



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Update

May 23, 2007

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have two announcements and eight items for your review.


Update Advisory on CORI Law

In cooperation with the Criminal History Systems Board, I am providing you with an [updated advisory on the CORI](#) (criminal offender record information) law and your responsibilities to conduct criminal background checks on employees, volunteers, contractors, transportation providers, and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The advisory contains updated information from the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) about renewing your certification with that agency and using its new Web CORI system, and the authority to conduct background checks on bus drivers. It also describes changes in the CHSB's regulations regarding the paperwork agencies need to complete before requesting CORI, and what a hiring authority needs to do before making an adverse hiring decision on the basis of a person's CORI. I want to thank the Criminal History Systems Board for its help in drafting this advisory. I hope this information will be helpful to schools and districts as you continue to carry out your legal obligations relating to criminal background checks and school safety.

Charter School Information Sessions

Information sessions on how to apply for a public school charter in Massachusetts will be held on May 31 and June 13, 2007 via web conference and on June 7 at the Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, 2nd floor. Register online at www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=314; by phone: 781-338-3227, or by email: charterschools@doe.mass.edu.

Items Posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. [Accountability and Technical Assistance in the Area of Special Education](#)
2. [Early Childhood Mental Health Survey](#)
3. [The Mathematics and Science Teachers Scholarship Program](#) 
4. [Release of Spring 2007 MEPA Results](#)
5. [June Release of Multiple-Choice Results: Grade 3 Reading and Grade 10 ELA and Math](#)
6. [Release of Spring 2007 IDEA Proficiency Test \(IPT\) Results for English Language Learners in Grades K-2 in Title III Districts](#)
7. [Public School Operated Before- and/or After-School Programs](#)
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Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education



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Special Education

Accountability and Technical Assistance in the Area of Special Education

To: Superintendents, Directors of Charter Schools, and Other Interested Parties

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 16, 2007

I write to inform you of some enhancements to our accountability and targeted assistance systems in regard to students with disabilities. A new requirement from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) presents us with an opportunity to coordinate our NCLB accountability work with determinations of the need for assistance in the area of special education. I have copied this memorandum to Principals and to Administrators of Special Education and I encourage you to discuss this information with them.

OSEP is required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004) to make overall determinations for each state as to whether the state "meets requirements," "needs assistance," "needs intervention," or "needs substantial intervention" in the area of special education.¹ OSEP considers information regarding outcome indicators, such as graduation and dropout rates, as well as compliance with federal special education laws and regulations in making these determinations. In addition, OSEP will take into consideration if the state is taking appropriate steps to correct identified non-compliance in a timely manner. OSEP will use primarily the outcome and compliance indicator information collected and reported under Massachusetts' special education State Performance Plan (SPP).² Massachusetts will post on its website its special education determination from OSEP³ as soon as it is received.

States are required, in turn, to make similar determinations for each school district annually. The definition for these determination levels is left to the states, within some limits. Massachusetts has chosen to link its special education determinations to the student performance indicators used in determining accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Therefore, we will use the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Reports⁴ and accompanying accountability status to make these overall determinations of special education needs for technical assistance or intervention for each district. Details on these determinations and their relation to AYP Reports are provided in the two-page document accompanying this memorandum. Districts should review their accountability status (at the website provided in [footnote #4](#)) as a guide to the district's special education determination. This memorandum and the accompanying detail serve as notice to districts of their status for the 2006-07 school year. Any needed technical assistance or intervention action will take place in the 2007-08 school year. The Department will contact districts in this regard during the 2007-08 school year.

Additionally, the Department may require corrective action related to special education compliance if any non-compliance in the area of special education is identified, regardless of AYP Report results. Further, the determination that a district "needs substantial intervention" in special education is based solely upon findings of egregious non-compliance in that area. Districts will receive individual letters if they are identified to need substantial intervention.

We hope this initiative to coordinate the NCLB and special education systems will result in more effective and targeted technical assistance to districts and help you provide students with disabilities the support that they need to perform at the highest levels.

Thank you for your attention to this memorandum and for your work on behalf of students with disabilities.

C: Administrators of Special Education
Principals

Attachment: [Massachusetts Department of Education Determination of Need for Special Education Technical Assistance or Intervention](#)

1 As required by Section 616(b)(1)(A) and 642 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

2 Found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/>

3 OSEP's criteria are available at: http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/images/stories/FRC/spp_mat/nac_materials/616_determinations.doc Massachusetts' special education determination from OSEP will be posted at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>

4 Found at: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp2006.aspx>

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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



District/School Administration

Early Childhood Mental Health Survey

To: Superintendents of Schools and Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 21, 2007

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is working with the Department of Public Health to conduct a study of Behavioral/Mental Health Services in early education and care settings in Massachusetts. The survey is designed to gather feedback from both specialists and early education administrators to better define and understand the services available for young children who have behavioral, social or emotional challenges.

This information will be used to inform future decisions related to EEC's work related to early childhood behavioral and mental health.

Please use the links below to access the survey:

- **Behavioral/Mental Health Specialist survey:** for individuals working directly with children, families and program staff in early education and care settings on issues related to mental and behavioral health, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=174873766937>.
- **Directors survey:** for administrators of early education and care programs (including Head Start and public schools) that provide, hire or work with behavioral/mental health specialists, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=707683780560>.

Both versions of the survey can also be accessed at the Glenwood Research website: <http://www.glenwoodresearch.com/>.

Please take some time to respond to this survey by **Thursday May 31**. If you prefer to receive a paper copy of the survey or have questions, please call Erin Oldham at Glenwood Research at 207-874-0539 or toll free at (888) 350-4384.

Please feel free to forward this information to others who might be interested in responding. Thank you.

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Release of Spring 2007 MEPA Results

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

Copy: Directors of English Language Learner Programs

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 21, 2007

I am writing to inform you that spring 2007 Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) student, school, and district results will be posted electronically to www.mcasservicecenter.com on Thursday, June 7. Each superintendent is authorized to access results for his or her district and schools; each principal is allowed to access results for his or her school. Please examine results for any cases of missing or irregular data and report any such cases to the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 by **5 p. m., Thursday, June 14.**

The following reports/results will be posted to the secure Web site:

- *Parent/Guardian Reports*
- *Preliminary Participation Report* (includes district and state comparisons)
- *Preliminary Results by Years of Enrollment in U.S. Schools* (includes district and state comparisons)
- *School Rosters* (student scaled score and performance-level results)
- *Guide to the MEPA for Parents/Guardians* (including translations in Cape Verdean, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese)
- *Guide to Interpreting the Spring 2007 MEPA Reports for Schools and Districts*
- Student level data file and file layout by district (available only to superintendents)

For assistance in downloading data from the Measured Progress Web site, please call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103. Beginning June 8, the latest version of TestWiz will be available at www.testwiz.com/mass/update.html. You will need to install the latest version in order to import these data files. These files may be read using Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet software.

On Thursday, June 14, principals will receive paper copies of the following reports:

- *Parent/Guardian Reports* for students (including translated report templates)
- *Guide to the MEPA for Parents/Guardians* (including translated versions)

Please do not publicly release your results prior to the public release of school, district, and state MEPA results, which will take place on or before June 18.



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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

June Release of Multiple-Choice Results: Grade 3 Reading and Grade 10 ELA and Math

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

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 21, 2007

I am writing to notify you of the release of spring 2007 MCAS grade 3 Reading and grade 10 ELA and Math results. Please note that only multiple-choice results will be released in June; performance-level and scaled score results will be available in August. Please make a note of the schedule below:

Dates for Release	Type of Results Released
June 18, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 3 Reading multiple-choice results • Grade 10 ELA multiple-choice results
June 28, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 10 Math multiple-choice results

Purpose of the Release

The grade 10 data files provide important preliminary information about the performance of high school students on the spring 2007 grade 10 tests. Although the data files do not contain open-response or composition results, you may use the information contained in the reports for the following purposes:

- Identifying students' individual areas of need in order to provide academic support services during the summer and fall
- Planning fall academic programs for students likely to score at the Failing level
- Informing curriculum and instructional activities

A brief guide for interpreting the grade 10 preliminary multiple-choice test item analysis results will be posted with the data files. Please note that grade 10 students who did not participate in the ELA and Mathematics tests (e.g., students with a medically documented absence) will appear in these files with blank raw scores.

How to Access the Data

The multiple-choice test item analysis data files contain student-level results in a format compatible with TestWiz, Microsoft Excel, and other data analysis software. To access these data files, visit 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.

Confidentiality of Data

These files are confidential student records and may only be reviewed by authorized school personnel, students, and their parents and/or guardians in accordance with federal and state confidentiality laws.

Please also ensure that your district/school procedures for maintaining the electronic AND physical security of all confidential student data are rigorous and followed by everyone with potential access to these data.

If you have any questions about the multiple-choice data files posted at the MCAS Service Center Web site or need assistance related to your password, please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Release of Spring 2007 IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) Results for English Language Learners in Grades K-2 in Title III Districts

To: Superintendents and Elementary School Principals in Title III Districts and Directors of Title III Charter Schools

Copy: Directors of English Language Learner Programs

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 21, 2007

I am writing to inform you that the spring 2007 IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) student-level rosters and electronic data files will be posted on the Measured Progress secure Web site, www.mcasservicecenter.com, by Thursday, June 7. The IPT was administered in spring 2007 to all limited English proficient students in kindergarten through grade 2 who were reported as enrolled in Title III districts or charter schools on the October 2006 SIMS.

Each superintendent is authorized to access results for his or her district and schools; each principal is allowed to access results for his or her school.

School rosters, data files, and layouts will be posted electronically and may be accessed using the MCAS/MEPA password that was mailed to school and district leaders on December 29, 2006.

For assistance downloading data from the Measured Progress Web site, please call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103. TestWiz will not be updated to import IPT data files, but results may be read using Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet software.

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School and District Accountability

Public School-Operated Before- and/or After-School Programs

To: Superintendents of Schools and Charter School Leaders

From: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 21, 2007

The demand and interest in before- and after-school programs for children and youth in the Commonwealth is growing. Many working families are seeking these programs to address childcare needs as well as to provide educational and enrichment opportunities for their children beyond the traditional school day.

The Department is working to compile an inventory of before- and/or after-school programs that are **operated by public schools**. The intent of this inventory is to identify where gaps in services occur. The data collected will be coordinated with information the Department of Early Education and Care has on non-public school operated programs. The information gathered will also be shared with the newly formed legislative Massachusetts After-School and Out-of-School Time Commission, which was formed to develop recommendations for the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve and expand after-school and out-of-school time opportunities for children.

To gather this information, we have developed an online registration survey instrument.

1. For the purposes of this survey, we are defining a public school operated before- or after-school program as one that meets **all** of the following three criteria:
 - *operated by a public school district;*
 - *provides before- and/or after-school programs for a consistent group of children ages 3 through 14, or any subgroup within that age group; and*
 - *provides a planned daily program of activities and is responsible for children for specific blocks of time during the week, usually four - five days a week and two to four hours each day, over the school year or the full calendar year.*

- Please note:** 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs that meet these three criteria do not need to register since the Department already maintains grant information for these programs.

2. For the purposes of this survey, a public school operated before- and after-school program is **NOT**:
 - *a program run by a private entity using school space (e.g., a program operated by a YMCA that rents space from the school system); or*
 - *a drop-in program where students are not expected to attend for a consistent amount of time and/or schedule; or*
 - *a Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensed child-care program (to find out if a program site is licensed by EEC, go to www.eec.state.ma.us);*
 - *a school club or athletic program; or*
 - *Supplemental Education Services (SES) or other tutoring service; or*
 - *an Expanded Learning Time (ELT) program providing a longer school day/year for all students in the school;*
 - *a full-day kindergarten program.*

To provide information on public school operated before- and after-school programs, districts should respond to the online survey indicating whether or not they operate a before- or after-school program that meets all of the criteria in Section I. The registration form can be accessed, completed, and submitted at: <http://vessunapp3.doe.mass.edu/surveys/take.do?n=1427354446>.

For districts that **do** operate a before- or after-school program, one registration form should be completed *for each site* within the district.

If you have registered your program with the Department in prior school years, please re-register it at this time so that the Department will have updated information. Registration forms should be submitted electronically by **Wednesday, June 6, 2007**.

If you have any questions, please contact Donna Traynham at 781-338-6372 or dtraynham@doe.mass.edu.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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NEWS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

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 Past 90 days

 Date Range

Start:

End:



U.S.-China Principal Exchange Opportunity

The China Exchange Initiative

140 Brandeis Road
Newton, Massachusetts 02459
Telephone: 617 559 6730; Facsimile: 617 559 6701
Website: <http://www.TheChinaExchangeInitiative.org>

May 11, 2007

David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
 Massachusetts Department of Education
 350 Main Street
 Malden, Massachusetts 02148

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

We are sending you information about our fourth annual U.S.-China Principal Shadowing Project opportunity for school principals and superintendents in school year 2007-2008. The project is designed for educators in school systems that have not yet had an opportunity to experience China. We have also asked former participants to put the word out.

The China Exchange Initiative (CEI) and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) are collaborating on a U.S.-China Principal Shadowing Project to build partnerships between school administrators, to promote mutual intercultural understanding, and to create opportunities for professional development.

Project goals:

1. Develop greater understanding of the partner school in its social context
2. Establish a mutually beneficial on-going relationship for educational enrichment
3. Gain insight into another culture, its educational philosophy, policy, and practice
4. Promote intercultural understanding

Project description:

CEI and CEAIE will be responsible for selecting respective American and Chinese participants. Administrators from Massachusetts will be partnered with peers from China. The project will begin in October or November 2007 with a visit by twelve Chinese administrators to schools in the U.S. In April 2008 U.S. administrators will visit their counterparts at schools in China.

Cost:

The total estimated cost will be \$1500 per person and will include transportation, seminars, site visits, accommodations, and meals. The Freeman Foundation grant will cover all additional expenses.

Role of CEI and CEAIE:

1. Selection of participants: schools and administrators. Secondary principals will be given priority in the selection. Administrators who have a clear vision of how this project will be useful in updating school curriculum and who can build ongoing relationships with Chinese counterparts will have priority.
2. Design and coordination of orientation sessions. Orientation will include information about the education system, its administrative structure, educational reform, assessment, the use of technology, and other topics of interest determined by participants.
3. Travel planning
4. Partial funding for travel

5. Program evaluation

Role of participating administrators in U.S. (Chinese schools will host in kind.):

1. Provide hospitality, including meals and accommodations in host families or hotels, and transportation for visitors during a five-day school site visit
2. Set up a schedule of shadowing, classroom visits, and meetings with other people in the school system, in order to provide a full range of information about school operations and educational practice
3. Provide welcoming activities in the local community

Activities of participants traveling to China:

1. Learn about China's educational system, secondary education, and educational reform
2. Study the roles and responsibilities of senior administrators
3. Explore opportunities for subsequent student and faculty exchanges and joint educational projects
4. Visit classrooms to observe pedagogy and examine curriculum materials
5. Tour local sites of interest
6. Live in host families, on campus, or in hotel

Approximate timeline:

2007	Mid-June	Final selection of U.S. participants Deposit of \$750 due
	End October	Arrival of Chinese visitors in Boston
	Early November	Visits to schools; principal shadowing, classroom observation for four days
2008	March	Orientation for U.S. participants going to China
	Mid-April	Depart for China for twelve-day trip, including seminars, school visit and principal shadowing, and tourism

Words from a former participant:

"I just returned from visiting China with a group of educators as a participant in the Principal Shadowing Project. This was a wonderful opportunity to observe current education in Chinese schools and to learn directly from Chinese educators the goals and initiatives planned for education reform in that country. Much has been written and publicized about the growing economy and the rapid development of China. Reading about the growth of China is impressive but experiencing it first hand creates a deeper understanding of the massive changes that are underway. This is one trip that is worth all that it takes to get you there."

V. James Marini, Superintendent, The Winchester Public Schools, April 2005

Please send word out to your members. Attached please find a [summary description](#). Thank you! For further information or questions, please contact us. We will need to form our participant list by the end of June.



Application

Sincerely,

Carolyn Henderson
Charlotte Mason
Directors

Email: Carolyn_Henderson@newton.k12.ma.us
Charlotte_Mason@newton.k12.ma.us

The China Exchange Initiative has fostered Chinese school partnerships with school systems in Massachusetts such as Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Concord, Dover-Sherborn, Lexington, Longmeadow, Needham, Newton, Sharon, and Wellesley. These partnerships provide on-going travel opportunities for teachers and students and have enriched curriculum and instruction in both the Chinese and the American schools. CEI is also currently building U.S.-China school exchange programs in New England, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. For further information, please visit our website at <http://www.TheChinaExchangeInitiative.org>.