



Jeffrey Nellhaus
 Acting Commissioner
 of Education

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Commissioner's Update

February 27, 2008

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

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

Massachusetts State Performance Plan for Special Education (MA SPP) for FFY 2005-2010 and Annual Performance Report (MA APR) for FFY 2006

A revised version of the Massachusetts State Performance Plan for Special Education (MA SPP) for FFY 2005-2010 and the recently submitted Massachusetts Annual Performance Report (MA APR) for FFY 2006 are now available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/>. The MA SPP is a six-year strategic plan required by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that outlines the state's efforts in working towards improved outcomes for student with disabilities. The MA SPP includes baseline data, targets, and improvement activities for 20 indicators identified by OSEP, including graduation and dropout rates, assessment results and other performance and compliance based indicators. The MA APR contains progress data for FFY2006 in 17 of the indicator areas. Data related to the MA SPP and MA APR are currently reported publicly at the LEA level for several indicators at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/special_ed.aspx. These data will be updated this spring and data for additional indicators will be added.

Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework Review

At the September 27, 2007 Board of Education meeting, the Board adopted a schedule to revise all seven Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The review process for the 2000 *Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework* and the 2004 *Grades 3, 5, and 7 Grade Level Standards Supplement* will begin in late February 2008 with the recruitment of members for the review panel. Application information and forms are posted online at the <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3934>. **Deadline** for applications is: **Wednesday, March 19, 2008**. Applicants selected for appointment to the panel will be notified in early April 2008. We are seeking representation on the panel from mathematics faculty, educators, and school leaders serving all grade levels as well as ELL and special education specialists and community representatives.

Items Posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. [Special Education Circuit Breaker Extraordinary Relief Claims Due by Friday, February 29, 2008](#)
2. [Opportunity to Review Student Demographic Information to Be Used for 2008 MCAS|AYP Subgroup Reports](#)
3. [Mathematics Curriculum Framework Review Panel](#)
4. [English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Discussion Meetings](#)
5. [April Regional College Readiness Workshops](#)

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner of Education

last updated: February 27, 2008

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School Finance: Circuit Breaker

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Special Education Directors, School Business Officials

From: Jay Sullivan, Administrator, School Business Services

Date: January 31, 2008

Subject: Special Education Circuit Breaker Extraordinary Relief Claims

The Special Education Circuit Breaker program includes a provision that allows districts to claim for extraordinary relief when claimable Special Education costs exceed 125% of the previous year's claimed costs. The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the extraordinary relief claim process for FY'08. Districts considering claiming for this fiscal year should send a letter or e-mail to [Lynn McKnight](#) expressing their intent to claim by Friday, February 29, 2008. After receiving this information we will create district specific claim files and make them available to school officials. These claim files will be in the same format as previous claims and will be due March 31, 2008. In addition, we are working to set up a training schedule during March to assist districts intending to file by the March deadline. Please be advised that districts filing after March 31 are not guaranteed consideration for relief.

I appreciate your assistance in the implementation of the Circuit Breaker program.

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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Mathematics Curriculum Framework Review Panel

To: Superintendents, Principals, Mathematics Curriculum Coordinators, and Other Interested Parties

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: February 20, 2008

I am writing to invite you to apply to serve on the panel to review and refine the *2000 Mathematics Curriculum Framework* and the *2004 Supplement to the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework: Grades 3, 5, and 7 Grade Level Standards* (located online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>). The panel will review the framework documents to determine if modifications are needed to reflect current policy and standards documents on learning and achievement in mathematics needed for college and 21st century careers.

To allow the panel to begin its work in April, **applications**   must be **submitted by Wednesday, March 19, 2008**. School district personnel should confirm administrative support before applying. Applicants selected for appointment to the panel will be notified by early April 2008.

The Department seeks applications from educators in elementary, middle, and high schools, school administrators, faculty at institutions of higher education, as well as other members of the community. We are seeking wide representation, including:

- educators who teach mathematics in elementary, middle, and secondary schools and higher education mathematics or education faculty who teach introductory or advanced college mathematics courses or mathematics education courses;
- educators who have incorporated mathematics in science, technology/engineering, literacy, history, economics, arts, comprehensive health, or vocational/technical courses;
- educators of special education and English language learner students;
- district and school administrators, including superintendents, principals, and curriculum coordinators;
- community members, including parents, students, school committee members, librarians, and educators

from informal and other educational institutions or agencies who help support students to improve their mathematical skills;

- business personnel with experience in hiring and training employees in mathematics skills; and
- researchers in the fields of mathematical thinking and quantitative reasoning.

The panel will meet monthly from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. beginning on Wednesday April 16, 2008 and continue on the following schedule:

Thursday May 15, 2008

Thursday June 19, 2008

Thursday July 17, 2008

Thursday August 21, 2008

Thursday September 18, 2008

Thursday October 16, 2008*

*Monthly meetings after October 16, 2008 will be scheduled as needed.

A list of recommended revisions to the *Framework* will be presented to the public at regional forums and to the Board of Education for discussion in the Fall of 2008. A first draft of the revised document will be sent to the Board for review in Winter 2009.

Panel members will receive Professional Development Points and districts will be reimbursed for the cost of substitute teachers if necessary. Travel expenses may be reimbursed.

I encourage you and your colleagues to consider participating in the review of the *Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework*. If you have questions, please contact Barbara Libby at 781-338-3460 or blibby@doe.mass.edu.

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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Discussion Meetings

To: Superintendents, High School Principals and Directors of Charter Schools, Approved Private Special Education Schools, and Educational Collaboratives, and English Language Arts Coordinators and Department Chairs

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2008

The *Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*, adopted by the Board of Education in 2001, is currently under review for possible revisions. You and your staff are invited to two public meeting to hear about the review process and contribute your ideas for strengthening the content and the format of the framework.

The meetings will be held at the following times and dates:

Tuesday, March 4: Medford High School Library, 4:00 to 5:30

Tuesday, March 11: Worcester Technical High School Conference Room, 3:30 to 5:00

Directions are below.

Snow Policy: The meetings will not be held if the Medford Public Schools are closed on March 4 or the Worcester Public Schools are closed on March 11.

[Directions to Medford High School, 489 Winthrop Street \(Route 38\), Medford](#)

[Directions to Worcester Technical High School, 1 Skyline Drive, Worcester](#)



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College and Career Readiness

April Regional College Readiness Workshops

To: Superintendents and High School Principals

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: February 21, 2008

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, is pleased to sponsor four regional workshops designed to improve college readiness and high school-college alignment.

Regional partners for these workshops include: The CONNECT Partnership, The Colleges of Worcester Consortium, The University of Massachusetts/Lowell, The Five College Public School Partnership, The Boston Regional Partnership, and The Berkshire Compact for Higher Education.

About the Regional College and Career Readiness Workshops

The workshops have been designed to help support existing effective school-college partnerships or foster new ones. Dr. David Conley and his staff at the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) at the University of Oregon have been selected to conduct the workshops and will provide specific strategies to increase college readiness and alignment between high school and college. Dr. Conley is nationally recognized for his work on college readiness, including the book, *College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready*.

During the daylong workshops in April teams will meet to create or refine high school-college alignment action plans. The staff from EPIC will review the action plans and provide technical support to the teams during the spring and summer of 2008. Support will be in the form of planning assistance for continued partnering, materials support for alignment and college readiness protocols, syllabus analysis, technical support for senior seminars and linked high school-college courses. Funded by an Advanced Placement Incentive Program grant from the United States

Department of Education, both the April sessions and the technical support will be provided to participants at no charge.

Please refer to the [Attachment](#) that accompanies this memo for more information about the techniques that Dr. Conley will present. His monograph, *Toward a More Comprehensive Conception of College Readiness*, commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and additional information about his research and the services provided by EPIC may be found at the EPIC website: <http://www.epiconline.org>.

Regional Workshop Dates and Locations

Regional workshops will be held from 9 am to 3 pm at the following locations and dates:

Region	Location	Date
1. West	Mt. Holyoke College	April 3
2. Greater Boston/Central	Regis College	April 4
3. Northeast	UMass/Lowell	April 14
4. Southeast	UMass/Dartmouth	April 15

Regional College Readiness Workshop Registration

High school principals are encouraged to send a team to the workshop in their region of the state. The team may include three to four members, such as the district curriculum coordinator, a high school principal, high school English and/or mathematics department chairs, or high school guidance director. The Board of Higher Education will recruit college and university faculty from each region to participate.

The deadline for registration is March 14, 2008. Because space is limited, you are encouraged to register your team as soon as possible.

The links for registration to each of the sessions are listed below.

Region	Link
West	http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=455
Greater Boston/Central	http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=456
Northeast	http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=457
Southeast	http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=458

If you have questions about the workshops, please contact Richard Salus at 781-338-6252 or rsalus@doe.mass.edu.