



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's Update

March 21, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this update I have 2 announcements and 6 items recently posted at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu):

### Alternative Education Program/School Survey







The Department of Education created a brief online survey to increase knowledge on the breadth of Alternative Education in Massachusetts. Information gathered will help the Department to: 1) increase district knowledge of promising practices throughout the state, and 2) provide improved technical assistance and training to both existing and emerging programs/schools.

This survey is available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/alted/survey/>. Please have a staff person familiar with Alternative Education in your district complete this survey for each Alternative Education program/school. Contact Jenny Caldwell, State Coordinator of Alternative Education, at 781-338-6839 or [jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu), with any questions.

### SIMS 2006-2007 Collection

Changes to the 2006-2007 SIMS collections are being implemented to increase the quality of the data and to meet new federal special education reporting requirements. The complete list of changes is available at the data collection website <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/fy07changes.pdf> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/fy07changes.doc>. If you have any questions please contact Data Collection at 781-338-3282 or [data@doe.mass.edu](mailto:data@doe.mass.edu).

Here are 6 items recently posted at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu):

1. Spring 2006 School Choice Enrollment Update  

2. Update on FY06 Charter Tuition Calculations  

3. Partnership for Technology Professional Development  

4. Reducing Trauma as a Barrier to Learning - State Conference  

5. Supporting the Children of Guard and Reserve Institute Training  

6. National Library Week and Week of the Young Child from April 2-8, 2006  


All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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*Massachusetts Department of Education*

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## School Finance: School Choice

### School Choice Roster Updates, Spring 2006

FY06 is the third year in which the Student Information System (SIMS) has been used for the purpose of determining which children are attending various school choice districts around the Commonwealth. October 1, 2005 enrollment submitted by receiving districts through SIMS was the basis for tuition calculations used to generate the December 30, 2005 and March 31, 2006 assessments and payments for school choice sending and receiving districts.

The school choice law requires both a fall and a spring enrollment reporting period. For this spring's reporting, receiving districts are asked to download and save on a district computer's hard drive their current enrollment spreadsheet using DOE's security portal. Because SIMS does not collect exact start dates, leave dates, or pupil addresses, district staff should enter that information for each pupil. In addition, for any school choice pupil who receives special education services, a pupil-specific special education cost should be calculated and entered on the spreadsheet (for further guidance, see the [school choice sped increment explanation](#)). When all of the school choice data have been updated, the claim form should be saved on the district's computer and uploaded through the DOE security portal to the district's school choice drop box.

These data changes will be used to calculate final FY06 school choice tuition. The June 30, 2006 local aid distribution will reflect the difference between final annual tuition and the amounts paid in the December and March distributions. Any adjustments to the last year's FY05 calculations will also be incorporated into the distribution in June.

#### Please note:

- The [DOE Security Portal](#) may be accessed by district staff who have been given the proper security permission.
- Claim Form Instructions ( [WORD](#) || [PDF](#) ) are available for completing and updating the school choice claim form spreadsheet, which is named "06SC000.xls" where 000 is the three-digit lea code.
- The sped increment is calculated on a template similar to that used for the circuit breaker program. However, there are differences. For that reason, receiving school choice districts should be sure to download and use the [FY06 School Choice SPED Increment](#) template.
- A certification statement ( [WORD](#) || [PDF](#) ) is required from the superintendent of each receiving district. This should be mailed or faxed to Phyllis Rogers at the address below, once the file has been submitted.

**Phyllis Rogers**  
**Office of School Finance**  
**Massachusetts Department of Education**  
**350 Main Street**  
**Malden, MA 02148-5023**  
**Fax 781-338-6530**

- Both the "06SC000" spreadsheet and certification statements are due by April 28th, 2006.



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## School Finance: Charter Schools

### Memorandum

**To:** Superintendents and Charter School Leaders  
**From:** David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education  
**Date:** 3/13/06  
**Subject:** Update on FY06 Charter Tuition Calculations

The revised charter tuition formula implemented last year includes a component for facility costs, based on the average of all district capital facilities expenditures in the prior year. The formula also anticipates 100% reimbursement by the state for this component of districts' tuition costs.

The FY05 facility component was calculated at \$748 per pupil, and the first quarter tuition estimates for FY06 were based on a comparable amount. However, actual spending reports from the districts for FY05 have shown a dramatic increase in facility expenditures, due primarily to the large, one-time payments from the School Building Authority. For the second and third quarter tuition estimates, the facilities aid component has been adjusted up to \$1031 per pupil. As the remaining district spending reports are processed, this number will continue to increase prior to the final tuition calculations in the fourth quarter.

Absent legislation, the effect of this unanticipated increase in the facility component is two-fold. First, charter schools will receive a larger tuition payment than expected this year and next year, with a corresponding drop in FY08 when the SBA catch-up payments end. Second, sending districts will have to absorb a significant portion of the higher payments this year, as the state appropriation for reimbursement is insufficient to cover the higher amounts.

I am recommending to the Legislature that it allow the Department to use the FY05 per pupil amount adjusted for inflation in the FY06 calculations. This will smooth out the payments to charter schools over time and ensure that we can meet our commitment to the sending districts to reimburse them for this cost. The Governor has made the same recommendation for FY07 in his House 2 budget proposal.

Charter school leaders and superintendents in sending districts need to be aware of the potential for significant adjustments in the fourth quarter as a result of this issue. If you need additional information or assistance, please contact associate commissioner Jeff Wulfson ([jwulfson@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jwulfson@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-6500) or school finance programs manager Roger Hatch ([rhatch@doe.mass.edu](mailto:rhatch@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-6527).

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## Educational Technology

### Partnership for Technology Professional Development

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Collaborative Directors

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: March 16, 2006

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The Department of Education is pleased to announce a new technology professional development initiative funded through Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology, under the No Child Left Behind Act.

The Partnership for Technology Professional Development Program (Fund Code: 165) is a 15-month program that will award a competitive grant of up to \$250,000 to a high-need school district that will partner with appropriate service providers to provide high-quality professional development using MassONE and/or in the use of MassONE, the state's online learning system. Other school districts that receive the Title II-D entitlement grants will be able to participate in this program.

Proposals are due at the Department by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 1, 2006. If you have questions, contact Connie Louie at 781-338-6865 or ([clouie@doe.mass.edu](mailto:clouie@doe.mass.edu)).

The grant application is posted on our website <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/>. To assist you with your grant application, we are conducting an informational session on Monday, April 10, 2006, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden (Room 3A). Directions to the session are posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/contact/doedirections.asp>. Please email Nicole Cirino at [ncirino@doe.mass.edu](mailto:ncirino@doe.mass.edu) by Friday, April 7, 2006, if your staff members wish to attend the session.

I encourage you to take advantage of this grant opportunity to advance education reform and the goals of No Child Left Behind.

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## Reducing Trauma as a Barrier to Learning - State Conference

May 10, 2006

Hogan Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

The Department of Education is hosting a conference on reducing trauma as a barrier to learning through Trauma-Sensitive Schools. Children experiencing trauma are likely to struggle in school with language and communication, attentiveness to classroom tasks, regulating emotions, and engaging in the curriculum.

Trauma-Sensitive Schools provide an environment that may include: staff awareness of trauma, training on teaching students affected by trauma, linking with mental health professionals, academic instruction for traumatized children, and nonacademic strategies for traumatized children.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, a national expert on trauma, will provide a keynote address on the impact of trauma on learning. Dr. van der Kolk has been active as a clinician, researcher, and teacher in the area of posttraumatic stress and related phenomena since the 1970s. He is a past President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University Medical School, and Medical Director of the Trauma Center at HRI Hospital in Brookline, Massachusetts. He has taught at universities and hospitals across the United States and around the world.

### AGENDA

8:15-9:15 -- Registration and Breakfast

9:15-9:30 -- Welcome

9:30-11:00 -- Keynote Address - Dr. van der Kolk

11:00-11:10 -- Break

11:10-12:30 -- Flexible Framework Presentation

12:30-1:15 -- Lunch

1:15-3:00 -- Regional Group Guided Discussion Session

3:00-3:15 -- Break

\*3:15-4:00 -- Bidders Conference for the Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Grant Program

Please register for this conference below. Conference registration will close on April 26th, or if maximum capacity is reached. Please register early. There is no fee for this conference.

\*A bidders conference for the Safe and Supportive Learning Environment Grant will take place at the end of the day. All school districts are welcome to attend. For more information about this grant, please visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/tss/grants.html>

Interested in learning about Trauma-Sensitive Schools? See: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/tss/>

Please contact Jenny Caldwell, State Coordinator of Alternative Education, at [jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-6839 with questions.

First Name:

Last Name:

Title/Position:

Job Function:

Email:

Phone:

Plan to attend bidders  
conference? (YES/NO):

District:

Session:

Contact [jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jcaldwell@doe.mass.edu) should you have any questions regarding this conference.

Please provide a **valid email address** so that we may send instructions regarding your session.

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## NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:

## Supporting the Children of Guard and Reserve Institute Training

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders and other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: March 8, 2006

Operation Military Kids Massachusetts (OMK-MA), a collaborative effort among UMass Extension's 4-H Program, the MA Department of Education, MA National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and the American Legion, will host a **Supporting the Children of Guard and Reserve Institute Training** conducted by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). **The purpose of this special training session is to help school staff recognize and deal with issues and problems facing the children of deployed servicemen and women.** The two-day session will be held April 27 and 28 from 8:30 - 4:00 p.m. at

Westford Regency Inn,  
219 Littleton Rd.  
Westford, MA

I encourage you to send a representative from the district guidance or other counseling staff as well as a school nurse to this unique training opportunity.

Brigadier General (PA) ret. Keith Martin, Project Manager for MCEC's Guard and Reserve Institute training, said, "Massachusetts Guard and Reserve servicemen and women are deployed in large numbers, serving alongside their Active Component comrades in the Global War on Terror and in disaster relief efforts here at home. These extended, and in some cases, multiple call-ups leave 'suddenly military' children on the home front; often in communities and schools far from the support networks of major military installation." Martin added, "We greatly appreciate the support of the Department of Education, National Guard and the entire Operation Military Kid team in making this training opportunity possible. The citizens of Massachusetts can be very proud of their leaders' commitment to doing everything possible to support the children of our deployed servicemen and women."

Dr. Mary Keller, MCEC Executive Director said, "The Guard and Reserve Institute training was developed by experienced educators and researchers to provide the awareness, sensitivities and skills to help our schools support the children of our deployed servicemen and women. The Institute seminar will 'train the trainers' so they can take what they learn back to their communities, campuses and colleagues."

The MCEC Guard and Reserve Institute training is funded by the Department of the Army Community and Family Service Center. There is no cost to participants except for travel and lodging expense. Attached for your convenience is a registration form or individuals can obtain registration information at <http://www.militarychild.org/GuardForm.asp>.

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## District/School Administration

### National Library Week and Week of the Young Child from April 2-8, 2006

To: Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders, and Educational Collaborative Directors, Public Schools with PreK-3 Classrooms

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: March 20, 2006

In partnership with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, I am pleased to invite you to celebrate National Library Week and Week of the Young Child from April 2-8, 2006.

#### National Library Week

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries across the country each April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. All types of libraries - school, public, academic and special - participate. This year, National Library Week is being promoted with the theme, "Change your world @ your library®." For more information, visit: <http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/nlw/NLW.htm>

#### Week of the Young Child

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. Each spring, NAEYC sponsors the Week of the Young Child to focus public attention on the importance of the early years for children's development and learning. This year, the theme for the Week of the Young Child is Building Better Futures for All Children. For more information, visit: <http://www.naeyc.org/about/woyc/>

In recognition of these national celebrations, the Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Robert C. Maier, and I are distributing two outreach tools for public schools with PreK-3 classrooms:

- *How to Help Your Young Child Do Well in Reading* brochures with tips to help parents support their young children's success in reading
- READ posters featuring First Lady Ann Romney to be posted in school libraries

These materials will be sent to public school media specialists in late March and will be available for downloading on the Reading Office website. Please contact 781-338-6265 or [reading@doe.mass.edu](mailto:reading@doe.mass.edu) if you would like more information.

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