



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's Update

October 5, 2005

Dear Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

I have 9 announcements for your review in this update.

### Educator Database Survey

In the Fall of 2006 the DOE will pilot a new individual educator data collection that will replace the current District and School Staffing Report (DSSR). We are currently conducting a survey to gather information on how school districts and public charter schools maintain education personnel information. We are encouraging all districts to complete the survey so that we may better plan for this initiative. For more information, and to complete the survey, please go to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/edb/>.

### Student Artwork Wanted

One of the most popular features on our web site is the presentation of student artwork. We are inviting public school K-12 teachers and students to submit new samples for the 2005-2006 school year. This unique opportunity showcases students' creativity and the pictures are a welcome sight for more than 12,000 people who visit our home page daily. Instructions for submission are posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/resources/kidart.asp>.

### Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The National Association of Secondary School Principals and Prudential Financial are now accepting nominations for the 2005 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards honoring young people in grades 5 through 12 for outstanding community service. The deadline to apply is October 31. Details on the competition can be found at [www.principals.org/awards/prudential.cfm](http://www.principals.org/awards/prudential.cfm) or call 1-888-450-9961.

### 2005 School Safety Conference

Educators from around the state are invited to attend one of three regional conferences organized by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and other public safety agencies to focus on school safety needs. The topics that will be discussed will include emergency operations planning, school safety, and bullying.



The conferences will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will include lunch. The three dates are: Oct. 11 at Crosspoint Towers in Lowell, Oct. 12 at the Holiday Inn in Mansfield, and Oct. 14 at the Clarion Hotel in Northampton. For more information or to register, contact Barbara Legatowicz at 508-820-2032.

### Gifted and Talented Grant Program

The request for proposals for the FY06 state-funded Gifted and Talented grant program for

Gifted and Talented Standards-Based Curriculum Review is available at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants06/rfp/580.html>. The purpose of this grant program is to raise the achievement of gifted and other students in grades K-8 by expanding educators' knowledge of research-based advanced curricula in mathematics, science, and technology/engineering. Schools and districts may use the funds to purchase curricula or subscribe to online resources to review and pilot in their classrooms, to hire consultants for professional development, and to pay for stipends or substitutes. Districts, charter schools, or collaboratives may apply for up to \$50,000 of the \$500,000 that is available. Proposals are due on November 21.

## New DSS Newsletter for Educators

The Department of Social Services has begun a newsletter   for school personnel, titled "Info for Educators." The agency has launched this as part of an overall effort to strengthen the ability of child welfare and school professionals to work together for children and their families. For more information, or to obtain a copy of their first edition, look online at [www.mass.gov/dss/](http://www.mass.gov/dss/).

## 11th Annual Environmentally Preferable Products Fair

All public schools in the Commonwealth are invited to the 11th Annual Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP) Vendor Fair and Conference. This free event will be held on November 2 at the DCU Center (formerly Centrum) in Worcester, MA. The fair's goal is to help state agencies, cities, towns and schools reduce their energy use, water consumption, make their indoor and outdoor environments healthier - and save money in the process.

The conference program will feature 10 educational workshops, including one focused on enhancing school building performance, and another dedicated to reducing school bus diesel emissions and their impact on student health. To register online go to: [www.mass.gov/epp/](http://www.mass.gov/epp/).

## Letters About Literature

Letters About Literature is a national reading and writing initiative sponsored by the Library of Congress and supported by Target. The Massachusetts program is administered by the Massachusetts Center for the Book, with support from the Calderwood Writing Initiative at the Boston Athenaeum and with assistance from Houghton Mifflin Company and the Massachusetts Library Association.

Participants write letters about books that have changed their lives. Last year Massachusetts was second only to California, with nearly 3,000 students participating. I encourage you all to consider implementing this program in your schools. For more information, to review their guidelines and to better understand how their work links to the state's curriculum frameworks, look online at [www.massbook.org](http://www.massbook.org).

## National Independence Day Parade

The National Independence Day Parade Association is beginning plans for next year's annual parade, and is looking for every state to recommend three marching bands to participate. This year's televised parade will celebrate the 230th anniversary of the nation. If you would like to recommend your district's marching band to participate in this great event, email your recommendation to [info@july4thparade.com](mailto:info@july4thparade.com). For more information on the parade, look online at [www.july4thparade.com](http://www.july4thparade.com).

Thank you again for the great work you each do every day for the children of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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