

Jeffrey Nellhaus  
Acting Commissioner  
of Education

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RSS

## Commissioner's Update

April 7, 2008

Dear Superintendents and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

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

### Department Seeks Committee Members for Updating of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)

During 2008-2009, test updating activities will take place for the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) for Biology, Communication and Literacy Skills, Chemistry, Earth Science, English as a Second Language, French, Physics, Spanish, and Technology/Engineering. The Department is seeking nominations for educators to participate in test redevelopment activities, including test review and setting of the qualifying (passing) scores. We need your assistance in finding licensed public school teachers who are current and exemplary in their subject area and college faculty teaching liberal arts and sciences, fine arts, or education preparation courses. Nomination information and forms are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=4028>. Please forward the nomination materials to educators you wish to nominate to participate in MTEL test development activities. Nominees should return their completed forms as soon as possible but not later than April 30, 2008 to either the address or fax number indicated on the form.



### Title IIB: Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership Program (MMSP) Grant Opportunity

As a reminder, the request for proposals for the Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership Program, funded through Title II, Part B, of the federal education act, No Child Left Behind, is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/grants.html>. The purpose of the MMSP program is to improve student achievement in science, technology/engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through intensive, high-quality professional development activities that focus on deepening teachers' content knowledge and improving standards-based practices. The due date for submission is Monday, May 5, 2008.

For further information about the Title II-B program contact Lisa Tyrrell, Statewide Science Assistance Specialist, at [ltyrrell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:ltyrrell@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-3514.

## MCAS and MEPA

I would like to draw your attention to five memoranda related to MCAS and MEPA testing that have been sent to you "On the Desktop."

1. Educators are invited to serve on Assessment Development Committees for the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) for the following grade spans: K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12 from June 2008 through May 2009. Please encourage staff working with English language learners and content staff to consider this rewarding professional development opportunity as the Department prepares to develop new MEPA reading and writing tests. Completed applications are due on April 11, 2008. Complete information is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3993](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3993).
2. Spring 2008 retraining sessions will be conducted for current Qualified MELA-O Trainers (QMTs). Retraining sessions will be offered in Worcester, Taunton, and Peabody on April 15, April 16, and May 5 respectively. As a reminder, all QMTs who report MELA-O scores must be retrained and requalified by January 31, 2010. Additional information, including registration instructions, can be found at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3995](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3995).
3. As a reminder, superintendents are responsible for ensuring that all principals in their schools follow proper testing procedures and security requirements during MCAS tests. Please refer to the *Principal's Administration Manual*  .
4. Compositions from the November 2007 retest have been posted on the MCAS Service Center Web site. Instructions for accessing them are available at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3996](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3996).
5. Principals or their designees must submit MELA-O scores for LEP students in grades K-2 who did not take the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) in March 2008. The deadline for submitting MELA-O scores for these students on the Department's Security portal is April 25, 2008. Instructions can be accessed at [www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3994](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3994).

## Transportation Routing Software Grant Announcement

A grant program to support the purchase of transportation routing software has just been announced. An application is listed on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Web site at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants08/rfp/197.html>.

The grant program is designed to cover the cost of the software and will range from \$10,000 to \$24,000 depending on the software purchased. Applications are due to the Department on April 25, 2008. Districts must be prepared to purchase this software by the end of the fiscal year.

Two companies have been added to the ASAP/Dell statewide blanket technology contract. Any purchase from the statewide blanket contract will satisfy the requirements of Chapter 30B. For information on the vendors, pricing and procurement process contact: Amy Zapata, Dell/ASAP, 800-307-4107, [Amy\\_zapata@dell.com](mailto:Amy_zapata@dell.com).

If you would like the quotes from the two vendors faxed to you or if you have any questions, please contact: Christine

M. Lynch, 781-338-6520, [clynch@doe.mass.edu](mailto:clynch@doe.mass.edu) or Jay Sullivan, 781-338-6594, [jsullivan@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jsullivan@doe.mass.edu).

## Special Education Circuit Breaker Workshop for New Staff

We are establishing our training protocols for the spring and recognize that many district staff members are either new to their positions or new to the Circuit Breaker process. To increase the effectiveness of our annual Circuit Breaker claims training, we plan to hold specific sessions for staff unfamiliar with the claim process. This new training would be an introductory session and provide a very basic understanding of the process. This training will be lecture style and will prepare attendees to participate in the "hands on" sessions that will be offered in late May and early June. District staff familiar with the process but who would like a refresher course are also welcome.

We have scheduled workshops throughout the state. Please click the following link to register for a workshop <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=495> .

## Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, Inc. - 2008 National High School Teacher Awards Program

Guidelines and an application form for the 2008 National High School Teacher Awards Program can be located at [http://www.dj.com/Pressroom/PressReleases/Other/US/2008/0318\\_US\\_DowJones\\_4683.htm](http://www.dj.com/Pressroom/PressReleases/Other/US/2008/0318_US_DowJones_4683.htm).

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

1. [2008 MCAS-Alt Summer Scoring Institute](#)
2. [New Fiscal Guidance - Consolidation Funds in Title I Schoolwide Programs](#)
3. [FY08 Title I Program Monitoring Review](#)
4. [FY09 Title V, Part A Innovation Grants News Alert](#)
5. [School Choice Roster Updates, Spring 2008](#)
6. [Release of March 2008 MCAS Retest Results](#)
7. [US-China Principal Shadowing Project](#)

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nellhaus  
Acting Commissioner of Education

last updated: April 8, 2008

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  - Adams Scholarship
  - Parent Hotline 1-866-MCAS220



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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### 2008 MCAS-Alt Summer Scoring Institute

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

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education



Date: April 7, 2008

I am pleased to announce the dates for the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) Summer Scoring Institute that will take place at the Mansfield Holiday Inn. I invite you to apply to become a scorer of MCAS-Alt student portfolios on the following dates:

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| Week | June 30-July 3                                  |
| 1:   |   |
| Week | July 7-11                                       |
| 2:   |   |
| Week | July 14-18 (or until all portfolios are scored) |
| 3:   |   |

Prospective scorers may apply for one or two weeks of scoring and must be available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each workday. Please complete and submit the enclosed application, or apply online at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com), no later than May 2, 2008.

Prospective scorers must be licensed Massachusetts educators, related service providers, or higher education faculty, preferably with experience developing MCAS-Alt portfolios for students with significant disabilities. Consideration will be given to content specialists in English language arts, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering with or without portfolio experience. Applicants must be familiar with the 2008 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities (2006). Prior experience in scoring MCAS-Alt portfolios is helpful, but not necessary.

Each Institute participant will receive a stipend of \$120.00 for each day of actual portfolio scoring, and \$75.00 for each day of training, plus PDPs provided for each week of scoring. Applications will be reviewed upon receipt, and your participation will be confirmed by mail no later than May 9. Please share this form with other interested educators. The **application form** may be photocopied and/or downloaded  .

To complete an online application go to [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com).

I encourage educators to participate in this important professional development opportunity. For additional information, contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

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## Title I

### New Fiscal Guidance - Consolidating Funds in Title I Schoolwide Programs

To: Title I Directors and Business Managers in Districts with Title I Schoolwide Programs

From: Lynda Foisy, Associate Commissioner, Accountability & Targeted Assistance

Date: March 24, 2008

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The U.S. Department of Education recently revised its Title I fiscal guidance concerning the consolidation of funds in schoolwide program schools. This memorandum notifies you of the publication of the new non-regulatory guidance and provides you additional information regarding the potential value of consolidating federal, state, and local funds to implement schoolwide program plans.

As you know, districts are able to operate Title I schoolwide programs in schools in which 40 percent or more of the students are from low income families. To operate a schoolwide program, a school must conduct a needs assessment of the entire school and develop a comprehensive plan that aims to upgrade the entire educational program in the school to improve the academic performance of all students. By consolidating, or "pooling", funds from Federal, State, and local sources, a schoolwide program school can address its needs using all of the resources available to it. This gives a school additional flexibility in its use of available resources to meet the specifically identified needs of its students.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) encourages schoolwide program schools to consolidate funds from federal, state, and local sources. The new fiscal guidance, available via the Department's Web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/titlei/fiscal/?section=supplement](http://www.doe.mass.edu/titlei/fiscal/?section=supplement), contains three example methods for the accounting of funds that have been consolidated in schoolwide programs. We recommend that school districts utilize **Example 2, Option 1** (described on page 54 of the guidance) in their accounting of consolidated schoolwide funds. This option pools funds on a school-by-school basis and allows expenditures to be allocated back to their source accounts as a percentage of the total funds. After allocating expenditures back to their source, districts can then follow standard accounting and grant procedures. This technique thus maintains the integrity of budgeting and expenditures for individual schools.

Please share the updated fiscal guidance with your district superintendent and principals of schoolwide programs in your district. This spring, school principals and staff will conduct their annual evaluation of the schoolwide program and revise their comprehensive plan, as necessary, to ensure continuous improvement in student performance. To aid in the revision of schoolwide comprehensive plans, districts and schools should also begin planning for September 2008 consolidation of funds.

For questions regarding the programmatic aspects of schoolwide programs, please contact John Desses ([jdesses@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jdesses@doe.mass.edu) / 781-338-6276). For questions regarding fiscal issues associated with schoolwide programs, including the consolidation of funds, please contact Tom Chin ([tchin@doe.mass.edu](mailto:tchin@doe.mass.edu) / 781-338-3592).

c: Superintendent

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## Title I

### FY08 Title I Program Monitoring Review

To: Title I Directors in Districts Participating in FY08 Coordinated Program Review

From: Lynda Foisy, Associate Commissioner, Accountability & Targeted Assistance

Date: February 19, 2008

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Dear Title I Director:

The Title I program review is a regular, systematic examination of school district administration and implementation of federal education grants. The review ensures district compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and provides evidence that district Title I programs and policies exhibit a focus on improving student academic achievement. All districts participating in a Coordinated Program Review (CPR) during the 2007-08 school year that provide Title I services to students also participate in a Title I program review.

This memorandum is official notice of the FY08 Title I program monitoring review for your district. In most cases, the FY08 Title I program review will be conducted as a desk-based audit of district documentation. We will notify you at a later date if the Department's review team determines that an onsite visit or additional information is necessary.

The attached document, *2007-08 Title I / NCLB Program Review Procedures*, details the Title I monitoring areas and required documentation. Earlier this school year your district may have submitted to the Department certain of the required FY08 documents - specifically those related to Comparability, parental notification, and private school consultation. If so, there is no need to resubmit those documents. Sample materials and additional resources are available online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/titlei/monitoring/>. We strongly encourage you to review and, as appropriate, use the sample materials and resources listed.

Please submit all required documentation in hard copy format, and **in the same order** that is described in the *2007-08 Title I / NCLB Program Review Procedures* document, to:

Lisa Keenan  
Accountability and Targeted Assistance  
Massachusetts Department of Education  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148

The deadline for submission is **March 24, 2008**. Once the document review is completed, we will notify you of any outstanding questions or concerns we have regarding your district's implementation of Title I services.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact Lisa Keenan at 781-338-3578 or [lkeenan@doe.mass.edu](mailto:lkeenan@doe.mass.edu). Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

c: Superintendent

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## Innovative Program Grants (Title V)

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner

Date: April 4, 2008

### FY 09 Title V, Part A Innovative Grants News Alert

Congress recently passed legislation to provide funding for the No Child Left Behind Act for state fiscal year 2008-2009 (FY 09) programs. Unfortunately, this legislation did not provide funding for Title V, Part A (Innovative Grants), which is distributed in Massachusetts through Fund Code (FC) 302. As a result, please be aware of the following:

- No new funds will be available for distribution to districts in this upcoming year (FY 09) through Title V, Part A (FC 302).
- Districts are strongly encouraged to spend all of their FY08 Title V, Part A funds by August 31, 2008.
- Districts with highly unusual circumstances that prevent them from spending all of their FY 08 Title V, Part A funds by August 31, 2008 must return the unspent portion along with the Final Financial Report Form (FR1) by October 31, 2008. These districts may then apply for that amount through a FY 09 carryover grant. Funds from the carryover grant need to be expended by August 31, 2009. Details on the carryover process will be posted later this spring to <http://www.doe.mass.edu/titlev/>.
- In FY 09, districts will still be entitled to transfer funds into Title V, Part A from other allowable Titles (including Title IIA Improving Teacher Quality state grants, Title IID Educational Technology state grants, and Title IVA Safe & Drug Free Schools and Communities grants), according to the same rules that have applied since the NCLB act was passed. See <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants08/rfp/nclb.html> for more details on transferability.
- Districts receiving funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program may continue to use their SRSA funds to carry out local activities authorized under Title V, Part A as well as under certain other programs indentified in the SRSA. Districts eligible for SRSA funding may also continue to exercise Rural Education Achievement Program flexibility (REAP-Flex) authority to use any funds that they receive under the Improving Teacher Quality, Educational Technology, and Safe and Drug-Free Communities grant

programs to carry out local activities authorized under Title V, Part A as well as activities authorized under certain other programs identified in the REAP legislation. See <http://www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa> for more SRSA details.

Please contact the Student Support Unit with any questions via [achievement@doe.mass.edu](mailto:achievement@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-3322.

last updated: April 7, 2008

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## School Finance: School Choice

### School Choice Roster Updates, Spring 2008


3/10/08





October 1, 2007 enrollment submitted by receiving districts through SIMS was the basis for tuition calculations used to generate the December 29, 2007 and March 31, 2008 assessments and payments for school choice sending and receiving districts.

The school choice law requires both a fall and a spring enrollment reporting period. For this spring's reporting, receiving districts are asked to download their current enrollment spreadsheet from Department's security portal, and save the file locally. Because SIMS does not collect exact start dates, leave dates, or pupil addresses, district staff should enter that information for each pupil. In addition, for any school choice pupil who receives special education services, a pupil-specific special education cost should be calculated and entered on the spreadsheet (for further guidance, see the [school choice sped increment explanation](#)). When all of the school choice data have been updated, the claim form should be saved on the district's computer and uploaded through the [ESE security portal](#) to the district's school choice drop box.

These data changes will be used to calculate final FY08 school choice tuition. The June 30, 2008 local aid distribution will reflect the difference between final annual tuition and the amounts paid in the December and March distributions.

#### Please note:

- The sped increment is calculated on a template similar to that used for the circuit breaker program. However, there are differences. For that reason, receiving school choice districts should be sure to download and use the **FY08 School Choice SPED Increment template** .
- **Each district claiming increments must upload its completed sped increment file to the school choice drop box on the security portal. Beginning this year, this applies to any level of increment, not just those eligible for Circuit Breaker reimbursement.**
- All sped increment calculations are subject to audits by Department's Circuit Breaker staff.
- Summer services that occurred between June and September of 2007 (if specified in a student's IEP) are now eligible to be included on the sped increment form.

- **Claim Form Instructions**   are available for completing and updating the school choice claim form spreadsheet, which is named "08choice000.xls" where 000 is the lea code.
- **A certification statement**   is required from the superintendent of each receiving district. This should be mailed or faxed to Phyllis Rogers at the address below, once the file has been submitted.

**Office of School Finance  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148-5023  
Fax 781-338-6530**

- The "08choice000" claim form spreadsheet, sped increment template and certification statements are due by April 25th, 2008.

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ESE Phone: 781-338-3000

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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30	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEWS/EVENTS SEARCH

Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



## U.S.- China Principal Shadowing Project

The [U.S.-China Principal Shadowing Project](#) (PSP) provides a unique opportunity for school administrators- superintendents and principals- to learn about and observe one another's educational systems from close up. Each October principals from China visit schools in the United States. After attending lectures on American education at universities, schools, and departments of education, they shadow partner principals or superintendents on the job, live in host families, visit classes, and participate in a variety of school and community events. One of the visitors described the experience as "a treasure." American administrators reunite with their counterparts in China in April for comparable parallel experiences. To date, CEI has sponsored PSPs in Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts and Oklahoma. The U.S.-China Principal Shadowing Project is co-sponsored by the China Exchange Initiative (CEI) and the China Education Association for International Exchanges (CEAIE) of China's Ministry of Education.

Download Application

Tuesday, April 08, 2008

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