



Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner
of Education

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Commissioner's Update

November 15, 2007

Dear Superintendents and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

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

Student Assessment Updates

John and Abigail Adams Scholarships

I am pleased to announce that 16,976 students in the class of 2008 have been named recipients of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. An Adams Scholarship entitles the recipient to a four-year tuition waiver at a Massachusetts state college or university.

To be eligible, students must earn a performance level of Proficient or higher on one grade 10 MCAS test (English or Mathematics) and Advanced on the other, and have a combined score that places the student in the top 25 percent of students district wide.

The Adams Scholarship is the state's largest merit-based tuition waiver program, and supplements the \$93 million in state financial aid administered each year to Massachusetts residents. The scholarship was signed into law in 2004 as part of then-Governor Romney's Legacy of Learning initiative.

Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System (VTCTS)

Phase I implementation training of the Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System (VTCTS) is complete. VTCTS is a Web-based system that assists teachers in monitoring student progress toward mastery of standards in the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education (VTE) Frameworks. Vocational-Technical school administrators from 51 schools participated in a two-hour training session and lead teachers designated by their superintendents or principals participated in an all-day training session. The trained lead teachers are now training and supporting teachers to implement VTCTS in their schools.

To assist schools in using the system, the Department has created a dedicated telephone number and a dedicated e-mail address for VTCTS users. Lead teachers function as the liaison between teachers in their schools and VTCTS support personnel.

The Department is currently planning training for Phase II implementation of the VTCTS. This training is tentatively planned for late December or January. Notification will be sent to schools that participated in Phase I training.

For more information, please contact the Office of Student Assessment at 781-338-3625 or send an e-mail to vtcts@doe.mass.edu.

ELAR Will Now Gather Education History Information

ELAR, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's online educator licensure system, will now ask educators to enter their education history when they log in. This improvement is part of an effort, along with EPIMS (Education Personnel Information Management System), to 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 a greatly needed analysis on our educator workforce that over time will identify high need areas, evaluate current educational preparation and related practices, and assist districts with their recruiting efforts.

Educators returning to ELAR who do not have their education history in their profile will be prompted to enter this information before continuing in their ELAR session; they will be given an opportunity to log out if they do not have the time to complete their educational history in that session. Educators applying for their first time will now find that " education history" is one of the fields they are required to complete, i.e., education history is now mandatory .

Items Posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. Notice of Public Comment for the Emergency\Proposed Amendments to 603 CMR 41.00: Regional School Districts
[No longer available]
2. [Continued Collaboration between the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Spain](#)
3. [Grants for Arts, Humanities, and Interpretive Sciences in Schools](#)
4. [International Education Week Activities](#)
5. [National Missing Children's Day Poster Contest for 5th Graders](#)

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner of Education

ESE Phone: 781-338-3000

EVENTS CALENDAR

November 2008						
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NEWS/EVENTS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

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District/School Administration

Continued Collaboration Between the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Spain

To: Superintendents, Principals, Personnel Directors, and Other Interested Parties

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 12, 2007

I am pleased to inform you about the continued collaboration between the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Spain. The Ministry has appointed Clara Gomez Jimeno to work at the Massachusetts Department of Education. She can assist districts in hiring experienced teachers and assistant teachers from Spain who are fluent in both English and Spanish to teach in English as a second language, two-way bilingual, and foreign language programs. The Department will sponsor teachers hired through this program for J-1 visas, which allow them to teach in the United States for up to three years.

You and your staff are invited to meet Clara and teachers from Spain working in Massachusetts's schools on Thursday, December 6, 2007 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm in the third floor Board Room at the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street in Malden. Directions to the Department may be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/contact/doedirections.asp?location=main>. If you would like to attend, please respond to Clara by Monday, December 3, 2007 at 781-338-3034, cjimeno@doe.mass.edu or clara.gomez@mec.es.

In addition to discussing the visiting teacher program, Clara will describe other initiatives of the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in the United States and Canada, <http://www.mec.es/exterior/usa/en/home/index.shtml>. These initiatives include the Spanish Resource Center, a library of free materials for teaching and learning Spanish language and culture at the University of Massachusetts Boston and summer courses in Spain for teachers, administrators, and high school students.

The Department of Education and the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain are committed to serving the students and teachers of Massachusetts and we welcome your ideas on strengthening the program. I hope you will be able to join us on December 6, 2007.



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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Grants for Arts, Humanities, and Interpretive Sciences in Schools

To: Superintendents, Principals, and Curriculum Coordinators

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 12, 2007

This is a special announcement for all educators in the arts, humanities, and sciences. The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) invites you to apply for funding that will assist you in implementing the curriculum frameworks in your districts.

The Creative Schools Grant Program is funded on a two-year cycle. The upcoming cycle begins in 2008 and this opportunity will not be offered again until 2010. Guidelines for this program may be accessed on the MCC website at <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org>. The application deadline for this cycle is February 27, 2008.

Individual schools may apply for up to \$10,000 per year; school districts may apply for a total of \$30,000 to \$45,000 for all applications from a district, depending on student population size.

For more information, contact Diane Daily, MCC's Education Programs Manager, at 617-727-3668, ext. 262 or diane.daily@art.state.ma.us.

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

International Education Week Activities

To: Superintendents, Principals

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: October 29, 2007

The Department of Education with the Board of Education Global Education Advisory Council (GEAC) has compiled a list of suggested activities for classroom use in recognition of International Education Week November 12-16, 2007. International Education Week is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education promoting programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and that attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States. More information can be found at <http://iew.state.gov>.

International Education Week November 12-16, 2007

A Menu of Activities for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

International Storytelling: Invite a storyteller to the school to tell stories from a variety of cultures. Invite student volunteers, to practice telling short tales with the professional. In classrooms, read and retell stories from around the globe with a common theme such as trickster tales, tales of friendship and loyalty, tales of transformations, from a variety of cultures; or choose stories from countries that are studied in social studies classes. (Elementary and Middle School)

Student Interviewers for Family and Community Stories: Prepare students to interview parents, grandparents, or members of the community who have come from cultures outside the U.S. Feature excerpts from the interviews in school newspapers, PTO newsletters, or if videoed, show selected clips in classrooms.

(Elementary, Middle, and High School)

International Music, Poetry, and Art Festival: Celebrate the richness of cultural diversity by presenting songs and poetry, staged with traditional art at a school assembly or during an evening program to which parents are invited.

(Elementary, Middle, and High School)

World Map to Identify Students' Countries of Origin: Identify the heritage countries of the school's students with colorful pins marking the locations on a large world map which is posted in a central location.

(Elementary, Middle, and High School)

Family Poster Project: Celebrate the cultural heritages of the school by creating family posters. Children work with parents to design posters representing the countries of origins to share in classrooms. Display the posters for all to enjoy. [Note: Teachers will know their students' families and can decide if this project is suitable.]

(Elementary and Middle School)

Exploring the Global Marketplace: Take a field trip to a local supermarket where pairs of students hunt and list foods and the locations they come from. Identify these locations on a world map. Also, explore clothing and product labels and identify locations on a world map. [The latter can be done without leaving the classroom.]

(Elementary and Middle School)

International Film Festival: Feature films from countries that complement social studies or literature curriculum.

(High School)

View the Same Foreign Films in Social Studies and World Language Classes: View a film in a language taught at the school. Discuss the film from the historical or economic perspective in social studies classes and from the cultural perspective in foreign language classes.

(High School)

Interdisciplinary Exploration of a Global Topic: Set aside a week or two in which students, in pairs or in small groups, research and present information about a topic of global importance in the areas of ecology, the global marketplace, or world health. Science, social studies, and English teachers would work collaboratively on this project with teams of students.

(Middle and High School)

Teacher Panel Discussion: Feature the insights and experiences of teachers from cultural backgrounds beyond the US in a panel discussion where they describe their responses to living and working in the U.S.

(Middle and High School)

Presentations by Teachers Who Have Lived and Worked in other Countries: Schedule opportunities in classrooms, or during open campus sessions, for teachers who have lived and worked abroad (for Peace Corps or in other capacities) to present information about the place and people with whom they worked and highlights of their

experiences.
(Elementary, Middle and High School)

Display Flags of Nations Representing the Origins of Students: With ceremony, hang the flags of the nations from which the students have come to your school. They might be displayed in the entrance hall, hallways, or in the cafeteria.
(Elementary, Middle and High School)

Presentations by Exchange Students: Prepare exchange students from outside the US to present their culture to their classmates through photos, music, songs, dance, stories and art. Publish articles and interviews of these students in the school newspaper.
(Elementary, Middle and High School)

International Club Event: Stage skits by students from the International Club to dramatize what it is like to be a stranger in a new culture, learning how to cope.
(High School)

PTSA International Dinner: Enjoy and celebrate the diversity of the school during an international dinner organized by the PTA. Ask families to bring favorite dishes of the cultures of origin. The program of international music and dance could conclude the evening's festivities.
(Elementary, Middle and High School)

International Education Week Website: <http://iew.state.gov/>

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ESE Phone: 781-338-3000

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District/School Administration

National Missing Children's Day Poster Contest For 5th Graders

To: Elementary School Principals

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: November 12, 2007

The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Child Protection Division, sponsors this annual contest for 5th grade students to develop the artwork that will represent America's united goal to bring missing children home safely.

The winning artwork from each state will be displayed at the National Missing Children's Day ceremony, to be held during the month of May, 2008. The national winner travels to Washington, DC, along with his/her parents and teacher, to receive an award and participate in the ceremony.

Contest Rules:

1. Applicant must be in the 5th grade.
2. Artwork should reflect the theme "Bring Our Missing Children Home." This phrase must appear somewhere on the poster.
3. The theme must be depicted visually in one or a combination of mediums, such as: acrylics, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, magic markers, spray paint, crayons, pastels, etc.
4. The finished poster must measure 11 x 14 inches.
5. The poster must be submitted with a completed application, that includes a description of the poster and a brief biography of the artist (neither to exceed 100 words) either legibly written or typed.

Judging Criteria:

1. Complete contest rules must be followed for all levels of competition. Incomplete packages and incorrect sized posters will not be eligible for further consideration.
2. Artwork will be judged on:

1. Originality of design
2. Reflection of the contest theme
3. Use of color and materials

3. Written applications will be judged on:

1. Level of understanding of the subject expressed
2. Clarity
3. Grammar and syntax appropriate to the 5th grade level

The contest will commence on January 13, 2008, "AMBER Alert Awareness Day."

The 11x14 poster with completed application **must be mailed by March 1, 2008** to:

Massachusetts State Police General Headquarters
c/o Tpr. Nicole Morrell
AMBER Alert Coordinator
470 Worcester Road
Framingham, MA. 01702

Complete information about the contest can be viewed and downloaded at the sites below:

[OJJDP Poster Contest Overview](#)

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*Massachusetts Department of
Elementary & Secondary Education*

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