



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

- > [Update Archive](#)
- > [Commissioner's Welcome](#)
- > [Commissioner's Checklist](#)



Commissioner's Update

February 22, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this update I have 4 announcements and 6 items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

Massachusetts State Performance Plan (MA SPP) for 2005-2010

The Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005-2010 is now available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/>. Required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, this is a six-year strategic plan regarding Massachusetts' approach to the 20 Indicators identified by the Federal Office of Special Education Programs. The report includes baseline data, performance targets and improvement activities for each Indicator, including graduation rates, dropout rates and performance of students with disabilities on the MCAS tests. Also, the MA SPP outlines several new areas in which the Department is required to collect data and measure performance, including the post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Massachusetts will be required to make district level information publicly available across all Indicators beginning in the 2006-7 school year.

MCAS Performance Appeals

I want to remind you of an option that is available for high school students for whom you may want to file MCAS performance appeals in English language arts and/or mathematics and who generally participate in smaller class sizes that may result in cohorts of less than 6 other students. Portfolio or work sample appeals should be filed for these students. *Please encourage educators and students to get into the habit of consistently collecting, assembling and saving student work samples so that evidence of performance on the learning standards is readily available when the time comes for submitting an MCAS Portfolio appeal.* Additionally, when filing portfolio or cohort appeals, please ensure that the applications, cohort worksheets and supporting information are thoroughly completed and accurate. No determination will be made on incomplete or inaccurate performance appeals submissions. MCAS Portfolio and cohort appeals filing guidelines are at www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/. Call 781-338-3333 for more assistance.

Third Annual Student Art Contest Sponsored by MEFA

The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority, MEFA, with the support of the Massachusetts Department of Education announces its third annual college saving art competition, "*What Do I Want To Be When I Graduate From College?*" for all Massachusetts public and private elementary school students in grades 3, 4, and 5. Three winners will be selected from each grade and will receive first, second or third place monetary awards of \$5,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 to be deposited into a U Fund college investment account. The deadline for art submissions is April 15 and winners will be announced in June. Contest information can be found at www.mefa.org/contest/ or call 1-800-449-MEFA (6332).

Educational Collaboratives: A Summary of Activity in 2005

Joe Keefe, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, has provided me with a summary of some of the activities undertaken by the Commonwealth's educational collaboratives in 2005. The report and other useful information regarding educational collaboratives may be viewed at www.doe.mass.edu/moec/05activitysummary.html.

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

1. Resources for the MCAS Spring 2006 Test Administrations Available Online



2. Spring 2006 MCAS School Closure (Snow Day Policy)



3. November 2005 MCAS Retest Composition CD



4. Updated Database for Qualified MELA-O Administrators and Trainers (QMAs/QMTS)



5. Additional MCAS/MEPA Workshop Session



6. Educational Data Warehouse and Reporting System



All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#)



- > MCAS Home
- > School Notices
- > About The MCAS
 - Test Schedule
 - Test Items
 - Scoring Guides/Student Work
 - MCAS Results
- > MCAS Alternate Assessment
- > MEPA
- > Publications
- > MCAS Performance Appeals
 - Parent Information Hotline
 - 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Resources for the MCAS Spring 2006 Test Administrations Available Online

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

Resources for the upcoming retest, including non-participation forms, are posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/retest.html. More information, including the *Principal's Administration Manual*, will be posted prior to administration.

Resources for the spring 2006 MCAS tests, including the *Principal's Administration Manual*, are posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2006/admin/. Updates and more information, including workshop slides, will be posted later this winter and in early spring.

E-mail this page | Print View



- > MCAS Home
- > School Notices
- > About The MCAS
 - Test Schedule
 - Test Items
 - Scoring Guides/Student Work
 - MCAS Results
- > MCAS Alternate Assessment
- > MEPA
- > Publications
- > MCAS Performance Appeals
 - Parent Information Hotline
 - 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Spring 2006 MCAS School Closure (Snow Day) Policy

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

If a district has a single snow day during the spring 2006 MCAS retest, MEPA, or MCAS test administrations, the district should continue testing after the snow day, beginning testing where it was left off the day before the snow day. In this case, the return of materials may be delayed by one day to make up for the snow day.

If a district has multiple snow days during test administration, it should check the Department's Website (www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/) for instructions.

E-mail this page | Print View



- > [MCAS Home](#)
- > [School Notices](#)
- > [About The MCAS](#)
 - [Test Schedule](#)
 - [Test Items](#)
 - [Scoring Guides/Student Work](#)
 - [MCAS Results](#)
- > [MCAS Alternate Assessment](#)
- > [MEPA](#)
- > [Publications](#)
- > [MCAS Performance Appeals](#)
 - [Parent Information Hotline](#)
 - [1-866-MCAS220](#)



[Assessment/Accountability](#) > [MCAS](#) >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

November 2005 MCAS Retest Composition CD

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

This is to notify you that we have sent CD-ROMs to superintendents for each school that administered the November 2005 MCAS ELA Retest. A brief user's guide accompanies the CD. When distributing CDs to schools, remember that the information on the CDs is confidential, and access to student results is limited to the student, parents/guardians, and authorized school personnel.

Please contact the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103 if you have any questions. Thank you.

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#)



EVENTS CALENDAR

March 2006						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:

Updated Database for Qualified MELA-O Administrators and Trainers (QMAs/QMTs)

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

As you are aware, the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) is the state's required assessment of proficiency in Listening (Comprehension) and Speaking (Production) for limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades K-12. MELA-O requires that each LEP student be observed and evaluated over a period of time by a qualified administrator (QMA) or trainer (QMT).

A revised list of QMAs and QMTs and the district in which they work has now been posted to the Department's Webpage at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2006/news/melao_lep.html. This list reflects information reported to the Department as of February 15, 2006.

I am asking all directors of English language learner programs and all QMAs and QMTs to examine this revised list and report any corrections to the Department. Please contact Lydia Smith in the Student Assessment Office by phone at (781) 338-3625, or via email at lsmith@doe.mass.edu, to report any of the following corrections to the information in this database:

- **Names of QMAs and QMTs who are no longer working in your district**
These names will remain in the database in an "unknown district" category until such time as the QMA/QMT updates his or her information to reflect the name of the district, if any, in which he or she currently works.
- **Names of any QMA trained and qualified in their district since February 15**
These individuals must send a completed QMA Information Form signed by their MELA-O trainer to the Department via mail or fax at (781) 338-3630. For your reference, a sample QMA Information Form has been posted to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2006/news/melao_lep.html. Names of QMAs received after February 15 will be added to the database and posted in August 2006.

Thank you in advance for reviewing this important information.

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#)



- > MCAS Home
- > School Notices
- > About The MCAS
 - Test Schedule
 - Test Items
 - Scoring Guides/Student Work
 - MCAS Results
- > MCAS Alternate Assessment
- > MEPA
- > Publications
- > MCAS Performance Appeals
 - Parent Information Hotline
 - 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Additional MCAS/MEPA Workshop Session

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

Copy: Superintendents

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

In order to facilitate the participation of principals in the Springfield area, we will hold an additional MCAS/MEPA workshop in Springfield on the afternoon of March 8, 2006. The workshop will be identical in content and format to all other workshops offered this March.

The workshop will be held as follows:

- 12:30-1:15 p.m.: Registration
- 1:15-3:15 p.m.: MCAS segment
- 3:15-3:30 p.m.: Break
- 3:30-4:45 p.m.: MEPA segment

If you have already registered for the morning Springfield session and wish to instead register for this new afternoon session, please contact the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103 to amend your registration.

More information about the spring workshop, including other sessions, is posted on the Department's Website at www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=2746.

We will be able to accommodate two staff members per school. It is recommended that the principal attend, along with the school's testing coordinator or another staff member from the school or district (as designated by the district superintendent). Principals may arrange to attend only the MCAS portion of the workshop if they have no enrolled LEP students and will therefore not be administering the MEPA this spring.

We ask that you register **by March 1, 2006** by completing the online registration form at www.mcasservicecenter.com. When registering, you will be asked to confirm whether or not you will be attending the MEPA segment of the workshop.

Following your online registration, you will be prompted to print out the "Registration Successful" page and to click on a link to driving directions. Please note that due to seating limitations, only confirmed registrants can be guaranteed admission. Thank you for your understanding.

Please contact the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103 if you have any questions.

Thank you.



EVENTS CALENDAR

March 2006						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:

Educational Data Warehouse and Reporting System

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders and Educational Collaboratives

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2006

I am pleased to announce the pilot of a statewide Educational Data Warehouse and Reporting System for use by DOE and district staff. After a lengthy and thorough RFR and evaluation process, the Department has selected Cognos Corporation as its data warehouse provider. With contract negotiations complete and funding and district participation for the initial pilot in place, the Department plans to begin implementation of the first phase of the pilot the last week of February 2006.

Phase One of the pilot will enable various DOE staff and 35 pilot districts to make use of the Cognos tools to analyze and report on four years of SIMS and MCAS data. Basic predefined reports will be provided, and users will have the capability to use Cognos' robust, web-based design tools to generate reports on any fields within SIMS and MCAS.

In addition, seven of the participating districts will upload a limited set of local data into the data warehouse, enabling them to link their local student, assessment, course, and staff data to SIMS and MCAS. The pilot's first phase is expected to be deployed in June 2006. The second phase of the pilot, currently expected to run during the academic year 2006-07, will extend local data loading capability to the remaining pilot districts.

Meanwhile, we are working actively with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to secure funding for a statewide license, allowing all public school educators and policy makers in the Commonwealth to access the data warehouse. The long-term goal of the pilot is to provide a powerful, standardized, and user-friendly system for reporting and analyzing educational data to all Commonwealth school districts, at a substantially reduced cost.

We will keep the districts up to date on our progress in this initiative. I encourage you to contact Darrick Yee at dye@doe.mass.edu or (781) 338-3509 if you are evaluating data warehouse tools.

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print View](#)