



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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

 [Superintendent's Checklist](#)

Commissioner's Update

December 6, 2006

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have 2 announcements and 3 items recently posted at www.doe.mass.edu for your review.

Update

District Expenditures Per Pupil

Our School Finance office has developed a new statistical series for reporting district per pupil expenditures. This new series has several major advantages over the old "day program" per pupil expenditure statistics that we have used for many years: it includes all operational expenditures, regardless of funding source; it includes spending on students in out-of-district placements; and it uses the same functional categories that are now used in the foundation budget. It presents a complete picture of district spending that should be extremely useful to district staff, state policymakers, and researchers.

We have published on our website http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/function05_note.html a complete explanation of the new series; the calculations for each district for FY05; and a comparison to the FY05 day program statistics. FY06 data will be published as we complete our review of your end of year reports.

Please note that for most districts, your per pupil expenditure will be higher (16.8%, on average) than it was using the old metric. If you need help in explaining this change to the number crunchers in your towns, contact Jeff Wulfson or Roger Hatch in our School Finance office.

The Princeton Prize in Race Relations

In order to recognize, support, and encourage young people who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing the cause of relations among the races, Princeton University is sponsoring an awards program for high school students - the Princeton Prize in Race Relations. Applications postmarked by January 31, 2007, will be eligible for prizes - including cash awards up to \$1,000 for particularly noteworthy work - that will be presented in the spring of 2007. If you know of a high school student who is helping to improve race relations, please encourage him or her to apply. Any student currently enrolled in grades 9-12 in the Greater Boston area is eligible. The student must have been actively involved in a volunteer activity <http://www.princeton.edu/PrincetonPrize/faq/> in the last 12 months that has had a significant, positive impact on race relations - broadly defined - in his or her school or community. Details at <http://www.princeton.edu/PrincetonPrize/>.

Postings at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. Microsoft Statewide Donation



2. [Spring 2006 MCAS ELA Student Compositions](#)



3. [MEPA District Reports](#)



Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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

Massachusetts Department of Education

[Search](#) · [Site Map](#) · [Policies](#) · [Site Info](#) · [Contact DOE](#)



EVENTS CALENDAR

December 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
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



Microsoft Statewide Donation

To: Superintendents, Principals, Technology Directors, and Teachers

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: December 2006

I would like to remind you of the Microsoft software donation that was announced in June this year. We believe this is the largest Microsoft contribution ever made to Massachusetts educational institutions. The donation will provide free access to the Microsoft Developer Network Academic Alliance (MSDNAA) software applications. As part of this donation, Microsoft has partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Education to make MSDNAA available to students at the more than 400 high schools throughout the state. Microsoft will work with the Department to share and discuss promising practices on the use of the software tools.

The donated software includes:

- Microsoft Visual Studio
- Microsoft e-Learning Library (MELL) collections:
 - General Programming
 - Microsoft Visual Studio .NET
 - Programming in Visual Basic .NET
- Teaching Tools CD
- Student Tools CD
- Teaching Tools Manual
- Student Tools Manual
- Introductory Kit
- Monitored Newsgroups
- MSDN Library
 - Documentation
 - Technical Articles
 - Code Samples

Microsoft Office and games are not included in this donation. However, students and faculty have access to the included software tools on their personal computers and in computer labs. This software donation will bring academic labs, faculty, and students up to the leading edge of software development.

Microsoft has set up a special web site for Massachusetts with details about this program (<http://msdn.microsoft.com/academic/program/highschool/stategrants/ma/>). The web site includes information on submitting an application, usage guidelines, and a complete list of applications and benefits. Schools can also e-mail mamsdnaa@microsoft.com for additional 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
- > NAEP
- > Publications
- > Other Resources:
 - Pathways to Success on MCAS
 - MCAS Performance Appeals
 - MCAS Service Center
 - Parent Hotline 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Spring 2006 MCAS ELA Student Compositions

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: November 27, 2006

I am pleased to announce that this year, for the first time, we are providing images of students' MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) compositions online rather than on CDs. These compositions, which were written by students who participated in the spring 2006 grades 4, 7, and 10 MCAS ELA tests, are now available at www.mcasservicecenter.com.

Principals may access the compositions for their school by following the link to **MCAS** and then to **MCAS Reporting** and entering their login information, including their secure 2006 MCAS password. This will take them to the **MCAS Results and Reporting** screen where they will click **Student Compositions**. A brief User's Guide is also available from this screen.

When you inform your schools that the compositions are available, please remind principals that the composition site contains official student records, which must remain confidential. **Access to an individual student's composition is strictly limited to the student, the student's parents/guardians, and authorized school personnel.** Authorized school personnel are the student's current and former teacher(s) and other personnel who are responsible for the individual student's educational services.

If you have problems accessing the Web site, please contact the MCAS Service Center at

800-737-5103. If you have questions regarding the compositions, contact the Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625.

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
- > Other Resources:
 - Pathways to Success on MCAS
 - MCAS Performance Appeals
 - MCAS Service Center
 - Parent Hotline 1-866-MCAS220



Assessment/Accountability > MCAS >

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MEPA District Reports

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

Copy: English Language Learner (ELL) Directors

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: November 27, 2006

I am pleased to announce that final 2005-2006 Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) district reports have been posted to www.mcasservicecenter.com.

The final reports describe the progress of students who took the MEPA last spring and also took a previous MEPA test (either in spring 2005 or fall 2005). Preliminary reports, issued in June, included only the student scores for the spring 2006 MEPA tests.

As you may be aware, this is the second year that we have administered MEPA at four separate grade spans (3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-12) in the spring. The test is also administered to new arrivals and to third graders in October. As a result, you will see as many as three separate progress reports for each grade span showing

1. the progress of students from fall 2005 to spring 2006
2. the progress of students taking the same grade span test in spring 2005 and spring 2006, and
3. the progress of students who changed grade spans from spring 2005 to spring 2006.

To access the reports and electronic data files, you will need the district password used to view MCAS reports and data files. The data files can be loaded into the latest version of TestWiz.

I also encourage district personnel using the MEPA data to register for the MEPA reporting conference call scheduled for Nov. 30 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. To register, go to www.mcasservicecenter.com and click the Registration for Training button.

E-mail this page | Print View