



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's Update

June 2, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have 3 announcements and 8 items recently posted at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu) for your review.

### Update

#### *Spaces Still Available for 2006 Summer Content Institutes*

The Massachusetts Department of Education is sponsoring more than 32 graduate-level content institutes on topics ranging from mathematics to the arts. These institutes are available across the state and are at no cost to educators. Participants are eligible for over 60 PDPs. (Please note that graduate credits are offered for an additional cost, often at a reduced fee.)

Spaces are filling quickly, so register now to be sure to get into the institute of your choice! The brochure is located at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/cinstitute/>

#### School Safety and Discipline Reports

The School Safety and Discipline Report are due to be returned to the Department by July 30. This online application collects information on all incidents involving drugs, violence or criminal offenses on school property and the resulting disciplinary actions imposed on the student offenders involved. According to our records almost 200 districts have not yet accessed the application to enter information for the 2005-2006 school year. Instructions for reporting and accessing the application can be found on our website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/schedule.html>. If you need additional assistance please contact Data Collection at 781-338-3282.









#### Safe Routes to Schools

WalkBoston has developed "The 15 Safe Routes to Schools," a curriculum and set of lesson plans aimed at teaching students how walking is good for their bodies, the environment. The lesson plans are aimed at students in grades K-5 and provide lessons in Health, Math, Social Studies and Science. The curriculum was specifically designed to meet our state's curriculum frameworks, and include print and Internet lesson plans. I would encourage elementary school teachers to review this material, and to consider incorporating it either partially or in its entirety in your classroom. To review the materials and download the curriculum, look online at [http://www.walkboston.org/projects/safe\\_routes.htm](http://www.walkboston.org/projects/safe_routes.htm).

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Postings at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu):

1. Summer 2006 MCAS Retest: Test Administration Schedule and Reminder about June 9 Deadlines

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2. Release of Spring 2006 Student, School and District MEPA Results: Friday, June 9
  - 3. National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) Additional Assurance Required for IDEA Part B Grant
  - 4. Revised May 31, 2006: Diplomas for Eligible Veterans
  - 5. Revised May 26, 2006: Recruitment for Board of Education Advisory Councils
  - 6. Notice of Public Comment, Proposed Amendments to Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00
  - 7. Notice of Public Comment, Proposed Amendments to School Finance Regulations, 603 CMR 10.00
  - 8. Science and Technology/Engineering Education Forum Information
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Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### Summer 2006 MCAS Retest: Test Administration Schedule and Reminder about *June 9* Deadlines

To: High School Principals and Directors of Alternative Adult/External Diploma Programs, Evening High Schools, Charter Schools, Approved Private Special Education Schools, Institutional Schools, and Collaboratives

Copy: Superintendents

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 30, 2006

I am writing to provide you with information about the summer 2006 MCAS retest administration. As you know, all students from the classes of 2003-2006 who have not met the Competency Determination requirement may participate.

#### Test Administration Schedule

The Mathematics retest will take place on **August 1**, and the ELA retest will take place on **August 2 and 3**. Students may choose from one of four retest sites throughout the Commonwealth. Please refer to my May 1 Update [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=2866](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=2866) for more details.

The retests will follow the attached [schedule](#). Please advise students who may need more time (i.e., would find it difficult to complete the tests according to the attached schedule) to participate in the November retest instead of the summer administration.

Students registered for the English Language Arts retest must attend the test sessions on Wednesday **and** Thursday.

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

#### Reminder about Deadlines

The deadline for registering students for the summer retest is 3 p.m., **June 9**. Principals (or designees) may register students by using the online form posted at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com). Students using any of the following accommodations must receive prior approval from the Department: individualized mathematics reference sheet (accommodation 20), other standard accommodation (accommodation 25), and other non-standard accommodation (accommodation 32). Schools must fax requests to use these accommodations to the Department at (781) 338-3630 by **June 9**.

Also, prospective test administrators must submit applications by **June 9**.



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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### Release of Spring 2006 Student, School, and District MEPA Results: Friday, June 9

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 30, 2006

I am writing to inform you that Spring 2006 Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) student, school and district results will be posted electronically via the Measured Progress secure website on Friday, June 9. Each superintendent is authorized to access results for his/her district and schools; each principal is authorized to access results for his/her school.

The following reports/results will be posted electronically:

- *Parent/Guardian Reports;*
- *Preliminary Participation Report* (includes district and state comparisons);
- *Preliminary Results by Years of Enrollment in U.S. Schools* (includes district and state comparisons);
- *School Rosters* (student scaled score and performance level results);
- *Guide to the MEPA for Parents/Guardians* (including translations in Cape Verdian, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese); and
- *Guide to Interpreting the Spring 2006 MEPA Reports for Schools and Districts*
- Student level data file and file layout by district (available only to superintendents)

For assistance downloading data from the Measured Progress website, please call the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103. Also, Test Wiz has been updated to import these data files beginning June 9; you will need to install the latest version of TestWiz ([www.testwiz.com/mass/update.html](http://www.testwiz.com/mass/update.html)). These files can also be read using Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet software.

Additionally, principals will receive paper copies of the following reports on Friday, June 9:

- *Parent/Guardian Reports* for students (including translated report templates)
- *Guide to the MEPA for Parents/Guardians* (including copies of translations)

### Results Embargoed until Monday, June 19, 2006

The Department plans to release school, district, and state MEPA results to the public by June 19. Please do not publicly release your results prior to the state's release of these data. We ask that districts/schools use the period prior to June 15 to examine results for any cases of missing or irregular data. Please immediately report (no later than 5 p.m., Thursday, June 15) any such cases to the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103.



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## Special Education

### National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) Additional Assurance Required for IDEA Part B Grant

**To:** Superintendents and Administrators of Special Education  
**From:** Marcia Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education  
**Date:** May 15, 2006

One of the topics addressed by IDEA is the **National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)**, which is designed to streamline access to instructional materials for students who are blind or have other print disabilities.

Attached please find a fact sheet on (NIMAS) prepared by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In addition, there is a NIMAS technical advice website which provides a detailed explanation of the NIMAS provision and its background. The website is <http://nimas.cast.org>

#### States' Responsibilities

Every state is required to adopt the NIMAS. NIMAS outlines a set of consistent and valid specifications for document source files created by K-12 curriculum publishers or other content producers that can be used to create accessible specialized formats of print instructional materials. Curriculum materials covered by NIMAS include printed textbooks and printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary school instruction and that are required by a state or school district for use by students in the classroom. Each state must provide an assurance to OSEP as part of the State's Part B application that students who need curriculum materials in alternate formats are provided with those formats in a timely manner to insure access to the general education curriculum.

In addition, the state may choose to "opt-in" or "opt-out" of the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). NIMAC will create a national repository of NIMAS source files that can then be converted into formats that are accessible by students who are blind or have other print disabilities. Massachusetts has decided to "opt in" and has provided an assurance to OSEP regarding our participation in NIMAC. Even though Massachusetts does not order textbooks for districts, choosing to participate in NIMAC will help districts acquire student-ready versions in a more timely and cost-efficient manner. We will provide further information on this process in the fall of 2006-7.

#### Districts' Responsibilities

Each district has the option of participating in NIMAC. Whether a district does or does not participate in NIMAC, the district will be responsible for ensuring that each child who requires instructional materials in an alternate format will receive it in a timely manner. The Massachusetts Department of Education recommends that districts choose to participate in NIMAC, because this national effort to centralize the distribution of instructional materials in alternate formats will help guarantee timely provision of such materials to students.

For districts that choose to participate in NIMAC, **contracts with publishers executed on and after**

**December 3, 2006** for textbooks and other printed core materials *must* include a provision that requires the publisher to produce NIMAS files and send them to the NIMAC (this will not add any cost to the contract). Curriculum publishers have been involved in discussions relating to NIMAS and are well aware of its requirements. Model contract language is included below:

"By agreeing to deliver the materials marked with "NIMAS" on this contract or purchase order, the publisher agrees to submit a valid NIMAS file set to the NIMAC at the American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. (APH). Should the vendor be a distributor of the materials and not the publisher, the distributor agrees to immediately notify the publisher of its obligation to submit NIMAS file sets of the purchased products to the NIMAC. This is page \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_ of this contract or purchase order."

In lieu of, or in addition to choosing to participate in NIMAC, each LEA may contract with curriculum publishers directly to purchase accessible, student-ready versions. In most cases, however, you will find that publishers will not have such versions for sale.

## Required Documentation

As part of the FY2007 Grant Assurances Document provided by all districts, there is an additional certification dealing with the NIMAS provisions of IDEA in "**SECTION I**" at **I-5**, entitled **National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)**. Your district is required to review this assurance, check YES or NO to indicate if you will "opt-in" to the NIMAC or provide materials in an alternate but timely manner, sign the assurance, and return it with your FY2007 grant application package.

### For more information

- We will provide additional details on the process of working with NIMAC in the fall of 2006-2007.
- To learn more about NIMAS, please refer to <http://nimas.cast.org>
- To learn more about the NIMAC, please refer to <http://nimac.us>

**Attachment:** [IDEA-Reauthorized Statute-National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#)

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## Diplomas for Eligible Veterans

To: Superintendents of Schools and School Committee Chairs, Veterans' Groups and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education and Thomas Kelley, Secretary, Veterans' Services

Date: May 31, 2006

Last November, Governor Romney signed into law Chapter 130 of the Acts of 2005, "An Act Providing Benefits to Service Members, Veterans and Their Families." One of the provisions allows certain Massachusetts war veterans who withdrew from high school permanently to serve as a member of the armed forces in World War II, the Korean Conflict, or Vietnam and who did not receive high school diplomas to be awarded high school diplomas (see text of law below).

Veterans of these wars who live in Massachusetts and attended your high schools but did not receive diplomas and were honorably discharged should be informed that they may contact the superintendent of schools of the city or town where the veterans last attended high school and request a diploma from the school committee. We encourage you to notify your local veterans' organizations and residents of your community about this opportunity.

Below is the provision of Section 4 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws that specifically authorizes school committees to award diplomas to veterans of certain wars.

**Section 4 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws** is hereby amended by adding the following 2 paragraphs:

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, school committees may award diplomas to any World War II veteran, Korean War veteran or Vietnam War veteran who is a resident of the commonwealth, who attended the high school maintained by the school committee, who withdrew from secondary school before graduation in order to serve in the armed forces of the United States, who did not receive a high school diploma as a consequence of that service, and who was honorably discharged from the armed services. The department of education and the department of veterans' services shall jointly promulgate guidelines for the identification of eligible veterans by school districts and for the awarding of the diplomas by school committees.

Family members of deceased veterans, who otherwise are eligible to apply for the diplomas, may apply for a diploma for the veteran posthumously under the same guidelines set forth by the department of education and department of veterans' services.

This advisory constitutes the "joint guidelines" issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Veterans' Services on this subject. We encourage school officials to work with local veterans' organizations and to address individual cases in accordance with this advisory and with the school district's policies and practices. If you have questions about the Massachusetts law on diplomas for eligible veterans, please contact Jan O'Keefe at the Department of Education at [jokeefe@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jokeefe@doe.mass.edu) or Gail Eldridge at the Department of Veterans' Services at 671-210-5782.

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## The Board of Education Advisory Councils

### Recruitment for Board of Education Advisory Councils

To: Educators, Parents, and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 12, 2006 - **Revised May 26, 2006**

The Massachusetts Department of Education is seeking candidates to serve on the Board of Education Advisory Councils. These councils were established by the Education Reform Act of 1993 to advise the Commissioner and the Board on matters relevant to their areas of focus in the implementation of education reform in Massachusetts. Members of these councils serve without compensation. Each council meets 4 to 6 times per year at times and locations determined by its members. All appointments will be for a three-year term and regular attendance is required.

The Board and I are committed to establishing advisory councils that will work actively to help improve public education programs and advance student achievement. We encourage applications from educators, parents, students, business leaders, and other community members who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to education reform, as well as interest, experience, and expertise in the subject matter of the particular advisory council.

Through diverse membership on each advisory council, we seek to draw on the perspectives and experiences of a wide range of constituents in order to strengthen public education. After reviewing applications, I plan to make appointment recommendations to the Board at the September 2006 meeting.

**Interested parties should submit a letter of intent along with a resume no later than July 14, 2006. These may be sent either by mail to Dr. Lurline Muñoz-Bennett, Office for the Humanities, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, or by email to [advcos@doe.mass.edu](mailto:advcos@doe.mass.edu).** For more information, please contact Lurline Muñoz-Bennett directly at [Lmunoz-bennett@doe.mass.edu](mailto:Lmunoz-bennett@doe.mass.edu) or by telephone at 781-338-6285.

Listed below are those councils with membership vacancies. In cases where these vacancies call for specific representation, it is noted:

- Adult & Community Learning Services: adult educators, business/union, and civic-minded representatives, particularly from central and western Massachusetts.
- Arts Education: candidates may be from all areas and levels of arts education as well as parents, practicing artists, and representatives from community arts organizations, particularly from western and central Massachusetts.
- Braille Literacy: educators, parents, students, and community representatives with expertise or developed interest in the teaching of the blind and visually impaired, particularly in the area of Braille literacy.
- Community Service-Learning: Pre-K through grade 12 and higher education educators and administrators, curriculum directors, parents, students and community representatives with expertise or interest in community service-learning.
- Educational Personnel: no membership vacancies this year.
- Educational Technology: Business partners, specifically business partners who have high interest in the use of technology in teaching and learning.
- English Language Learners/Bilingual Education: educators, parents, and community representatives with expertise in English as a Second Language (ESL), Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), or Bilingual Education.

- Gifted and Talented Education: school administrators, representatives from higher education, and parents, teachers, and community members with expertise or developed interest in gifted education.
- Global Education: teachers, parents, and community representatives with expertise or developed interest in global issues (e.g. economics, world cultures, and environmental science).
- Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services: educators, health professionals, parents and community representatives who are knowledgeable about health education and human services in the public schools. We have a particular need for new members who are parents, community representatives, or professionals who work in community youth programs.
- Life Management Skills and Home Economics: representatives who are well informed and committed to the continuing development of students through Health/Family and Consumer sciences education; parents, students, school student support and guidance professionals; representatives of higher education programs that involve Health/Family and Consumer Sciences certification and licensure programming, and business/civic representatives in Health/Family and Consumer Sciences related career areas to assist in these programs in the public schools under Education Reform.
- Mathematics and Science Education: mathematics and science educators, directors, or coordinators of Pre-K through grade 12 or higher education, as well as parent, community, or professional representatives with expertise and/or a developed interest in any of these disciplines.
- Parent and Community Education and Involvement: Pre-K through grade 12 and higher education educators, community and business partners, parents, students, and others who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to education reform, as well as interest and experience in parental and community involvement.
- Racial Imbalance: parents of children in grades Pre-K through grade 12 from all regions across the state, educators, civic leaders, community group representatives, persons with knowledge and understanding of the Racial Imbalance Law, choice program directors, educators, school committee representatives.
- Special Education: additional parent representation, and a representative from higher education.
- Technology/Engineering Education: technology/engineering education directors, coordinators, educators, or professionals, as well as parent and community representatives with expertise or a developed interest in this discipline. (Note: the focus of this council is on applied technologies such as engineering design, construction, and transportation, but not instructional technology as in computer applications.)

For more information about the Board of Education Advisory Councils, visit our web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/).

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## Education Laws and Regulations

Friday, May 05, 2006

### Notice of Public Comment for Proposed Amendments to the Educator Licensure Regulations

Pursuant to its authority under M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B and c. 71, § 38G, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G. L. c. 30A, § 3 the Massachusetts Board of Education is soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to 603 CMR 7.00, Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval.

The proposed amendments will: remove the current requirement that English Language Learners (ELL) license candidates pass a second subject matter test; relieve already-licensed teachers who seek to add ELL at the grade levels they teach from the requirement to complete a 150-hour practicum; and change the name of the license from "English Language Learners" to "English Language Development" (ELD) to more accurately reflect the scope and purpose of the license.

Copies of the **proposed amendments**   and a **comment form**   are available on the Department's web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/) or by calling 781-338-3292. Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted by mail to Educator Preparation and Quality, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 01248; by e-mail to [certregs@doe.mass.edu](mailto:certregs@doe.mass.edu); or by fax to 781-338-3317. The deadline for submission of public comment is **Friday, June 9, 2006**. The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments at its regular monthly meeting scheduled for June 27, 2006.

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## Education Laws and Regulations

Friday, May 05, 2006

### Notice of Public Comment for Proposed Amendments to the School Finance Regulations, 603 CMR 10.00

Pursuant to its authority under M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71B, § 5A, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, the Massachusetts Board of Education is soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to 603 CMR 10.00, School Finance Regulations.

The proposed amendments will revise section 10.07 (9) of the regulations, relating to the special education "circuit breaker" reimbursement program. The purpose of the amendment is to clarify the accounting treatment of funds remaining at the close of a fiscal year.

Copies of the proposed amendments are available on the Department of Education's School Finance website at [finance1.doe.mass.edu](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu), or by calling 781-338-6511. Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted to John J. Sullivan, Department of Education, 350 Main St., Malden, MA 02148; by fax to 781-338-6530; or by e-mail to [jsullivan@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jsullivan@doe.mass.edu). The deadline for submission of public comment is **Friday, June 9, 2006**. The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments at its regular monthly meeting scheduled for June 27, 2006.

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## Educator Services

### Science and Technology/Engineering Education Information Forum

**To:** Superintendents, Curriculum Coordinators, Charter School Directors, Collaborative Directors, Directors of Approved Private Special Education Schools, Educator Preparation Program Contacts, Science and Technology/Engineering Faculty in colleges and universities, Educators, and Professional Colleagues

**From:** David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

**Date:** May 30, 2006

The Department is working to support districts in their efforts to improve science and technology/engineering teaching and learning. As part of this effort, we are pleased to announce that we will be offering four informational sessions about science and technology/engineering (STE) education next month.

These sessions will highlight:

- The 2006 revised high school STE standards;
- The integration of the high school standards into the Framework;
- Upcoming initiatives to support STE education;
- Updates on the STE MCAS program; and
- Student achievement data.

We invite district staff, school department heads, and others involved in science and technology/engineering education to join us. There will be an opportunity at each session for participants to provide suggestions about how the Department can further support districts in their efforts to improve STE teaching and learning.

Each session is scheduled from 9 am to 12 pm.

#### Monday, June 5

Revere High School Library, Revere

#### Tuesday, June 6

Bridgewater State College, Rondileau Campus Center, Bridgewater

#### Wednesday, June 14

Assabet Valley Regional Vocational-Technical High School Conference Room, Marlborough

#### Thursday, June 15

Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center, Room 212, Springfield

Each session can accommodate a limited capacity. Please register online for a session you wish to attend, using the DOE conference registration: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=206>

For further information, contact Jacob Foster, Director of Science and Technology/Engineering Education: [jfoster@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jfoster@doe.mass.edu). We welcome your participation!