test materials.

### ***Spring 2005 MEPA Test Results for Schools and Districts***

Later this fall, the Department will release updated reports of school and district results from the spring 2005 MEPA test administration. These reports include results for students who participated in the fall 2004 and spring 2005 MEPA tests. These matched results show, at the school and district levels, the progress that LEP students made toward English language proficiency during the last school year.

### ***Database of District MELA-O Administrators and Trainers***

As you know, the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) is the assessment required for assessing the English proficiency of LEP students in Comprehension (Listening) and Production (Speaking). The MELA-O must be administered by a qualified administrator (QMA) or a qualified trainer (QMT). Since superintendents are responsible for ensuring that all LEP (grades K-12) be assessed annually on MELA-O, it is important to ensure that your district has an adequate number of trained staff to conduct the test administration. To assist you with this, the Department's list of QMAs and QMTs within each district has recently been updated. We request that you review your district's information at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2004/news/0223melao\\_lep.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2004/news/0223melao_lep.html) and report any inaccuracies via e-mail to Lydia Smith in the Student Assessment Office at [lsmith@doe.mass.edu](mailto:lsmith@doe.mass.edu).

### ***Fall 2005 MEPA Reporting Workshops***

The Department will conduct MEPA Reporting Workshops for principals in early November 2005. These sessions will provide information on the fall MEPA school and district report updates and the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives reports that will be issued later this fall as required by Title III of the federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* law. Information on these workshops will be posted next month to the Department's Web page at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/epa/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/epa/).

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your assistance with this important initiative for LEP students.

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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



## District/School Administration

### New Regulation on Access to Student Records by Non-Custodial Parents (603 CMR 23.07(5))


To: Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders and School Principals

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 18, 2005

The Board of Education has adopted, as emergency regulations, amendments to the Student Records Regulations concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents. The new provisions are in effect for the start of the 2005-2006 school year. As set forth in the amended regulation, 603 CMR 23.07(5), non-custodial parents are eligible to obtain access to their children's student records *unless* the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. the non-custodial parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

Here are links to the complete text of the amended regulations concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents:  . Copies are also available on the Department of Education's web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/) or by calling 781-338-3400.

### Reason for the Amendments

In 1998, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted G.L. c. 71, §34H in order to standardize the process through which schools make student records available to non-custodial parents. The statute provides that a non-custodial parent will have access to his or her child's student record unless a court has determined that the parent poses a safety risk. The Board of Education subsequently adopted regulations (603 CMR 23.07(5)) to implement the state law.

In May 2005, the U.S. Department of Education informed the Massachusetts Department of Education of its determination that our state statute and regulations on access to student records by non-custodial parents must be amended in order to conform to federal law (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, 20 U.S.C. §1232g). In particular, the U.S. Department of Education found that requiring non-custodial parents to provide documentation that there are no court orders rendering them ineligible before granting them access to student records violates their right to inspect and review their children's educational records.

We have been working with the staff of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education as they prepare a statutory amendment that will bring the state law into conformity with the federal requirement. After legislation is enacted, it may be necessary to revise our regulations to accord with it. In the interim, however, the Board adopted emergency regulations on July 28, 2005 amending 603 CMR 23.07(5) in order to ensure compliance with federal law and to provide guidance to school administrators before the start of the 2005-2006 academic year.

### Invitation to Comment

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, these amendments became effective as emergency regulations upon adoption by the Board of Education on July 28, 2005. The Department is soliciting public comment through September 30, 2005 and will bring the regulations back to the Board at the October 25, 2005 meeting for a final vote. A notice inviting public comment on these amendments is posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/).

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## Education Laws and Regulations



### Notice of Public Comment

#### Proposed Amendments to 603 CMR 23.00, Student Records Regulations

Pursuant to its authority under M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B and c. 71, §§ 34D and 34H, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §3, the Massachusetts Board of Education is soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to 603 CMR 23.00, Student Records Regulations.

These amendments were adopted by the Board of Education on July 28, 2005 as Emergency Regulations. Emergency adoption of these amendments was necessary to preserve the public welfare in order to comply with federal law concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents.

Copies of the proposed amendments   are available on the Department of Education's web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/](http://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](mailto:legal@doe.mass.edu); or by fax to 781-338-3390. The Board is particularly interested in comments on whether the regulations provide sufficient guidance to school personnel and parents. The deadline for submission of public comment is **Friday, September 30, 2005**. The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments at its regular monthly meeting scheduled for October 25, 2005.

  **Emergency Regulations, Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, regarding Access to Student Records by Non-Custodial Parents**

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**Emergency Regulations: Proposed Amendments to  
Regulations on Access to Student Records – 603 CMR 23.00**

**For consideration and initial action by the Board of Education (adoption of emergency regulations): July 28, 2005**

**Period of public comment: through September 30, 2005**

**Final action by the Board of Education anticipated: October 25, 2005 Board Meeting**

These amendments revise the section of the regulations, 603 CMR 23.07(5), that relates to access procedures for non-custodial parents. The amendments will make the state regulations consistent with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232 g, and the regulations promulgated under it, 34 CFR Part 99.

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the emergency regulations will remain in effect for no longer than three months. Following the period of initial implementation and public comment, the Board is expected to adopt the regulations in final form at its October 25, 2005 regular meeting.

Amendments are indicated by underscore (new language) and ~~overstrike~~ (deleted language). Sections of the regulations that are unchanged are not reproduced in this document. The full text of 603 CMR 23.00 is available on the Department of Education website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr23.html>.

\* \* \*

603 CMR 23.07: Access to Student Records

(5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:
1. the parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
  2. the parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
  3. the parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal annually. ~~The initial request must include the following:~~

- ~~1. a certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5) (a), or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and~~
- ~~2. an affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remains in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.~~

~~(e) The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5) (a).~~

(d) Upon receipt of the request ~~(initial and annual)~~ the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

(e) The school must delete the electronic and postal address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.



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## Legal Holidays; Accommodation for Religious Observances

To: Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 5, 2005

With this memo I am enclosing a list of Massachusetts legal holidays and major religious holidays for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 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.

[Enclosure](#)



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

	2005-2006 School Yr.	2006-2007 School Yr.	2007-2008 School Yr.
Labor Day	<b>Mon., Sept. 5</b>	Mon., Sept. 4	<b>Mon., Sept. 3</b>
Rosh Hashanah*	Tues., 10/4 - Wed. 10/5	Sat., 9/23-Sun., 9/24	Thurs., 9/13-Fri., 9/14
Yom Kippur*	Thurs., Oct. 13	Mon., Oct. 2	Sat., Sept. 22
Sukkot*	Tues., 10/18- Wed., 10/19	Sat., Oct. 7	Thurs. Sept. 27
Columbus Day	<b>Mon., Oct. 10</b>	Mon., Oct. 9	<b>Mon., Oct. 8</b>
Ramadan**	Mid-October	Mid-October	Mid-October
Veterans' Day	<b>Fri., Nov. 11</b>	Sat., Nov. 11	<b>Sun., Nov. 11</b>
Eid al-Fitr**	Thurs., Nov. 2	Tues., Oct/ 24	Thurs., Nov. 1
Thanksgiving	<b>Thurs., Nov. 24</b>	Thurs., Nov. 23	<b>Thurs., Nov. 22</b>
Chanukah*	Mon., Dec. 26	Sat. Dec. 16	Wed. Dec. 5
Christmas Day	<b>Sun., Dec. 25****</b>	Mon., Dec 25	<b>Tues., Dec. 25</b>
Kwanzaa	Mon., Dec. 26	Tues., Dec. 26	Wed., Dec. 26
New Year's Day	<b>Sun., Jan. 1****</b>	Mon., Jan 1	<b>Tues., Jan. 1</b>
Eid al-Adha**	Jan/Feb	Jan/Feb	Jan/Feb
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	<b>Mon., Jan. 16</b>	Mon., Jan 15	<b>Mon., Jan 21</b>
Presidents' Day	<b>Mon., Feb. 20</b>	Mon., Feb. 19	<b>Mon., Feb. 18</b>
Ash Wednesday	Wed., Mar. 1	Wed., Feb. 21	Wed., Feb. 6
Evacuation Day (Suffolk County only)	<b>Fri., Mar. 17</b>	Sat., Mar. 17	<b>Mon., Mar. 17</b>
Palm Sunday	Sun., April 9	Sun., April 1	Sun., March 16
Passover *	Thurs., 4/13-Fri., 4/14 Wed., 4/17- Thurs., 4/18	Tues., 4/3-Wed., 4/4 Mon., 4/9-Tues., 4/10	Sun., 4/20-Mon., 4/21 Sat., 4/26-Sun., 4/27
Good Friday	Fri., April 14	Fri., April 6	Fri., March 21
Easter	Sun., April 16	Sun., April 8	Sun., March 23

Patriots' Day	<b>Mon. April 17</b>	Mon. April 16	<b>Mon., April 21</b>
Memorial Day	<b>Mon., May 29</b>	Mon., May 28	<b>Mon., May 26</b>
Shavuot*	Fri., June 2	Wed., May 23	Mon., June 9
Bunker Hill Day (Suffolk County only)	<b>Sat., June 17***</b>	Sun., June 17****	<b>Tues., June 17</b>
Independence Day	<b>Tues., July 4</b>	Wed., July 4	<b>Fri., July 4</b>

\* 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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## School Finance: Chapter 70 Program

### FY06 Foundation Reserve Program

#### Application Instructions

The Legislature has appropriated \$6,870,000 for the FY06 foundation reserve ("pothole") program [St. 2005 c.45, s.2, item 7061-0011]. The pothole program is intended to provide supplemental financial assistance to cities, towns, and school districts to address a variety of special circumstances. Municipalities and districts may apply for these funds in accordance with these instructions.

- Foundation reserve funds will be awarded in eight different categories, as described in the accompanying application forms ( [WORD](#) | [PDF](#) ). Applicants should submit the appropriate form for each category for which they are eligible.
- Categories A, B, E, F, and H are for municipal relief. Applications in these categories must be submitted on behalf of a city or town by the mayor, town manager, or board of selectmen. Awards in these categories will be treated as unrestricted state aid and may be appropriated by the municipality for any purpose.
- Categories C, D, and G are for supplemental educational funding. Applications in these categories must be submitted on behalf of a local or regional school district by the superintendent of schools. Awards in these categories will be treated as grants and may be expended by the school committee without further appropriation. Please note that charter schools are not eligible for foundation reserve awards.
- Because of the limited funding available and the large number of priority categories established by the Legislature, no applications will be accepted for other extraordinary and unanticipated needs. Municipalities and districts should only apply if they meet the eligibility criteria for one of the categories listed in the application.
- Applications must be submitted by mail to the address below, and must be received no later than close of business on September 16, 2005:

**Massachusetts Department of Education**

**Attn: Jeff Wulfson**

**350 Main Street**

**Malden, MA 02148-5023**

Fax and email submissions cannot be accepted.

- Award amounts will be determined by the Commissioner of Education and will depend in part on the number of applications received, the size of the municipality or district, and the financial need for which the award is made. We expect to announce most of the awards by October 15.

Please note that foundation reserve awards are one-time awards that are not included in base aid calculations for chapter 70 aid in future years.

**Questions regarding the foundation reserve program should be directed to associate commissioner Jeff Wulfson at 781-338-6500 or by email at [jwulfson@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jwulfson@doe.mass.edu).**



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## School and District Accountability

Thursday, August 18, 2005

### Department of Education Seeks Practitioners for School Panel Review

September 20, 2005

Dear Superintendents:

As part of the Massachusetts School and District Accountability System, the Department of Education will continue to conduct on-site reviews during the school year, both to identify schools that are under-performing and schools that are exemplars of improvement. The Department is actively recruiting qualified school and district based practitioners to participate in these reviews. Principals and teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as well as assistant superintendents, curriculum and other program directors are encouraged to apply. Please share this information with central office staff and principals in your district. We welcome both professional who have served as panelists in the past and new panelists for whom this experience would be beneficial to participate.

Panelists will serve on five- member teams composed of Department staff, educational consultants, and active practitioners. Selected schools are reviewed over a two-day period using a detailed protocol. Panelists must commit to four hours training, some preparatory reading, and a two-day on-site visit, and will require the approval of the Superintendent for their release. Participants will receive a \$100 honorarium and 30 professional development points for their service.

On-site visits are guided by a detailed protocol for interviewing and observation, and culminate in a meeting by the panel to come to consensus on the answers to the two key questions which frame the evaluation process. A report on the team's findings is submitted to the Commissioner, who considers it either in the determination of under-performance, or in the final selection of improving schools to serve as Compass Schools.

Participation in the Panel Review process enables panelists to observe the organizational structure, curricular programs, and instructional practice in a variety of schools. Panelists analyze information on: the process of developing and implementing school improvement plans, the use of student performance data to drive the planning process, what school level assessments are used to track student progress and measure the success of improvement efforts, and the focus of professional development plans and activities.

In addition to contributing to the effort to improve student performance in all the schools in the Commonwealth, panelists on School Review Panels have the opportunity to work with peers from outside their own schools and community. Past panelists have described the experience as a valuable form of professional development, which has helped them later in the operation of their own schools and districts.

For more information on the process, or to apply to serve as a panelist, please contact Erin Furey

Patterson by phone at 781-338-3565 or by email at [epatterson@doe.mass.edu](mailto:epatterson@doe.mass.edu). A detailed overview of the School Review Panels and application forms are available on our web site at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/>. For more specific information on becoming a panelist, please visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/panel/overview.html>.

Thank you for your interest in the School Evaluation process. Your support for this important work lends credibility to our efforts and reflects well on the future of public education in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2006

### Massachusetts Charter School Dissemination Program

Fund Code: 537

July 2005

Dear Educators:

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993—an ambitious and sustained commitment to improving student learning—included among its provisions the creation of new, independent public schools called charter schools. Charter schools were established to "stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education" and to provide "models for replication in other public schools."

Since 1999, through an award from the United States Department of Education Charter School Program, the Massachusetts Department of Education has awarded grant funds to Massachusetts charter schools on a competitive basis for the purpose of disseminating their best practices and innovations. Massachusetts Charter School Dissemination Grants are designed to promote the sharing of effective practices that have been designed, developed, tested, and proven successful in Massachusetts charter schools.

I encourage you to review the various [dissemination projects](#) that have been completed and are currently taking place in Massachusetts charter schools. Recent projects include:

- Media and Technology Charter High School      a unique intensive urban tutoring model
- Codman Academy Charter Public School      utilizing intranet technology to increase parent involvement
- Academy of Strategic Learning Charter School      documenting best practices for serving students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of doing so
- Neighborhood House Charter School      leadership case studies of best practices for effective boards, managing school operations effectively, and motivating and supporting faculty and staff

I also encourage currently operating [charter schools](#) to consider proposing a dissemination project of their own by applying for an FY2006 Massachusetts Charter School Dissemination Grant. Please see full details in the request for proposals located at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants06/rfp/537.html>.

These dissemination projects are just one of the many ways Massachusetts is leading the nation in education reform and they are designed to help **all** schools improve their practice. Much of our success will depend on how well we can share *best practices* among all of our schools.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## EVENTS CALENDAR

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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## NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

 Past 30 days

 Past 90 days

 Date Range

Start:

End:



## District/School Administration

### Opportunity to Host Brazilian Principals

To: Superintendents and Principals

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 19, 2005

I am pleased to announce that the Fulbright Exchange Program is accepting applications from United States secondary schools to host school principals from Brazil. Award-winning secondary school principals from 271 Brazilian states will visit the United States in November/December 2005 to share best practices in school leadership and administration, teacher development, and community involvement.

The Brazilian principals are interested in interacting with school staff and students, learning about teaching and administration in United States schools, and studying processes in U.S. schools that help students, teachers, and administrators achieve their goals.

The Brazilian administrators will arrive in the United States on November 27th and will have a week-long orientation in Washington, DC that will include an introduction to the U.S. education system, visits to education organizations, and a cultural itinerary. They then travel in groups of four (three principals and one interpreter) to different localities in the United States where they will spend five days (December 3-8) observing host administrators in assigned host schools. (Program dates could change slightly.) Brazilian principals will stay in hotels and receive a stipend from the U.S. Department of State to cover the housing, food, and transportation needs.

Host schools should demonstrate the ability to:

- Host three secondary school principals and one interpreter (most of the principals will speak Portuguese only);
- Assign the Brazilian administrators to U.S. administrator(s) for work-shadowing and other observational opportunities within the host school and district;
- Organize opportunities for the Brazilian administrators to meet with diverse students; and
- Plan cultural outings to allow the Brazilian administrators to learn about the local region in which they are placed.

**Deadline:** Hosting Applications must be submitted by **October 1, 2005**. Interested applicants should download the 2005 BRAZIL HOSTING FORM found at <http://www.fulbrightexchanges.org/View/ViewOtherOpps.asp>

**On-line applications will not be accepted.**

Forms should be mailed to Brazil Hosting Program, Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, 600 Maryland Ave., SW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20024.

If you have questions, please contact [fulbright@grad.usda.gov](mailto:fulbright@grad.usda.gov) or phone (202) 314-3520.



## EVENTS CALENDAR

September 2005						
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## NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Target:

Dates:

 Past 30 days

 Past 90 days

 Date Range

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## District/School Administration

### Constitution Day and Citizenship Day: September 17

To: Superintendents, Principals and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 20, 2005

A federal law enacted in December 2004 designates September 17 as "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day," to commemorate the signing of the United States Constitution on September 17, 1787. The federal law is included in Section 111 of Pub. L. 108-447 (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005). It contains the following provision in Section 111(b): **"Each educational institution that receives Federal funds for a fiscal year shall hold an educational program on the United States Constitution on September 17 of such year for the students served by the educational institution."** The U.S. Department of Education has published additional information about the new law at [www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2005-2/052405b.html](http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2005-2/052405b.html). It states that since September 17 falls on a Saturday in 2005, educational institutions may hold the educational program during the preceding or following week, i. e., between Monday, September 12 and Friday, September 23.

Many excellent resources are available on why the Constitution was written, how it describes the structure of our federal government, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Among these are:

#### [Constitution Resources:](#)

Links to many agencies, libraries, archives, and museums

#### [National Constitution Center:](#)

Text of the Constitution, timeline of constitutional history, maps, debates; searchable database of topics related to the Constitution, such as civil rights, school prayer and Supreme Court decisions

#### [National Archives:](#)

Description of how the Constitution was created and ratified; biographies of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787

#### [Library of Congress:](#)

Text of the Constitution and other primary documents relating to it <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/bdexhome.html>

Role of the Continental Congress during the Revolution, including relations with Native Americans <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>

Text of the Federalist Papers and history of the debates about ratifying the Constitution

#### [The Center for Civic Education:](#)

Lessons for Kindergarten, grades 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12

#### [Discovering Justice \(at the Moakley Federal Courthouse, Boston\):](#)

A curriculum for the early elementary grades, dramatic presentations of historic cases and legal issues for middle and high school, courthouse tours and resources on the US legal system and important cases

#### [First Amendment Schools:](#)

Information and lesson plans on the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights

[The Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework:](#)

Massachusetts standards for learning about U. S. history, civics, government

I hope you will find these resources useful. For further information about the role of schools in commemorating Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, please contact: Alex Stein, U.S. Department of Education, at (202) 205-9085 or [constitutionday@ed.gov](mailto:constitutionday@ed.gov).

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