



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

December 20, 2005

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this update I would like to draw your attention to 4 items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. 2006 MCAS-Alt: Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions 
2. Invitation to Attend the High Schools of the Future: Lessons from Reforming Schools Conference 
3. "Preliminary FY06 School Choice Pupil Rosters and Tuition Calculations" 
4. Competitive FY2006 Academic Support Grant Requests for Proposals (RFPs): for 2006 Spring/Summer Programs Fund Codes (FC) 592-B-1, 592-B-2, and 597 

I want to wish you and your families, as well as your teachers and students all the best for a wonderful holiday season and good health and happiness in the New Year.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education



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2006 MCAS-Alt: Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: December 20, 2005

I am writing to remind you of Department-sponsored portfolio review and training sessions scheduled for educators who are conducting the 2006 MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt). The sessions will be held across the state from January 9 through January 12, 2006. Information has already been sent to each school and district, and is posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/.

This year, several changes have been made to the MCAS-Alt, including new assessments in each grade and new procedures for completing portfolios for students with significant disabilities. It is important to identify educators from your district who will benefit from participating in this training.

Sessions will provide educators with an opportunity to share their student portfolios and questions with expert teachers and Department staff, and to exchange ideas on compiling high-quality portfolios. Sessions will include an overview for educators who are new to the MCAS-Alt process, including new requirements for 2006 and training on the use of software to create MCAS-Alt electronic portfolios. Educators must register by January 4.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Health, Safety and Student Support Services

Invitation to attend:

High Schools of the Future: Lessons from Reforming Schools Conference

When: January 20, 2006, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: The Hogan Center at Holy Cross College
[Conference Agenda](#)

The Department of Education, the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy <http://www.renniecenter.org/>, and the Center for Collaborative Education <http://www.ccebos.org/> are co-sponsoring a day-long high school reform conference in January entitled *High Schools of the Future: Lessons from Reforming Schools*. The conference will be held on Friday, January 20, 2006 at Holy Cross College from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m.

Conference attendees will hear from school leaders in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine on lessons that have been learned in redesigning high schools. This conference is being organized to provide a forum for high school administrators, faculty, and district administrators to learn about and share practices for creating high performing, academically challenging, and personalized high schools that successfully educate all students.

Who should attend? District and school leaders from across New England are invited to attend. District and schools that send teams of at least three people will get first priority for registration, with teams consisting of the high school principal, key teachers, district-level administrators, and college and/or business partners. There is no registration fee. Participants will be registered on a first-come, first-served basis, up to a maximum of 300 participants.

Key Conference Speakers: **David Driscoll**, Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, **Tom Vander Ark**, Executive Director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Education Initiatives, **Kati Haycock**, Director, The Education Trust.

Workshops: Two sets of workshop sessions will feature lessons from practitioners engaged in high school reform. Topics will include large school conversion to small schools and small learning communities, college prep curriculum for all, advisory, graduation by competency, senior institute, creative scheduling, building a professional collaborative culture, personalization, literacy across the curriculum, and community-business partnerships that support high quality instruction. A student panel will focus on their vision of what high school should look like. Presenters will include practitioners from large comprehensive high schools, small high schools, charter high schools, and Boston Pilot high schools.

More about the Conference: Participants will learn more about the results of a recent high school study conducted by the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy that provides an action agenda for taking the lessons of high school reform and using them to improve all high schools. In addition, the Center for Collaborative Education will report on student engagement and performance in Boston's Pilot Schools.

To register, go to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=169> or go to the DOE Homepage and select the Events Calendar. Conference registrants will be emailed a final [conference agenda](#). For more information, contact: Stafford Peat at 781-338-3956 speat@doe.mass.edu, Mary Doyle at (617) 421-0134 ext. 238, mduoye@ccebos.org, or Jill Norton at (617) 354-0002 ext. 17 jnorton@renniecenter.org.

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Health, Safety and Student Support Services

High Schools of the Future: Lessons from Reforming Schools Conference

The Department of Education, the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy <http://www.renniecenter.org/>, and the Center for Collaborative Education <http://www.ccebos.org/> are co-sponsoring a day-long high school reform conference.

Conference Agenda

- 7:45 - 9:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 - 9:15 Welcoming Remarks - Commissioner David Driscoll, Moderator
- 9:15 - 10:00 Keynote: Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director, Education Division Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- 10:00 - 10:30 Presentation of Research and Key Guiding Questions
Rennie Center: Scaling Up: Reform Lessons for Urban Comprehensive High Schools
CCE: Progress and Promise: Results from the Boston Pilot Schools
- 10:30 - 10:45 Break
- 10:45 - 12:00 Workshops: AM Session I
- 12:00 - 1:30 Lunch
Luncheon Speaker: Kati Haycock, Executive Director, Education Trust
- 1:30 - 3:00 Workshops: PM Session II

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School Finance: School Choice

Preliminary FY2006 School Choice Tuition as of December, 2005

This past fall, school choice receiving districts submitted files through the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS) that listed the school choice students enrolled this fiscal year. Information from these submissions, as well as this fall's FY05 End of Year Pupil & Financial Reports, have been used to estimate annual tuition amounts for FY06. On December 30, 2005 the State Treasurer's office will assess one-third of this estimated annual charge, and pay one-third of the tuition receipts, as part of each district's quarterly local aid distribution.

The summary entitled [School Choice Pupils and Tuition, FY06 Preliminary as of December 2005](#) is a statewide list of the number of full-time equivalent pupils and their tuition amounts for both receiving and sending districts.

[School Choice Tuition Rates](#) are calculated separately for regular and vocational programs. For special education pupils, an incremental cost is added to their regular or vocational tuition. In these preliminary calculations, the increments are estimates based last year's costs, or upon pupils' reported special education categories.

Preliminary FY06 school choice tuition rates are set at the FY05 operating cost per full-time equivalent pupil, for the receiving school district. If a district's FY05 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report appears to be in question, its previous year's rate is used. In such a case, the FY06 rate will not be available on this site until March when the preliminary calculations are next published.

Superintendents of sending and receiving districts can obtain school choice rosters from the DOE Security Portal. The rosters will show their districts' school choice pupils' names, grades, programs, and other information.

This information will be used as the basis for the December 30, 2005 local aid distributions. This coming spring, receiving districts will submit new claim forms that will be used to calculate final FY06 tuition. Pupils' actual special education costs will also be reported in the spring. Any necessary adjustments to the current numbers will be made in June.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact Phyllis Rogers of the Office of School Finance, at (781) 338-6534 or via email at progers@doe.mass.edu.

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Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2006

Competitive FY2006 Academic Support Grant Requests for Proposals

MEMORANDUM

To: Leaders and Representatives of School Districts, Charter Schools, Approved Private Special Education Schools, Collaboratives, Higher Education Institutions, One Stop Career Centers, Adult Basic Education Providers, and other Public and Private Educational Service Organizations.

From: Rachele M. Engler, Director of Academic Support

Date: December 22, 2005 (**REVISED VERSION**)

Subject: Competitive FY2006 Academic Support Grant Requests for Proposals (RFPs): For 2006 Spring/Summer Programs: Fund Codes (FC): [592-B-1](#), [592-B-2](#), and [597](#)

Three competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) grant applications have been released for additional FY 2006 Academic Support spring/summer programs. The RFPs have been posted to the Department's Grant page under "2. FY2006 Requests for Proposals" (<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/>), and select information is highlighted below. Please see RFPs and associated documents for full details and contact the Academic Support unit with any questions via phone: 781-338-3203 or email: achievement@doe.mass.edu.

JANUARY 10 -- INFORMATION SESSION

On January 10, 2006, from 1:00-2:30 p.m., a bidders' conference will take place on the third floor of the Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden MA 02148. The session will provide an overview of the new grant opportunities as well as an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions. Please register online via <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=170>.

APPLICATIONS DUE TO THE DEPARTMENT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2006

[FC 592-B-1](#) Competitive Academic Support **Partnering Program** for Students from the Classes of 2003-2007

[FC 592-B-2](#) Competitive Academic Support: **Collaborative Success Plan**

APPLICATIONS DUE TO THE DEPARTMENT FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2006

PLEASE NOTE:

Regrettably, the Department will not be able to fund the FC 592-B-3 - Transition Services grant program at this time. We apologize for any disappointment earlier announcements about this may have caused.

• **Fund Code: 592-B-1**

Academic Support Partnering Program for Students from the Classes of 2003-2007

PURPOSE:

The goal of this program is to provide academic instruction (English language arts and mathematics) and support services that enable students from the Classes of 2003-2007 to continue to pursue a Competency Determination through the delivery of programs developed collaboratively by school districts, One Stop Career Centers, community colleges, and other partners in areas of the state that have a need for additional support services. Planning and recruitment efforts are expected to begin upon grant approval (early March), with student services to take place in the summer (as well as the spring if possible).

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES:

Eligible applications must be submitted by a partnership that includes at least one of each of the following three types of institutions/organizations:

1. public school district, charter school, approved private special education school, and/or educational collaborative;
2. community college and/or other type of higher education institution; and
3. One Stop Career Center.

FUNDING AMOUNTS:

Up to \$350,000 is available statewide, with up to \$100,000 available per grant award.

• **Fund Code: 592-B-2**

Competitive Academic Support: Collaborative Success Plan

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this grant is the development of a Collaborative Success Plan (CSP) to supplement existing district resources to help increase the number of:

- a. students entering high school who will exit having met the competency determination and graduation requirements; and
- b. post-12th grade students who are aware of the postsecondary educational and/or employment/ workforce training opportunities available until passing the retest.

Through the collaborative efforts of the students, families, schools, and community, a communication and support tool will be developed and implemented to:

- provide an outline of educational choices, consequences, and options for secondary and post-secondary students;
- identify key times when decisions are made in high school and possible support interventions;
- specify roles that various members of the community will play in supporting students striving to earn their high school diplomas; and
- serve as a model that other communities may adapt and replicate in the future.

Efforts are expected to begin upon grant approval (early March), with relevant components of the CSP being implemented within an existing 2006 summer program (that does not need to take place in the lead applicant's district).

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES:

The application must be submitted by at least one of the following:

public school district, charter school, and/or approved private special education school, in partnership with at least one other entity such as the following:

community organizations, businesses, community colleges, and One Stop Career Centers.

FUNDING AMOUNTS:

Up to \$250,000 is available statewide, with up to \$75,000 awarded to each grantee.

- **Fund Code: 597**

Competitive Academic Support Services - *Work and Learning* Programs

PURPOSE:

The goal of this program is to provide quality innovative and intensive instruction in English language arts and mathematics through *work and learning* programs to students in the classes of 2003-2007 who have taken and not yet passed the 10th grade MCAS needed to complete the state required competency determination for high school graduation. Student services are to be offered during the summer (2006), with planning and recruitment to begin upon grant approval.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES:

School districts, charter schools, institutions of higher education, adult basic education providers, and public and private educational service organizations are eligible to partner with a high school or a group of high schools to submit applications for funding.

FUNDING AMOUNTS:

Up to \$350,000 is now available statewide. Grant awards are based on the quality of programs and the number of students served.

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