



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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

 [Superintendent's Checklist](#)

Commissioner's Update

November 1, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

As many of you have undoubtedly heard by now, I have decided to retire as of August 31, 2007. That date will represent 43 years in public education for me, and my wife and I have decided that it is time for both of us to retire together, do some traveling and spend more time with our grandchildren. I chose to make my announcement a full 10 months in advance to give the Board of Education ample time to conduct a meaningful and thorough search process and to allow for a smooth transition period next summer.

I have been very lucky in my career to have worked with so many exceptional educators, and I look forward to the many things we will accomplish together over the next 10 months. Enclosed in this week's Update is a copy of the [speech](#) I made before my staff on October 30, a press release we distributed to the media, and a list of what I believe to be our top 10 best accomplishments throughout my tenure www.doe.mass.edu/news/archive06/1030retire.html.

Again, thank you for the excellent work that you do in and out of the classroom every day for the children of the Commonwealth.

In this week's Update I have enclosed 5 announcements and 7 items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu for your review.

High Quality Teachers and Principals - Attachment A

In the October 18, 2006 Commissioner's Update, you received a memorandum entitled "Update to the NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Requirements and District Action Steps for the Coming Year." Attachment A to this memo listed the HQT status of every district. There was an alignment error in the data listed for several districts, hence, if you have already checked your district's status on Attachment A, please click on the following link to reconfirm: www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/hq/101306memo.html?section=A.

Additionally, we are now incorporating an error band of 3 percentage points for districts in "Cohort A," hence, districts that have maintained a HQT percentage of 97% or higher since 2004 are included in this cohort.

I apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

MCAS Performance Appeals Workshop

Since 2003, nearly 3,000 MCAS Performance Appeals have been awarded in mathematics and English language arts to public high school students in Massachusetts through the MCAS Performance Appeals process. This provides students who are unable to pass the Grade 10 Math or English MCAS exams an opportunity to have their English and/or math GPAs and coursework reviewed by a board of high school educators to determine whether he or she meets the passing standard. To assist secondary school faculty members in learning about the filing process, the Department of Education will be offering an MCAS Performance Appeals workshop. I encourage you to send teams of up to 3 educators per district. The workshop will held on Monday, December 11th, from 1-3 p.m., at the Department of Education in Malden. To register, please email mcasappeals@doe.mass.edu, with workshop participant names and titles, and your high school and city or town.

Reminder to Districts on Title IIA: Extension of FY06 Funds into FY07

NCLB allows districts that have applied for funds under Title IIA to extend the fund use period for funds received in one fiscal year into the following fiscal year. This process includes submitting an end of year Financial Report (FR-1) and a check in the amount of the unexpended funds and then reapplying for those funds. Unfortunately, Title IIA funds cannot be simply carried over or extended through the amendment process.

Please refer to the [attached memo](#) explaining the Title IIA fund extension process for districts. The memo explains the process for districts that applied for Title IIA funds through the coordinated district planning process.

Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework Update

I am pleased to present the updated October 2006 Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework. This Framework includes unchanged 2001 K-8 learning standards and the revised high school learning standards, approved by the Board of Education in January 2006. Also incorporated into this Framework are additional vignettes, expanded safety information, revised broad topic outlines, and an updated bibliography. The 2006 Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>. For details on how to order hardcopies please visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/order.html> or call 617-727-2834 (Boston area) or 413-784-1376 (Western MA).








New FY2007 Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten Grant RFP Application Released

We are offering a state-funded competitive grant to encourage the voluntary expansion of high-quality, full-day kindergarten across Massachusetts. This grant is intended for districts ready to implement full-day kindergarten (FDK) in September of 2007.

The larger purpose of the state-funded Kindergarten Development Grant program is to enhance the educational experience of children by increasing the number of full-day kindergarten classrooms; improving overall quality and curriculum; increasing inclusion; promoting continuity of curriculum from preschool (PreK) to third grade; and developing other program components. Our goal is that over time, this will help us to prevent future achievement gaps from even starting.

All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 17, 2006. For more details, review <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants07/rfp/702.html> or contact the Office of Elementary School Support at ecaille@doe.mass.edu, abarton@doe.mass.edu or mchen@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-6355.

Postings at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. Board of Education Votes

2. November 2006 MCAS Retest Update

3. Extension of FY2006 Funds into FY2007

4. 2007-2008 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program

5. 2007 Presidential Awards for Mathematics and Science Teaching

6. Conference on Gifted Education in Western Massachusetts

7. The Advanced Placement Exam Fee Subsidy Program


Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education



- [BOE Home](#)
- [Board Meeting Schedule](#)
- [Board in Brief](#)
- [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- [BOE Members](#)
- [BOE Advisory Councils](#)
- [Chairman's Statements](#)

[District/School Administration](#) > [Administration](#) >

The Massachusetts Board of Education

Board of Education Votes

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders

From: Education Commissioner David P. Driscoll

Date: October 26, 2006

The Board of Education voted on October 24 to require all students to either reach or strive for Proficiency on MCAS.

The goal of this decision is the right one: We need to do whatever we can to encourage our students to achieve at higher levels. This change leaves the passing score at 220, but requires students who pass but haven't made it to Proficient to take courses and additional assessments that will move them in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the media vastly mischaracterized this vote. The newspapers, TV and radio have reported that the Board voted to "increase the passing score to 240." I am writing to clear up any confusion resulting from the inaccurate coverage.

New Competency Determination Regulations

Let me be clear: the Board did **not** increase the MCAS passing score. Instead, members voted to create an "either/or" scenario for all students. Beginning with the Class of 2010:

- Students will be required to **either** meet or exceed a scaled score of 240 on both the Grade 10 ELA and Math MCAS exams; **or**
- Students will be required to meet or exceed a scaled score of 220 on both the Grade 10 ELA and Math exams and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP).

Each EPP will include, at a minimum: a review of the student's strengths and weaknesses, based on MCAS and other assessment results, coursework, grades and teacher input; the courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12; and a description of the assessments the school will regularly administer to determine if the student is moving toward proficiency.

In 2006, 84 percent of 10th graders scored at least a 220 on the English and Math MCAS exams, earning their competency determination on their first try. Statewide 59 percent of 10th graders scored Proficient or higher on both exams, up from 54 percent in 2005 and just 38 percent in 2001. This means that if the regulations were in place this year, about 40 percent of students would require EPPs.

As part of their vote, the Board also reaffirmed the addition of Science, Technology and Engineering to the competency determination requirement beginning with the Class of 2010, and voted to add History beginning with the Class of 2012.

Certificate of Mastery

The Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery was established by the Board in 1997 to recognize high academic achievement on MCAS, in high school, and in competitions and student publications. Recipients of the

certificate have received four years of free tuition at any of the state's public colleges or the University of Massachusetts.

The Board made changes to the certificate on Tuesday to reposition it to clearly indicate college and career-readiness, rather than solely academic achievement.

To earn the Certificate under the new requirements, students must:

- Score Proficient or higher on the Grade 10 ELA and Math exams
- Maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in grades 11 and 12
- Pass an Algebra II test that will be identified by the Department.
- Demonstrate proficiency in writing through an assessment that will be identified by the Department.
- Either complete a high school curriculum designed to prepare students for college- and career-readiness, **or** earn a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency.

The Board renamed the existing Certificate of Mastery the "Certificate of Mastery with Distinction," and maintained the existing requirements to qualify.

The Department intends to work with the Board of Higher Education to establish incentives to strive for the repositioned Certificate of Mastery.

If you have further questions about any of these issues please contact me.

[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
- > NAEP
- > Publications
- > MCAS Performance Appeals
- Parent Information Hotline
1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

November 2006 MCAS Retest Update

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

Copy: Superintendents and MCAS Coordinators

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: October 30, 2006

I am writing to remind you about the upcoming November 2006 MCAS retest, which will be administered November 8 and 9 (Mathematics) and November 15-17 (English Language Arts).

Test administration manuals containing procedures, participation requirements, and scripts for administering the retests are now posted online at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/retest.html. Also posted online are sample letters and non-participation forms that school principals may use to document that students were offered but refused the opportunity to participate in the retest.

High schools that have requested materials are scheduled to receive retest materials by Monday, October 30. Principals are advised to carefully inventory materials immediately upon receipt. The deadline for requesting additional retest materials is **November 3**.

As a reminder, students who have left your school without earning a high school diploma may contact you about taking the November retest. I request that you accommodate the testing of these students.

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

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



NCLB Home

Federal Grant Programs

Title I
Title II-A
Title II-D
Title III
Title IV
Title V-A

Goals & Indicators

Resources

Supplemental Services
Consolidated District Planning
Consolidated State Application
Guidance for Private Schools
NCLB Report Cards
School/District Improvement

Assessment/Accountability >

No Child Left Behind



Extension of FY2006 Funds into FY2007

To: Title IIA District Contacts
From: Cathy Depradine, Title IIA Contact
Date: October 20, 2006

Under No Child Left Behind, districts that have applied for funds under Title IIA can extend the fund use period for money received in one fiscal year into the following fiscal year. Thus, districts that have not expended all of their FY06 Title IIA funds by August 31, 2006 can request to extend the use of those funds into FY07.

Please note that the FY06 funds that are extended into FY07 will be treated as a separate FY07 grant and those funds must be expended by August 31, 2007. All FY06 funds that are not expended by August 31, 2006 must be sent back to the Department and an end of year Financial Report Form (FR-1) must be completed and returned by October 31, 2006, as previously informed. While extending funds is an option available to districts for Title IIA, the US Department of Education would like to see funds expended within the year they are granted.

The procedure for districts having any FY06 Title IIA funds that are unexpended and unobligated as of August 31, 2006 is as follows:

- Submitting an end of year Financial Report Form (FR-1)   and checks for the unexpended FY06 amounts to the Grants Management Unit at the Department by no later than **October 31, 2006**.
- Submitting a justification for why funds were not expended during FY06 to your Title contact. There should be justifiable reasons why the funds were not expended.
- You will receive via email a Carryover Grant Application for completion.
- Emailing the Carryover Grant Application and mailing the signed cover sheets to the appropriate title contact. If you are requesting the extension of **Title IIA funds**, please email Cathy Depradine at cdepradine@doe.mass.edu.
- **Completing the steps listed above by Friday, December 1, 2006.**

Title IIA Contact for Requesting the Extension of Fund Use

All questions should be directed to:

- Title IIA - Cathy Depradine (781-338-3324; cdepradine@doe.mass.edu)



- > [Educator Recognition Home](#)
- > [American History Teacher of the Year](#)
- > [Christa McAuliffe Fellowship](#)
- > [Fulbright Memorial Fund](#)
- > [George Washington Scholars](#)
- > [Master Teacher Program](#)
- > [Milken Family Foundation](#)
- > [National Teachers Hall of Fame](#)
- > [Presidential Awards](#)
- > [Teacher of the Year](#)

[Educator Services](#) > [Career Advancement](#) >

Recognition Programs

2007-2008 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program

To: Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: November 2006

It is again time to solicit nominations for the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program. This will be the forty-fifth year of participation in this nationwide program.

The Teacher of the Year should be an exemplary educator who demonstrates professionalism, leadership, excellent communication skills, and an outstanding and measurable commitment to student achievement and to the teaching profession.

To be considered for the program, a teacher must first be nominated by way of a brief letter to the Department. Administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members are invited to submit nominations. Upon receipt of the nomination, the teacher is sent an application form.

The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year will share his/her expertise with educators, students, community members and others on a limited basis in the evenings, on weekends, and during the summer while maintaining regular classroom responsibilities.

Teachers who are selected as Massachusetts Teacher of the Year finalists and semi-finalists will be included in a pool of outstanding educator talent, who may be called upon to assist the Department of Education on various review panels.

We are making every effort to see that as many teachers as possible are nominated. Public school teachers from all geographic areas, every ethnic and racial group, veteran teachers or newcomers may be considered for nomination.

Hannaford Supermarkets is a partner with the Department of Education in supporting the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program and will award the Teacher of the Year, finalists and semi-finalists grants to be used for classroom purposes or for personal professional development.

I have enclosed a **flyer**   for you to distribute. **The deadline for nominations is January 30, 2007.**



- › Educator Recognition Home
- › American History Teacher of the Year
- › Christa McAuliffe Fellowship
- › Fulbright Memorial Fund
- › George Washington Scholars
- › Master Teacher Program
- › Milken Family Foundation
- › National Teachers Hall of Fame
- › Presidential Awards
- › Teacher of the Year

Educator Services › Career Advancement › Recognition Programs ›

Educator Recognition Programs

2007 Presidential Awards for Mathematics and Science Teaching

To: Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education



Date: November 2006

I am pleased to announce that nominations are open for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The PAEMST Program was established in 1983 by the White House and is sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The program identifies outstanding mathematics and science teachers, kindergarten through 12th grade, in each state and the four U.S. jurisdictions. These teachers will serve as models for their colleagues and will be leaders in the improvement of science and mathematics education.

The competition alternates year by year between teachers of grades K-6 and teachers of grades 7-12. **Teachers of grades 7-12 mathematics and science are eligible for nomination for the 2007 Presidential Awards.** Teachers of grades K-6 will be eligible for the 2008 Presidential Awards.

In order to apply for the 2007 PAEMST, a teacher must be nominated. Anyone (e.g. principals, teachers, students, and other members of the general public) may nominate a teacher. Self-nominations will also be accepted.

Each Presidential Awardee will receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation and gifts from donors. Each Awardee will also be invited to attend, along with a guest, recognition events in Washington, D.C., in March 2008.

I have enclosed a **nomination form**   for you to copy and distribute. **The deadline for nominations is Monday, April 2, 2007.** For further information, contact Deborah Walker at djwalker@doe.mass.edu or call (781) 338-3347. Nominations should be submitted to Deborah Walker at the Massachusetts Department of Education.

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



EVENTS CALENDAR

November 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	1	2

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

 Past 30 days

 Past 90 days

 Date Range

Start:

End:



Family & Community

Conference on Gifted Education in Western Massachusetts

To: Superintendents and Curriculum Coordinators

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: October 31, 2006

I am writing to invite you and your staff to a conference, "Promising Policies & Practices: Education for Advanced, Talented & Creative Learners in Western Massachusetts," which will be held at the Delaney House in Holyoke from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 16, 2006. The School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst has organized this conference.

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, a nationally renowned expert on gifted and talented education, will be joining us as our keynote speaker. I will also be on hand to welcome you and bring you the latest developments at the state level. Leading practitioners will join us as we discuss identification issues, program models, and classroom practices, and begin developing an advanced, talented, and creative education network in Western Massachusetts.

There is no fee to attend this conference, which is funded by a Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education grant from the United States Department of Education. Districts are requested to attend in three-person teams--for example, a superintendent/designee, a curriculum director/coordinator, and an interested principal or teacher. Educators from districts from Worcester County west will have priority for registration; other interested districts will be admitted as space allows.

To register, click on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=152775706E95006>

Please provide your district's name and address, and the names, titles, locations, and email addresses of your three team members. If you are bringing a teacher as part of your team, you can also indicate if you would like reimbursement funds for a substitute teacher.

For information, please contact Andy Churchill at achurchill@educ.umass.edu or 413-545-0958. I look forward to seeing you on November 16th!

Joyce VanTassel-Baska
Keynote Speaker

**"Promising Policies & Practices:
Education for Advanced, Talented & Creative Learners in Western
Massachusetts"**
November 16, 2006

Joyce VanTassel-Baska is Executive Director of the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary in Virginia where she has developed a graduate program and a research and development center in gifted education. Formerly she initiated and directed the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University.

She has also served as the state director of gifted programs for Illinois, as a regional director of a gifted service center in the Chicago area, as coordinator of gifted programs for the Toledo, Ohio public school system, and as a teacher of gifted high school students in English and Latin. She has worked as a consultant on gifted education in all 50 states and for key national groups, including the U.S. Department of Education, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and American Association of School Administrators.

She has consulted internationally in Australia, New Zealand, Hungary, Jordan, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates. She is past president of The Association for the Gifted of the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Northwestern University Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. She is currently President of the National Association for Gifted Children.

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



Family & Community > Alternative Learning >

Advanced Placement

The Advanced Placement Exam Fee Subsidy Program

To: Advanced Placement Coordinators and Guidance Counselors

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: October 31, 2006

Massachusetts has received funds from the U.S. Department of Education to assist eligible students through the Advanced Placement Examination Fee Subsidy program. The purpose of this program is to reduce the cost of an Advanced Placement Examination from \$83 to \$10 for students who meet the eligibility criteria.

For a public, private or parochial school student to qualify for an Advanced Placement Exam Fee Subsidy, that student must be:

1. a United States citizen, and
2. eligible for free or reduced priced school lunches under the National School Lunch Act.

High school students may be reluctant to apply for this assistance because it requires providing documentation of their family's financial status¹. Therefore, it is important that you assure your students that all family income information will remain confidential. Consequently, counselors will need to maintain a secure file to ensure that such sensitive information does not leave your office. I have included a blank copy of the cover page for this student file.

Later this fall the College Board will send you an Advanced Placement exam order form. The form will include instructions on how to order the Advanced Placement exams at a reduced fee for your eligible students.

In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding the Advanced Placement Exam Fee Subsidy Program, please contact Richard Salus at (781) 338-6252 or by e-mail at rsalus@doe.mass.edu.

Enc:  **2006-2007 Family Income Eligibility Chart**

  **Sample blank AP Fee Reduction Subsidy Cover Sheet**

¹ Please refer to 2006-07 family income eligibility chart either attached to this memo or posted in the Federal Register / Vol. 71, No. 50 / Wednesday, March 15, 2006./P>