



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Commissioner's Update

January 10, 2007

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have five announcements and six items for your review.

### Update

#### Charter School Development Grant Deadline: February 1, 2007

Development grants for the creation of Horace Mann and Commonwealth charter schools are currently available online at: <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants07/rfp/534.html>. Grants are not restricted to the development of new schools, but also are available for existing public schools that may want to consider applying for a Horace Mann charter in order to re-organize the school. An additional \$600,000 may be available for the planning and implementation of approved schools, if federal funding is approved.

#### Regional Safety Planning Workshops

Regional School Safety Planning workshops co-sponsored by MASBO, MASS, MEMA and MADOE will be held in the following locations:

Central Region: <https://training.mema.state.ma.us/Mema/courseDesc.do?cofId=8847>

Southeast Region: <https://training.mema.state.ma.us/Mema/courseDesc.do?cofId=8867>

Springfield Region: <https://training.mema.state.ma.us/Mema/courseDesc.do?cofId=8887>

Northeast Region: <https://training.mema.state.ma.us/Mema/courseDesc.do?cofId=8888>.

We are hoping to attract 50 participants per region. At minimum we would like a Superintendent (or designee) and School Business officials to attend as a team. The workshops are designed to assist school leaders in reviewing and developing all hazard safety plans for their schools.

#### Department of Revenue Reminder

The Department of Revenue has asked us to remind all regional district superintendents that excess and deficiency fund balances must be certified each year before they can be expended. Final FY06 balances should already have been submitted. For more information, contact the DOR's Division of Local Services.



#### The Goldman Sachs Foundation Prizes for Excellence in International Education

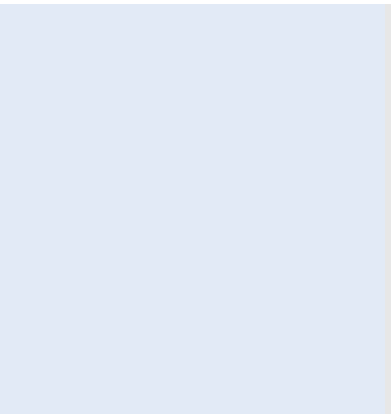



The deadline for the 2006-07 Goldman Sachs Foundation Prizes for Excellence in International Education in elementary/middle school, high school, and media/technology categories has been extended to February 5, 2007. For more information please review <http://www.internationaleled.org/prizes/about.htm>.

#### Concord Review

The National Association of Scholars and its partners are offering Teaching American History grants of up to \$1 million to three districts with 20,000 or more students. The money, which is paid out over three years, can be used to fund about 45 history teachers each year. Proposals are due by March 9. For more information, contact Will Fitzhugh, The Concord Review, at [Fitzhugh@tcr.org](mailto:Fitzhugh@tcr.org).

Six Items Posted at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu):

1. Ordering Test Materials for the 2007 MCAS and MEPA-R/W Administrations 
2. Passwords to Access the MCAS Service Center Web Site 
3. February Informational Meetings Scheduled for Statewide Rollout of EPIMS

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4.  Educator Licensure Call Center Extends Hours
  5.  High School Science and Technology/Engineering Teleconferences
  6.  Release of November 2006 Retest Results

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### Ordering Test Materials for the 2007 MCAS and MEPA-R/W Administrations

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 10, 2007

#### Deadline to Update Shipping Information: January 19, 2007

#### Deadline to Order Test Materials: January 26, 2007

In preparation for the 2007 statewide test administrations, principals must do the following:

1. Provide any necessary updates to shipping information by **January 19**.
2. Order test materials by **January 26**. Responses are required for each order form.

Superintendents must ensure that test materials are ordered by special education schools and educational collaboratives that serve their students in out-of-district placements.

#### Test Administration Schedule and Workshop Reminders

As a reminder, the schedule for the 2007 test administrations is posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cal.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cal.html). Information about the test administrations will be presented at the spring workshops. Registration information for the workshops is posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3199](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3199).

#### Accessing Order Forms for Test Materials

The order forms listed below will be available online at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) beginning at 9 a.m. on January 16. To access the order forms, new passwords that were sent to principals earlier this month must be used. The steps for completing orders for materials are outlined below.

- **March 2007 MCAS Retest (for high schools)**  
Click MCAS, then click *Enrollment Verification*, then click *March 2007 MCAS Retest*.
- **Spring 2007 MCAS Tests (including MCAS-Alt)**  
Click MCAS, then click *Enrollment Verification*, then click *Spring 2007 MCAS Tests*.
- **MEPA-R/W Grades 3-12 Tests**  
Click MEPA, then click *Enrollment Verification*.

#### **Step 1. Principals must review shipping information. Updates to shipping information must be provided by 5 p.m., January 19.**

Public school principals must access the order forms posted at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) and review shipping information (principal name, MCAS test coordinator name, physical (shipping) address, fax number, e-mail address) and provide updates to district-level directory administrators if necessary. Directory administrators will then access the Department's Directory Administration via the Security Portal to make the corrections. For non-public schools and collaboratives, updates must be provided by contacting Joann Brady in the Department's Data Collection Unit at [jbrady@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jbrady@doe.mass.edu) or at 781-338-3526.

#### **Step 2. Principals must order test materials by 5 p.m., January 26.**

Principals must access the order forms posted at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) between January 16 and January 26. Available special test forms (e.g., large print) are indicated on each order form. Participation requirements for students, including

requirements for high school students, are posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/part\\_req.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/part_req.html).

When ordering test materials, remember to order appropriate quantities for every student enrolled in the tested grades. Since the testing contractor will supply schools with 10 percent more materials than you order, please provide accurate counts so that we may minimize waste.

### Information for High School Principals

Before ordering March retest materials, high school principals are encouraged to contact all eligible students, including former students, to inform them of the opportunity to participate. To assist principals in determining appropriate orders for retest materials, November 2006 retest results were posted to [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) on January 8. In February, data files containing information on the 11th and 12th graders without their Competency Determinations (CDs) will be provided to districts via the Department's Security Portal. More details on accessing these data files will be provided later this winter. Questions about student eligibility prior to February should be directed to the Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625.

As a reminder, principals must notify parents/guardians of eligible students in writing of their children's right to participate in retests. As required by the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Law, students who failed one or both of the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests required for graduation have the **right** to participate in retest administrations. Beginning this school year, districts are required to provide annual written notice to former students from the previous two years who have not yet earned their CD to inform them of academic support options. More information is posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3051](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3051).

For the spring 2007 high school science and technology/engineering (STE) tests, high school principals are reminded that students may participate in only one content area test.

New for 2007, a separate Student ID Label should be ordered for each student participating in each content area STE test. STE Student ID Label order forms, which will be available in March, will require principals to select the names of students participating in each content area test. Specific instructions will be provided later this winter.

Please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 if you have any questions about ordering test materials. As always, please direct questions about policy and guidelines for participation to the Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625.

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  - Parent Hotline 1-866-MCAS220



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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### Passwords to Access the MCAS Service Center Web Site

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 10, 2007

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Superintendents and principals were recently mailed individual secure passwords to access the MCAS Service Center Web site ([www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com)) during the 2007 calendar year. It was necessary to change passwords at the close of the 2006 calendar year to maintain the site's security. These secure passwords provide access to confidential student data. Therefore, access must be restricted to authorized personnel in accordance with federal and state laws related to the protection of confidential student records.

Most immediately, you will use your password this month to access results from the November 2006 MCAS retest and to order test materials for the 2007 test administrations. Additional information on retrieving November Retest results and ordering spring test materials is posted on the Department's Web site.

Please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 if did not receive your new password in the mail or if you have any questions.

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## Data Collection

### February Informational Meetings Scheduled for Statewide Rollout of EPIMS

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders  
Copy: SIMS Coordinators and HR Directors  
From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education  
Date: January 10, 2007

The Department will implement the Education Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) on a mandatory basis to all districts in 2007. The first statewide EPIMS data collection period will be from October 1 - December 31, 2007. EPIMS will replace the DSSR (District School Staffing Report) which currently reports similar information on an aggregate basis.

Please register soon for one of the four EPIMS Informational Meetings that have been scheduled:

- [Friday, February 2 at the DOE in Malden, 9 AM to noon](#)
- [Wednesday, February 7 at Ayer High School, 9 AM to noon](#)
- [Friday, February 9 at Meline Kasparian P.D. Center in Springfield, 9 AM to noon](#)
- [Wednesday, February 14 at Brockton High School, 9 AM to noon](#)

I strongly encourage all districts to attend one of these sessions. The data collection process and the data to be collected will be described at these meetings. Since some of the EPIMS data elements may be stored in either a district's human resource database or in a student-scheduling database, districts should send a representative from both their HR and IT departments.

The EPIMS data collection represents a major change to the types of data being reported. Districts may well have to collect information in a different way or supplement the data they currently collect. It is important for districts to understand the EPIMS data requirements as soon as possible so they can begin to prepare for the fall collection.

For the first time in our state's history, EPIMS will collect demographic data and work assignment information on individual public school educators. This information will enable Massachusetts to comply fully with the No Child Left Behind Act by accurately reporting on highly qualified teachers. The EPIMS data also will be used to perform greatly needed analysis on our educator workforce that over time will identify high need areas, evaluate current educational practices and programs, and assist districts with their recruiting efforts.

We have worked very closely with several pilot districts throughout this past year to develop the list of data elements and to test the EPIMS application. I would like to extend my personal thanks and appreciation to everyone who actively participated in this effort. The list of EPIMS pilot districts is posted on the [EPIMS homepage](#). With the assistance of these districts, we have completed a successful pilot data collection which we anticipate will make the statewide collection smoother for all. Pilot districts will be in attendance at the informational meetings to share their experiences and to offer tips for getting started.

A meeting to explain the EPIMS reporting requirements to vendors has been scheduled for March 2nd. The DOE has been working with vendors for the pilot districts this past year. Many have begun to work on adapting their software to store and export EPIMS data. We strongly encourage you to work closely with your vendors to ensure that they are made aware of the EPIMS reporting requirements. Please check the pilot vendor list on the [EPIMS homepage](#). If your HR and scheduling software vendors are listed, please contact them to find out if they plan to support EPIMS. If your vendors are not listed, please [contact the DOE](#) to have your vendors added to the list of invitees for the vendor meeting.

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## NEWS SEARCH

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 Past 30 days Past 90 days Date Range

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## Educator Services

### Educator Licensure Call Center Extend Hours

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

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

**Date:** January 10, 2007

The Department of Education's Educator Licensure Call Center is adding additional evening hours to its schedule to better meet the needs of the state's teachers.

Effective January 17th, the Call Center will take calls from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. every Wednesday. The Call Center is also open from 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

The Call Center is a resource for all educators to assist with their licensure questions. Representatives typically receive more than 900 calls each week. The expanded service is expected to greatly reduce wait times, and provide greater access to educators unable to resolve their licensure issues during traditional business hours.

There are more than 80,000 licensed educators in the Commonwealth.

The Call Center's phone number is 781-338-6600. The expanded hours will remain in effect each Wednesday through June 20.

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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### High School Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS Teleconferences

To: Superintendents, Principals, Directors of Charter Schools, Approved Private Special Education Schools, Institutional Schools, and Collaboratives, Science and Technology/Engineering Coordinators and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 3, 2007

The Department of Education will host two conference calls to provide school leaders with information regarding the high school Science and Technology/Engineering Competency Determination, MCAS test participation, and test administration requirements. The conference calls will also provide school leaders with the opportunity to ask questions about the Competency Determination and testing requirements.

The conference calls are open to superintendents, principals, and directors of charter schools, approved private special education schools, institutional schools, and collaboratives, as well as science and technology/engineering coordinators and other interested parties. The conference calls will take place on January 17, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and on January 23, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

To register for a conference call, please go to [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) and select "MCAS." Then, click on "Registration for Training" to access the registration form. When you have reached the registration form, click on one of the session options to complete your registration (see table below). Instructions and a password for dialing into the toll free conference call will be sent to you in a confirmation e-mail after you have successfully completed registration.

#### Teleconferences

Session	Date	Time	Registration Deadline	Space Available *
High Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS Workshop	1/17/2007	10:00 - 11:30	1/16/07 5:00 p.m.	150
High Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS Workshop	1/23/2007	2:30 - 4:00	1/22/07 5:00 p.m.	150

\*An "0" in the Space Available column indicates that the session is full.

You may register for a session prior to the registration deadlines as long as there is space available.

Prior to and during the session, please refer to the July 24 Commissioner's Update which may be accessed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2006/news/0725hsscscietest.html>.

If you need assistance in accessing the registration form, please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800- 737-5103. For more information on MCAS, please visit the [Department's Web site](#).



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## Release of November 2006 MCAS Retest Results

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 8, 2007

I am writing to notify you of the schedule for reporting results from the November 2006 MCAS retest. Data files will be made available to schools and districts electronically on Monday, January 8, 2007, through the MCAS Service Center. I encourage you to share these results with students and parents for planning purposes. Following the period for reporting discrepancies, printed Parent/Guardian Reports will be provided.

### Accessing Data Files Through MCAS Service Center Online

To access data files through the MCAS Service Center, visit [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) and select "MCAS." Next, select the "MCAS Reporting" tab in the left-hand margin. Finally, choose your district and school from the drop-down menus and enter the password mailed to you in the Commissioner's memo dated December 29, 2006.

### Reporting Discrepancies

Schools will be given five days to review their November retest files for any discrepancies in their data. All discrepancies must be reported by 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 12, 2007, for the discrepancy to be considered prior to the generation of Parent/Guardian Reports. To report a discrepancy, visit [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com), select "MCAS," and then select the Discrepancy Reporting tab in the left-hand margin. When reporting a discrepancy, schools will need to select a specific student from the drop-down list.

### Printed Reports

Beginning this year, printed Parent/Guardian Reports for MCAS Retest results will be provided following completion of discrepancy resolutions. Final electronic results and printed reports for the November 2006 Retest will be available no later than February 2, 2007.

If you did not receive your new password or if you have any additional questions, please contact the MCAS Service Center at (800) 737-5103. Policy questions can be directed via e-mail to the Department at [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu).

Thank you.

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