



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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

  [Superintendent's Checklist](#)

Commissioner's Update

August 8, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have one announcement and three items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu for your review.




Pandemic Influenza and All Hazards Planning

To assist you in preparing for the potential of pandemic influenza and other emergencies in the schools, the Department of Education has established a "Pandemic Influenza and All Hazards Planning" website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pandemic/>.

This website is a source of important and timely local, state, national and global information and resources for school personnel and public health and safety officials in preparedness planning, and it will be updated periodically by the Department of Public Health and other agencies.

Please forward this important link to others who are involved in school emergency preparedness.

Postings at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. [Reviews of First Year Waivers](#)

2. [Expanded Learning Time Planning Grants](#)

3. [High School of the Future II Conference Call for Presenters](#)


Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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EVENTS CALENDAR

September 2006

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	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

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

 Past 30 days Past 90 days Date Range

Start:

End:



Educator Services

Reviews of First Year Waivers

To: Superintendents of Schools, Leaders of Horace Mann Charter Schools, Directors of Collaboratives and Approved Private Special Education Schools

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: August 7, 2006

As you may recall, in my April 18, 2006 update I reminded you of the requirement to hire licensed educators. If after making a good faith effort you are unable to hire a qualified candidate who is licensed, you may apply for a waiver from the Commissioner exempting you for one school year from the requirement to employ licensed personnel.

To qualify for a waiver you must demonstrate that you made a good faith effort to hire a licensed educator. Documentation of these efforts must be retained by the district and are subject to review by the Department. The Department will be randomly selecting first year waivers to review the documentation that the district did in fact make a good faith effort to hire a licensed educator. If you are randomly selected for a review, the documentation that you will be asked to submit includes the following:

1. Verification of all actions taken, beyond internal postings, to recruit an appropriately licensed person for the position (for example, letters sent to placement officers/agencies, participation in a job fair and copies of advertisements placed in the media).
2. The name and license number of any appropriately licensed educators who applied for the position, an explanation of why they were not appropriately qualified to perform the duties, and/or the name and license number of any appropriately licensed candidates who declined the position.

As a reminder, during the time that such a waiver is in effect, service of an employee of a school district to which the waiver applies shall not be counted as service in acquiring professional teacher status or other rights under M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 41.

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- › Finance/Grants
Recent Updates
- › Accounting & Auditing
- › Chapter 70 Program
(Foundation Budget)
- › Charter Schools
- › Circuit Breaker
- › DOE Budget
- › Federal Renovation Program
- › Grants: Information
- › Nutrition Programs
(School Lunch)
- › Per Pupil Expenditure Reports
- › Regional Districts
- › School Building Issues
- › School Choice
- › School Finance Regulations
- › Statistical Comparisons
- › Transportation
- › Vocational Education
- › Key Contacts
- › Links

Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2007

School Redesign: Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success - Planning Grant Fund Code: 226

Memorandum

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders
From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Date: August 2, 2006
Subject: Expanded Learning Time Planning Grants

I am pleased to announce that the School Redesign: [Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success Planning Grant RFP](#) is now posted on the state's website.

The Expanded Learning Time Planning Grant program is intended to support a district's planning activities to use longer school days/years as a strategy to raise student achievement. The grants provide resources for districts to plan the innovative redesign of selected schools by adding time to their schedules for English language arts, mathematics and other core subjects; for planning and professional development for teachers; and for integrated enrichment opportunities for students. Districts will plan to expand the hours and/or days of operation by adding no less than 25 percent additional time or 300 hours to the current schedule for all students in the participating schools.

Through a competitive process, grants of at least \$10,000 plus a factor added for each additional school involved in planning are available. At least 60 percent of the grants will go to districts with 25 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced price meals. Other districts are also eligible to apply.

Districts that are awarded planning grants will use the funds to convene principals, school teams, collective bargaining representatives, external partners and others to develop an implementation plan that details the structure of their new school day and year and the steps they will take to make the plan come to life. Districts that develop approvable implementation plans will be eligible for state funding of \$1300 per student to establish Expanded Learning Time schools, pending future state appropriation.

Districts may plan to open the expanded time schools either in September 2007 or September 2008.

The Department will be hosting **two conference calls** to provide information to districts interested in learning more about the expanded learning time planning grant. The conference calls are scheduled for **Friday, August 11th (9:30 - 11:00 am)** and **Tuesday, August 22 (1:00 - 2:30 pm)**. Please email Diane Beck at dbeck@doe.mass.edu if you wish to participate in one of the conference calls. She will provide further information about the call.

I hope your district will consider this unique opportunity. **Please note that the deadline for application is Wednesday, September 27, 2006.** For more information, please contact Sarah McLaughlin [smclaughlin@doe.mass.edu, 781.338.3589] or Karen Vigue [kvigue@doe.mass.edu, 781.338.3567].

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- > [SSCE Home](#)
- > [Pandemic Preparedness](#)
- > [Student Advisory Council](#)
- > [Robert C. Byrd](#)
- > [U.S. Senate](#)
- > [Migrant Education](#)
- > [Student and Secondary Support](#)
- > [Nutrition, Health and Safety](#)
- > [Career/Vocational Technical Ed](#)
- > [Connecting Activities](#)
- > [Legacy Programs](#)
- > [SSCE Staff](#)

[Family & Community](#) > [Students & Families](#) >

Student Support, Career & Education Services

High Schools of the Future II Conference Call for Presenters

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, Department Heads, and Teachers

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: July 31, 2006

The Massachusetts Department of Education, the Center for Collaborative Education, and the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy are soliciting presentation proposals from high school teams for our upcoming *High Schools of the Future Conference II*. This is a follow-up to our successful *High Schools of the Future* conference held in January 2006.

This event is intended to help school and district leaders develop next steps in high school redesign and to help improve the state's graduation and college readiness rates.

General Information

The *High Schools of the Future Conference II* will be held on **October 12** at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough. The program will consist of seven concurrent morning workshops, seven concurrent afternoon workshop sessions, a morning keynote speaker and a luncheon keynote speaker. This call for presenters is to invite high school practitioners and/or administrators to be workshop presenters for the morning and afternoon concurrent workshop sessions.

Important Dates

Submission deadline: August 25

Notification of acceptance by: September 15



General Conference Topics

- High school restructuring
- Literacy across the curriculum
- Scheduling (block scheduling, common planning time for teachers)
- Building community support for changing/restructuring high schools
- Identifying the content and expectations of a college prep curriculum for all students
- Closing the math achievement gap
- Student support /systems of extra help
- Challenging students in their senior year
- Dual enrollment / Early College programs
- Addressing issues of race, class, language and the achievement gap
- Incorporating electives and extra-curricular activities into a small learning community

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals for workshop sessions should include opportunities for participants to exchange information and/or work on a topic or problem with teams from their schools/districts. Workshop presentations will be approximately 70 minutes in length and will be scheduled according the following guidelines:

- 20 minutes maximum of presentation
- 30 minutes of interactive activity (including practical materials that attendees can take back to their schools and use)
- 20 minutes of Q & A

Proposals should be 500 to 1000 words (two to four pages), and contain the information that appears on the **attached form**  .

Evaluation Criteria



All proposals will be reviewed by at least two individuals from the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Center for Collaborative Education, and the Rennie Center. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Topic: importance of issues, relevance to program themes, degree of innovation
- Contribution to the field: models of success, models of 'lessons learned'
- Relevance: to audience, other contexts and school settings
- Written proposal: quality of writing, clarity, logic, organization
- Workshop format: appropriateness of format to content or issues
- Opportunities for interaction: opportunities for contributions from audience or exchange of multiple perspectives

Inquiries

General inquiries regarding the Conference may be directed to Colleen Heffernan at cheffernan@renniecenter.org.

Directions for Submission

Please mail your **proposal**   to the address provided below by August 30, 2006 or email it to: cheffernan@renniecenter.org.

Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy
131 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Attn: Proposal Review Committee

We will confirm receipt of your proposal by email. If you do not receive confirmation, please contact Colleen Heffernan at cheffernan@renniecenter.org.

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