



David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

- › Update Archive
- › Commissioner's Welcome

 Superintendent's Checklist

## Commissioner's Update

April 24, 2007

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

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

### UMASS-Boston Conference On May 7

The University of Massachusetts-Boston's Center for Technical Education will hold its Annual State Wide Conference on May 7th. Dr. Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President of the Southern Regional Education Board's High Schools That Work Initiative will be the featured speaker. His topic will be "High Schools That Work/Secondary School Reform and Perkins IV." This important conference will take place at the Sheraton Hotel in Milford on Monday, May 7, 2007. For information contact Dr. Sumner Rotman at 1-617-287-7919 or [sumner.rotman@umb.edu](mailto:sumner.rotman@umb.edu).

### Summer 2007 Professional Development Institutes Brochure Now Available

The Department of Education will be offering Professional Development Institutes for summer 2007, an enhancement of the successful Content Institute Program we offered in the past. This year's Institutes will focus on effective standards-based teaching skills and strengthening teachers' content knowledge in mathematics, science, technology/engineering, reading, and writing. The statewide program will sponsor more than 30 institutes during the summer in mathematics, science, technology/engineering, reading, writing, Sheltered English Immersion, and more. Follow-up sessions will be held in the fall and winter to support educators as they implement content instruction in the classroom. All institutes will offer professional development points (PDPs) and optional graduate credit that can be applied toward educator re-licensure.

A list of all institutes and information about many other professional development experiences being offered this summer is now posted at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/cinstitute/>.

### New Mathematics & Science Teachers Scholarship Program

The Department of Education and the Board of Higher Education are pleased to announce that the state Legislature has funded a pilot scholarship program for mathematics and science teachers who have received waivers from certification regulations or are "out of field" teachers. These funds are designed to help to increase the number of public school teachers in the Commonwealth who are certified in mathematics and science.

Scholarships will cover the cost of tuition, fees and related expenses for math and science teachers for up to three courses per semester at higher education institutions to meet teacher certification requirements. Eligible mathematics and science teachers (including technology/engineering teachers) can apply this scholarship to courses at participating Massachusetts public or private colleges and universities.

Recipients will be required to commit to continue teaching mathematics and science in the Commonwealth for a term of service after becoming licensed. The program has been designed to give priority for scholarships to teachers from high-need districts.

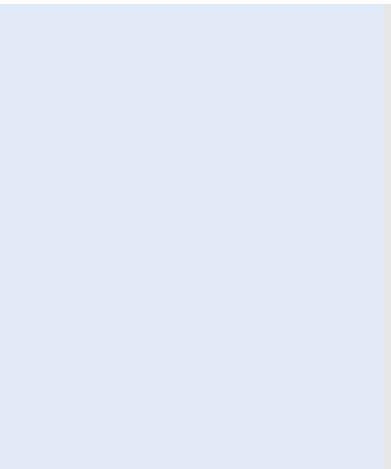




Information about application materials will soon be available for the 2007 summer semester at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/?section=news&flag=true>. Scholarship applications for Fall 2007 semester courses will be available June 2007. For more information, please contact Barbara Libby at [libby@doe.mass.edu](mailto:libby@doe.mass.edu).

### 2008 National Science Teachers Association Conference

The 2008 NSTA annual conference, *Science: Bridge to the Future*, will be held in Boston on March 27-30, 2008. The conference will include hundreds of workshops, presentations, field trips, short courses and seminars led by dynamic educators and researchers. Participants may concentrate their individual professional development through four strands: using data; successful programs and practices; science & technology research; and instructional technology. As your schools plan for the 2007-2008 school year, I encourage you to send your science and technology/engineering teachers to this worthwhile professional development opportunity.

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

1. Release of March 2007 Retest Results

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2.  School choice receiving district status 2007-2008
  3.  History and Social Science-New "Regions of the United States" for Grade 4/5
  4.  Foreign Language Teachers Programs
  5.  Recruitment of Candidates for Board of Education Advisory Councils

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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



- › MCAS Home
- › School Notices
- › About the MCAS
- › Test Schedule
- › Test Administration
- › 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

### Release of March 2007 Retest Results

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: April 23, 2007

I am pleased to notify you of the reporting schedule for the March 2007 Retest. Please make a note of the following dates:

Dates	Reporting Results
April 27, 2007	Release of preliminary results. Data files available electronically to schools and districts.
May 4, 2007	Deadline for reporting discrepancies to the Department.
May 25, 2007	<i>Parent/Guardian Reports</i> shipped and final data files released electronically.

During the four-week window between the release of preliminary results and the release of *Parent/Guardian Reports*, results should be shared with students for planning purposes. Results identified as discrepancies by the Department or by school officials on the online discrepancy reporting system are subject to change during this period.

### Directions for Accessing Data Files Through the MCAS Service Center

To access data files, 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 December 29, 2006 Commissioner's memorandum.

### Reporting Discrepancies

Schools will be given five days to review their March retest files for any discrepancies. The following types of discrepancies may be reported:

- Large blocks of missing data
- Incorrect student identifying information (name, DOB, SASID)
- Results reported but student not enrolled in your school or district
- Results not reported but student retested at your school or district

To report a discrepancy, go to [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, you will need to select a specific student from the drop-down list. All discrepancies must be reported by **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 4**, for the discrepancy to be considered.

### Printed Reports and Final Electronic Results

Printed *Parent/Guardian Reports* for the March 2007 Retest will be shipped to districts no later than **May 25**. Final data files will be posted to [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com) for schools and districts by May 25.

If you have any additional questions or did not receive your new password, 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).



- › 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

## School Choice

### School Choice Receiving District Status, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

Updated on April 11, 2007

Each year, school committees consider whether their district should be in the school choice program during the upcoming school year. **If they choose not to accept school choice pupils from other districts, they must take a vote and report the result to the Department by the end of June.** They may also choose to accept new pupils but only in certain grades. Results to date are listed below. School choice districts with an asterisk are serving pupils accepted in past years, but did not enroll new pupils this year.

For information about contacting a district, see the Department's directory profiles at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>

[Download the Excel File](#)  OR



## EVENTS CALENDAR

April 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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	3	4	5

## NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



## District/School Administration

## History and Social Science-New "Regions of the United States" for Grade 4/5

To: Superintendents, Principals

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner

Date: April 12, 2007

Adaptations made in the MCAS History and Social Science test development process necessitate the revision of one standard in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework (August 2003) and the revision of an appendix to that document.

This change affects Grade 4 standard 4.9 (p. 24) and Appendix H (p. 130) of the framework. The change reduces the number of regions of the United States that students are supposed to know from ten regions to five.

The revised standard reads:

**4.9** On a map of North America, locate the current boundaries of the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico). Locate the states of the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and West regions of the United States, in addition to the six states of New England. See Appendix H (revised) for a listing of states in each region. (G)

The revised Appendix H, appearing below, also appears in the MCAS Guide to History and Social Science Assessments, posted in February 2007 at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/admin/hssguide.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/admin/hssguide.txt> (Appendix B, p.73).

Administrators are also advised to inform curriculum coordinators and History and Social Science department heads of the climate zone descriptions used in the development of MCAS in History and Social Science for the Grade 5 and Grade 7 tests, found below.

These descriptors were also originally published in the MCAS Guide to History and Social Science Assessments, posted in February 2007 at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/admin/hssguide.pdf> or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/admin/hssguide.txt> (Appendix A, p.72).

  **Revised Appendix H: Regions and States of the U.S.**

  **Climate Zone Descriptions: Used in History and Social Science MCAS, Grades 5 and 7**



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## District/School Administration

## Foreign Language Teachers and Programs

To: Superintendents, Principals, and Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: April 20, 2007

I am pleased to remind you about initiatives designed to support your foreign language programs.

As a result of the Department's agreements with the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain, the Department can assist schools and districts in hiring teachers from Spain for the 2007-2008 school year. All of the teachers who have been accepted to teach in the Commonwealth have taught for at least three years in Spain, are fluent in English, and have been interviewed by Massachusetts' foreign language administrators. Many also have experience teaching in countries outside Spain.

In the past, such teachers have held positions in foreign language and two-way bilingual programs. American educators in our schools have found that having teachers from other countries on staff has enormously increased students' and teachers' understanding of language and cultures. In addition to bringing an international presence to schools, these teachers have assisted with student exchanges and a variety of other cultural programs. Currently there are approximately 25 exchange teachers from Spain working in Massachusetts public schools. They hold J-1 visas for up to three years and are exempt from Massachusetts licensure requirements as defined by M.G.L. c71, § 38G.

You can find information on other programs, including placement of assistant teachers from Spain, summer courses at Spanish universities for teachers and high school Advanced Placement students, and *Materiales*, a magazine for teachers of Spanish, at <http://www.mec.es/sgci/usa/en/home/index.shtml>.

I encourage you to contact the Spanish Advisor, Soledad Outes, at 781-338-3034 or [soutes@doe.mass.edu](mailto:soutes@doe.mass.edu) to learn more about hiring a Spanish teacher or participating in these study programs.

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



- › BOE Home
- › Board Meeting Schedule
- › Board in Brief
- › Board Meeting Minutes
- › BOE Members
- › Board Documents
- › BOE Advisory Councils
- › Chairman's Statements

District/School Administration › Administration ›

## The Board of Education Advisory Councils

### Recruitment of Candidates for Board of Education Advisory Councils

To: Educators, Parents, and Other Partners in Education  
 From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education  
 Date: April 23, 2007

The Massachusetts Department of Education is seeking candidates to serve on the Massachusetts Board of Education Advisory Councils.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established the Board of Education's Advisory Councils to advise the Commissioner and the Board of Education on matters related to their specific areas of focus for the purpose of enhancing efforts to improve public education and advance student achievement. We are seeking a wide range of diverse constituents including educators, parents, students, business leaders and other community members who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to excellence in public education in addition to content experience and expertise specific to the interest of the advisory council.

Advisory councils meet at least four times a year at locations and times determined by their members. Several councils will have openings for the fall of 2007. Members are appointed for a term of three years and they serve without compensation.

Nominations will be accepted through July, and recommendations will be made to the Board of Education in September. Interested parties should submit a letter of intent along with a resume to me at the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, (*attention Advisory Councils*), or email [jokeefe@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jokeefe@doe.mass.edu).

I have included information below on the status of membership on each of the councils, and I hope that you will take this opportunity to consider serving. To learn more about advisory councils, please go to [www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/).

### Massachusetts Advisory Councils to the Board of Education

- Adult & Community Learning Services: vacancies are not expected until fall of 2008. Adult educators and business, union and civic-minded representatives should consider applying in the spring of 2008.
- Arts Education: a few vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. Candidates from all disciplines and levels of arts education, especially those representing higher education and the performing arts, as well as parents and those from community arts organizations, are encouraged to apply.
- Braille Literacy: educators, parents, students, and community representatives with expertise or developed interest in the teaching of blind and visually impaired persons, particularly in the area of Braille literacy, should consider serving. For information on participation in 2007 and beyond, please contact Braille Literacy Advisory Council Liaison, Kim Charlson, at [Kim.charlson@perkins.org](mailto:Kim.charlson@perkins.org).
- Community Service Learning: a few vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. Parents, business partners and school principals with experience and expertise in community service learning, in addition to teachers, are invited to apply. Greater representation from southeastern Massachusetts is sought.
- Educational Technology: several vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. Business partners and third party representatives from key agencies and programs are welcome to apply.
- English Language Learners/Bilingual Education: vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. Parents of English Language Learners and community representatives with expertise in the education of English Language Learners are invited to apply.
- Education Personnel Advisory Council: several appointments will be made in the fall of 2007 for this council. Teachers, school district personnel and the following associations are encouraged to participate: Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association, MA Association of School Superintendents, MA Elementary School Principals Association, MA Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Commonwealth Teacher Education Consortium, MA Association of School Personnel Administrators, MA Teachers Association, and American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts.
- Gifted and Talented Education: a few vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. Interested educators and parents, particularly minority representatives from the greater Metro Boston area, are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Global Education: candidates for this advisory council will be sought in the spring of 2008. Teachers, community representatives, and especially parents with expertise or developed interest in global issues, such as economics, world cultures and environmental science, will be encouraged to apply.
- Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services: a few vacancies will be open for the fall of 2007. Parents, community members, health and youth-serving organizations and persons from central and western Massachusetts and

from ethnic minority communities are particularly encouraged to apply.

- Life Management Skills and Home Economics: several vacancies will be open in the fall of 2007. Candidates are sought who are well informed and committed to developing independent, responsible, productive and contributing members of the family, the community and society. Candidates who will work together to promote life skills management programs in the public schools, especially students, are encouraged to apply, in addition to parents, student support and guidance professionals, and representatives of higher education and business/civic organizations.
- Mathematics and Science Education: a number of vacancies are expected for the fall of 2007. We are especially seeking parents, community and business representatives, and school administrators with expertise and/or interest, along with Pre-K through college educators in mathematics and science.
- Parent and Community Education and Involvement: vacancies are anticipated for the fall of 2007. All are welcome to apply, especially educators in pre-K through higher education, community and business partners, parents, students, and others who have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to education reform, as well as those with interest and experience in parental and community involvement, are welcome to apply.
- Racial Imbalance: a few vacancies will be open in the fall of 2007. We encourage representation by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and by the Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM) in addition to parents of children in grades Pre-K through 12 across the Commonwealth, educators, other civic and community representatives, persons with knowledge and understanding of the Racial Imbalance Law, school choice program directors, and members of school committees.
- Special Education: at this time, we anticipate one vacancy for the 2007-2008 school year. Interested parties should contact the Special Education Advisory Council Liaison, Ann Marie John, at [ajohn@doe.mass.edu](mailto:ajohn@doe.mass.edu), for additional information.
- Technology/Engineering Education: several vacancies are expected in the fall. We invite applications from all who have expertise and/or interest in this discipline. In particular, parents and community/business representatives are encouraged to apply along with technology education directors, educators and engineering professionals with expertise and or a developed interest in this discipline. This council's focus is on applied technologies such as engineering design, construction, and transportation, not instructional technology such as in computer applications.

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