



**Mitchell D. Chester**  
 Commissioner of  
 Elementary and Secondary  
 Education

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## Commissioner's Update

October 10, 2008

Dear Superintendents and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

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

### All Advisory Councils Meeting on Monday, November 3, 2008

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is expected to vote on Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester's advisory council membership recommendations for the 2008-2009 school year at the October 21, 2008 Board meeting. All members of the 17 advisory councils are invited to an All Advisory Councils meeting on Monday, November 3, 2008 at the Hogan Campus at Holy Cross College in Worcester. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Invitations to new appointees will be sent following Board approval. Board Chair Maura Banta and Commissioner Chester will present the Board's and Department's goals and priorities and charge the councils with their work for the next year. Advisory council volunteers who have completed their service will be recognized at the Appreciation Luncheon following the charge to the councils.

The 17 advisory councils are: adult basic education, arts education, community service learning, educational personnel, educational technology, English language learners/bilingual education, gifted and talented education, global education, interdisciplinary health and human services, life management skills, mathematics and science education, parent and community education and involvement, racial imbalance, school and district accountability and assistance, special education, technology/engineering, and vocational technical education. Council membership, including 2008–2009 new member recommendations, can be found on the Board's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/0908/item3.html>.

### ESE Online Services – Service Interruptions Nov 21st – Nov 25th

The weekend before Thanksgiving, ESE will be moving its data center to a new location. During this time there will be an interruption of service that will be substantial as we are bringing a new network online and moving over 130 servers. We will work to keep the interruption as short as possible, but please make sure to plan around the schedule below. Please expect that **all ESE online services** will be unavailable starting **Friday, Nov 21st** and continuing through the entire weekend of **Nov 22nd - 23rd**.

Our goal is to bring services back online according to the following schedule - services may be down until the date listed:

*By Monday, Nov 24:*

- ESE public website
- ESE e-mail

*By Tuesday, Nov 25:*

- MassONE
- Directory Administration
- ELAR (online teacher licensure)
- SIMS and EPIMS data collections
- School and district profiles
- ESE website search
- SMARTT

*By Wednesday, Nov 26:*

- Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System
- ESE Data warehouse
- Nutrition
- Drop boxes
- MCAS Look up/Score request
- PQA Web-Based Monitoring System

We will accelerate this schedule if at all possible. Thank you for your patience.

### **Massachusetts Celebrates Learn and Serve Challenge Week: October 6 - 12, 2008**

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that combines content standards with service to the community. Students and teachers engaged in service-learning throughout Massachusetts are meeting real community needs while improving academic knowledge and sharpening skills for the 21st century.

The week of October 6–12 marks **National Learn and Serve Challenge Week**, a week designed to raise awareness and public support for service-learning. Research shows that service-learning has a positive impact on students, schools and communities. In 2006, the Corporation for National and Community Service set a national goal to engage 50 percent of America's K–12 schools in service-learning by 2010.

During 2007–2008 in Massachusetts, through funding from Learn and Serve America, nearly 20,000 students engaged in service-learning projects. Through these projects, students applied a wide range of academic skills and knowledge to community issues such as environmental awareness/protection, health education, historical preservation, community development and more.

The following are some of the ways that Massachusetts supports and promotes service-learning as a strategy for student engagement and success:

### **Announcing 2008–2009 Massachusetts Service–Learning Leader Awards Program**

The Community Service–Learning Advisory Council to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education provides recognition for excellence in service–learning practice through its annual Service-Learning Leader Awards Program. Awards are presented to a superintendent, principal, curriculum/CSL coordinator, community partner, higher

education partner, and up to ten teachers who demonstrate dedication and commitment to service-learning as a strategy for engaging students in their schools and their communities. The awards are given each year at the Statewide Service-Learning Conference, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Massachusetts Service Alliance. See the news section on the bottom of the home page of our [CSL web site](#) for nomination information.

The 2007-2008 Massachusetts Service-Learning Leader Award recipients:

Teacher Leader Awards:

- Sarah Benis Scheier-Dolberg, Humanities Teacher, New Mission HS, Boston
- Kenneth High, Social Studies Teacher, Hudson HS, Hudson
- Mary "Gret" Lozeau, Social Studies Teacher, Hanson MS, Whitman-Hanson
- Zachary Snow, Biology Teacher, Newton North HS, Newton

Superintendent Leader Awards:

- Ruth Gilbert-Whitner, Assistant Superintendent, Whitman-Hanson Regional Schools

Community Partner Leader Award:

- South Shore Habitat for Humanity

Higher Education Partner Leader Award:

- Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

### **Massachusetts Community Service-Learning Regional Mentoring Centers (RMCs)**

The Regional Mentoring Centers are grant-funded districts/collaboratives that have demonstrated leadership in implementing and sustaining service-learning practice. They are charged with maintaining CSL and sharing promising practices to engage more districts throughout the state. Funding supports activities that emphasize improving practice, disseminating promising practices, and solidifying service-learning as part of a district's culture. Mentoring grantees serve as a resource for districts less familiar with CSL methodology. The 2008-2009 Regional Mentoring Centers are: Danvers Public Schools, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, Hudson Public Schools, North Adams Public Schools, and Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. For more information about the RMCs please contact [Kristen McKinnon](#).



**Massachusetts Community Service-Learning Promising Practices** Community Service-Learning (CSL) Promising Practices are activities, projects, strategies, and approaches that have been shown to be effective through experience and have led to positive outcomes for youth. The Department believes Community Service-Learning deserves serious attention as a powerful educational practice that addresses many of the components necessary to build strong learning environments. Of equal importance, CSL offers a unique resource for the revitalization of our

communities. Visit the [CSL Promising Practices](#) page for more than 40 examples of CSL projects implemented in schools in Massachusetts.

### **2008 STEM Summit V: Implementing the MA STEM Plan**

Registration is available for the **2008 STEM Summit V: Implementing the MA STEM Plan** to be held at the [Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center](#), Sturbridge, MA on Tuesday, October 28, 2008. Educators, both pre-K-12 and higher education, community and business leaders, and state and local-level policymakers are invited to attend. The combined efforts of all stakeholders will accelerate successful student preparation for careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in Massachusetts. The Keynote Speaker is Nobel Laureate Craig C. Mello, PhD., Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, The Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School. To register, go to: <http://www.massachusetts.edu/stem/index.htm>. Please feel free to forward this message.

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

1. [MCAS Assessment Development Committee \(ADC\) Recruitment](#)
2. [Notice of Public Comment](#)
3.   [Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for Competency Determination: Performance Appeals Process 603 CMR 30.00](#)
4. [November is Family Literacy Month](#)
5. [Regional Forums on the Educational Proficiency Plan and MassCore](#)
6. [Update on Required Teaching Licenses or Persons Engaged in Reading Instruction](#)

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

last updated: October 10, 2008

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*Massachusetts Department of  
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## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

### MCAS Assessment Development Committee (ADC) Recruitment

To: Superintendents and Educational Leaders

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
 Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: October 6, 2008

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is seeking educators to serve as members of the MCAS English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering (STE), and History and Social Science (HSS) Assessment Development Committees. Members of these committees are directly involved in assisting the Department with the process of developing MCAS test items. We are looking for members with content expertise, familiarity with the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks*, and teaching experience in the grade and subject matter indicated on the application. This is a rewarding professional development opportunity for educators who are interested in learning about large-scale, standards-based assessment. Please inform your faculty and colleagues of this opportunity. Individuals who previously served or currently serve as ADC members may reapply.

#### Committee Members' Responsibilities

Assessment Development Committee members assist the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the review of MCAS reading passages (ELA only), test questions, and scoring rubrics. The charge is to review items for:

- alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and MCAS performance standards
- developmental appropriateness
- instructional worthiness

- content accuracy

Committee members are charged with reviewing all test questions prior to field-testing and making suggestions for refinements. After field-testing, committee members review the questions with their field-test performance data. ELA committee members for grades 4, 7, and 10 also review writing prompts and make recommendations regarding their selection for use on MCAS tests.

### *Membership Structure and Number of Meeting Days*

Each ADC consists of approximately 8–12 educators. The membership term runs from January 2009 through December 2009. Committee members are required to attend all scheduled meetings, which run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., during the school year and the summer. The approximate number of meeting days per committee anticipated for 2009 is as follows:

Content Area	Grades	Number of Meeting Days
ELA	3, 5, 6, 8	7
ELA	4, 7	8
ELA	10	14
History and Social Science	5, 7, 10/11	8
Mathematics	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	3
Mathematics	10	8
Science and Tech/Eng	5	4
Science and Tech/Eng	8	6
Biology	High School	8
Chemistry, Intro Physics, Technology/Engineering	High School	6

Upon selection, successful applicants will be sent a calendar of meetings and will be asked to confirm their commitment to attend these meetings. The first meeting of most committees will be in the early part of 2009 at a site yet to be determined.

### *Reimbursement of Expenses*

The Department will reimburse districts for actual substitute teacher costs up to \$120 per day. Committee members are reimbursed for mileage, and lodging is provided to members who live 70 or more miles away from the meeting site. In addition, committee members receive professional development points for their service. For summer

meetings only, committee members are awarded a small honorarium, and are not required to live more than 70 miles from the meeting site in order to be provided with lodging.

### *Application Procedure*

Complete applications must include the following three components:

1. Completed application form **with Superintendent's signed recommendation**
2. Current résumé that includes:
  - Content expertise, experience, and professional development related to committee members' responsibilities
  - Current course syllabi, if applicable
3. **Statement of interest\***

The statement (1–2 pages) should describe why the applicant wishes to serve and what particular training and experience will enable the applicant to make a positive contribution as an MCAS ADC member. ***\*Please note: Current committee members who wish to reapply are not required to submit another statement of interest.***

The deadline for receipt of applications is **Friday, October 31, 2008**. Notification will be sent by early December 2008. Please see the attached application for further instructions. If applicants have any questions, they may contact the following content area lead developers:

- ELA: Liz Davis, 781-338-3628
- HSS: Kevin Dwyer, 781-338-3614
- Mathematics: Wayne Fernald, 781-338-3641
- STE: Katie Bowler, 781-338-3464

  ADC Application 2009



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## Education Laws and Regulations

### Notice Of Public Comment

Pursuant to its authority under M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 1B and 1D, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c.30A, § 3, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is soliciting public comment on the adoption of the current emergency regulations amending 603 CMR 30.00 the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for Competency Determination Regulations: Performance Appeals Process, as permanent amendments.

The proposed amendments revise the sections of the regulations, 603 CMR 30.05, that relate to MCAS performance appeals, to add a performance appeal in Science and Technology/Engineering, so that eligible students may have the option of an MCAS performance appeal in science available to them early in the 2008-09 school year.

Copies of the proposed amendments are available on the Department's web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/) or by calling 781-338-3112. Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted to Jonathan Considine, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: by mail to 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148; by fax to 781-338-3195; or by e-mail to [jconsidine@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jconsidine@doe.mass.edu). The deadline for submission of public comment is **Thursday, October 30, 2008**. The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments at its regular monthly meeting scheduled for November 18, 2008.

last updated: September 18, 2008

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**Proposed Amendments to  
Regulations on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and Standards for  
Competency Determination: Performance Appeals Process – 603 CMR 30.00**

**Adopted by Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (adoption of emergency regulations): September 10, 2008**

**Released for public comment for adoption as permanent regulations: September 10, 2008**

**Period of public comment: through October 30, 2008**

**Final action by the Board anticipated: November 18, 2008**

These amendments revise the sections of the regulations, 603 CMR 30.05, that relate to MCAS performance appeals, to add a performance appeal in Science and Technology/Engineering. Adopted as emergency regulations, they take effect in September 2008, so that eligible students may have the option of an MCAS performance appeal in science available to them early in the 2008-09 school year. In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the emergency regulations will remain in effect for no longer than three months. Following the period of initial implementation and public comment, the Board is expected to adopt the regulations in final form at its November 18, 2008 regular meeting.

Amendments are indicated by underscore (new language) and ~~overstrike~~ (deleted language). Sections of the regulations that are unchanged are not reproduced in this document. The full text of 603 CMR 30.00 is available on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr30.html>.

30.05: Performance Appeals

(1) A performance appeal addresses a claim that a student's knowledge and skills in English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science and Technology/Engineering both subjects, meet or exceed a performance level equivalent to 220 on the MCAS ~~grade 10~~ high school tests required for the Competency Determination, even though the student ~~repeatedly~~ has not demonstrated attainment of that standard on the MCAS grade 10 test(s). The performance appeal provides an opportunity to establish that a student has attained the equivalent of a scaled score of 220 on the MCAS test for the purposes of eligibility for the Competency Determination. For English Language Arts and Mathematics, a student meeting this standard must also fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan in order to be eligible for a Competency Determination.

\* \* \*

(3) The superintendent shall include in the performance appeal evidence that the student meets the eligibility requirements for a performance appeal, by submitting documentation as follows that the student:

- (a) (i) For a Mathematics or English Language Arts performance appeal, evidence that the student has taken the grade 10 MCAS test or retest in the subject area of the appeal at least three times;  
  
(ii) For a performance appeal in Science and Technology/Engineering, evidence that the student has taken a Science or Technology/Engineering MCAS test (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering) and is currently enrolled in a Science or Technology/Engineering class or has completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- (b) evidence that the student has maintained at least a 95% attendance level (no more than nine days of absence from school in a 180-day school year) during the school year prior to and the year of the appeal, provided that the superintendent may present evidence of extenuating circumstances such as a student's disability, serious illness, or child care or other family responsibilities, that would justify an exemption from this requirement;
- (c) evidence that the student has satisfactorily participated in the tutoring and other academic support services made available by or approved by the school under an individual student success plan or under any other plan designed to strengthen the student's knowledge and skills in the subject(s) at issue, provided that the superintendent may present evidence of extenuating circumstances, such as a student's disability, serious illness, or child care or other family responsibilities, that would justify an exemption from this requirement;
- (d) A student who has participated in the MCAS Alternate Assessment shall be eligible for a performance appeal if the student has participated in the MCAS-Alt submitted at least two portfolios in the subject area of the appeal at least twice, in lieu of meeting the eligibility requirements listed in 603 CMR 30.05 (3) (a).

\* \* \*

- (5) The superintendent shall include in the performance appeal evidence of the student's knowledge and skills in the subject area(s) for which the appeal is to be filed at issue (English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science and Technology/Engineering~~both~~) by submitting:

\* \* \*

- (d) for appeals in English Language Arts and Mathematics, the grades or grade point average of the student for courses taken in the subject area(s) of the appeal in grade 9 (at the discretion of the superintendent), grades 10, 11, and, if available, grade 12; and

(e) the grades or grade point average and MCAS scores in the area of the appeal of other students in the school who took the same courses; as the student who is the subject of the appeal.

(e) for appeals in Science and Technology/Engineering, the grade of the student for the course in the content area of the appeal (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering) and the grades and MCAS scores in the content area of the appeal of other students in the school who took the same course as the student who is the subject of the appeal.

\* \* \*

(g) If the student has a disability, the superintendent shall include in the performance appeal any other information the student's individual education plan team or Section 504 team (if any) asks to be included, with the consent of the student's parent or guardian, that indicates in the judgment of the individual education plan team or Section 504 team that the student's knowledge and skills in the subject area of the appeal meet or exceed the performance level established by the Board for the performance appeal (220) competency determination (i.e., equivalent to the 220 Needs Improvement level on the MCAS grade 10 test(s)) and that the student's MCAS scores do not accurately reflect the student's knowledge and skills for the content area of the appeal.

(h) The superintendent may, and in the case of a student with disabilities the superintendent shall, also include in the performance appeal other supporting information relevant to the determination as to whether the student's knowledge and skills in the subject area of the appeal meet or exceed the performance level established by the Board for the passing standard for the performance appeal (220) competency determination. In order to be relevant to the determination, the supporting information shall provide evidence of the student's work that specifically and directly addresses the state academic performance standard in the subject area of the appeal. Supporting information includes a collection of the student's work samples sufficient to demonstrate the student's level of performance in relation to the learning standards established by the Board. The superintendent also may submit additional supporting information such as scores of the student on other standardized tests in the subject area, evidence of acceptance to college courses, or other evidence of academic achievement which demonstrates that the student's knowledge and skills meet or exceed the passing standard required for the performance appeal (220). competency determination standard.

\* \* \*

(7) The Commissioner shall appoint members to one or more Performance Appeals Boards Each board shall be chaired by a high school principal and shall consist primarily of teachers and

department heads with experience and expertise in the Massachusetts standards for English Language Arts, ~~or~~ Mathematics, or Science and Technology/Engineering. Each member shall be appointed for a three-year term, provided that the initial terms may be staggered as the Commissioner deems appropriate. The Department shall coordinate and assist the work of each Performance Appeals Board. The Performance Appeals Board shall have the following duties:

- (a) to review each performance appeal submitted to it by the Commissioner, in accordance with these regulations and any guidelines issued by the Commissioner;
- (b) to review the information submitted by the superintendent under 603 CMR 30.05(5) and determine whether it provides sufficient evidence that the student has the required knowledge and skills; and
- (c) to make a recommendation to the Commissioner regarding whether or not the appeal should be granted.

\* \* \*

- (10) For a student with a disability, the Commissioner shall grant the appeal if the cohort analysis as described in 603 CMR 30.05 ~~(b)-(e)~~ (d) or (e), or the portfolio as described in 603 CMR 30.05 (d), or the collection of work samples produced by the student and any additional supporting information submitted with the appeal as required in 603 CMR 30.05 (5) (f), demonstrates by a preponderance of the evidence that the student's knowledge and skills in the subject area of the appeal meet or exceed the performance level established by the Board of Education for the passing standard for the performance appeal (220) competency determination.
- (11) The Commissioner will notify the superintendent in writing of his decision and the reasons for it within ten business days after he receives the recommendation of the Performance Appeals Board. The superintendent shall notify the student, parent or guardian of the decision. Within 21 calendar days after receipt of the Commissioner's decision, the superintendent may respond, including seeking reconsideration of the Commissioner's decision. The decision of the Commissioner shall be final. If the appeal is granted, the student will be deemed to have met the performance appeal passing standard on the MCAS high school grade 10 test that was the subject of the performance appeal. If the appeal is denied, the superintendent may submit a subsequent appeal on behalf of the student, as long as the student meets the eligibility requirements. To be eligible for a subsequent appeal in Science and Technology/Engineering, a student must first take a subsequent MCAS test in either the same or a different discipline (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics or Technology/Engineering).

ESE Phone: 781-338-3000

## EVENTS CALENDAR

November 2008						
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Keyword:

Dates:

Past 30 days

Past 90 days

Date Range

Start:

End:



## Family & Community

### November is Family Literacy Month

To: Superintendents, and Interested Parties

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: October 10, 2008

During my years as teacher, assistant principal and curriculum coordinator, I have had numerous opportunities to observe families learning together and reflect on the profound impact families have on children's learning. Students of all ages do better in school when they are reading, writing and participating in literacy and other learning activities with their families.

That's why I am pleased to announce that Governor Patrick has issued a Proclamation of November 2008 as Family Literacy Month. Family Literacy Month provides an opportunity to support the whole child in out-of-school learning, engage parents in supporting their children's education and engage community partnerships in supporting and celebrating lifelong learning and family well-being.

We are encouraged that so many schools, libraries, adult literacy and parent support programs, social service agencies and businesses are providing organized activities for families during Family Literacy Month. Many of these activities involve parents and children reading together but others include: book giveaways; read-a-thons; read alouds by authors and community leaders; bookmaking; storytelling; family math nights; and trips to museums, historic sites and natural landmarks. If you would like to celebrate Family Literacy Month in your community, here are some resources to get you started:



Governor Patrick's 2008 Proclamation of Massachusetts Family Literacy Month

[The Department's Family Literacy Month web page](#)

[The Celebrate Family Literacy at Your Library web page of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners](#)

[The U.S. Department of Education's Parents web page](#)

This celebration, sponsored by the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC) and its member agencies, underscores the importance of education as a foundation for lifelong learning and family success. The MFLC, a statewide partnership of state agencies including the Children's Trust Fund, the Departments of Early Education and Care and Elementary and Secondary Education, statewide and community organizations, parents and other interested parties, is working to provide wraparound services for at risk children and families.

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## Regional Forums on the Educational Proficiency Plan and MassCore

To: Superintendents, Principals, and Directors of Charter Schools

Copy: Guidance Directors, Counselors, Curriculum Directors, and Academic Support Coordinators

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
 Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: October 6, 2008

The Department will hold four half-day informational forums to increase awareness of the Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) and the MassCore and the role each serves in helping to reach the state's college readiness target identified in Goal Three of the Commonwealth's Readiness Project. Goal Three states: "By 2020, at least 90 percent of Massachusetts high school graduates will finish high school ready for college without having to take remedial non-credit bearing coursework."

### Who should attend?

Superintendents, Principals or designee, Charter School and Guidance Directors, Counselors, Curriculum Directors, and Academic Support Coordinators

### About the Forums

The forums will focus upon the importance of increasing the number of high school students who graduate college and career ready; provide information on the MassCore and on updated resources on the three required elements of the EPP; and provide forum attendees with an opportunity to hear from school district practitioners on their implementation of the EPP.

### Educational Proficiency Plan

Starting with the graduating class of 2010, students who do not score at 240 or above on the grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics MCAS tests must have an EPP. The EPP must identify the student's strengths and weaknesses, based on MCAS and other assessment results, coursework, grades, and teacher, student, and counselor input. It must include the courses (ELA and/or mathematics) the student will be required to take in grades 11 and 12. In

addition, the EPP should include the assessments that will be used to measure the student's progress towards reaching proficiency. For School Year 2008-2009, the Department has approved four assessment options:

- Locally developed end-of-course assessment in English language arts and/or mathematics
- Grade 10 MCAS test forms designed for the EPP in which scoring will be done at the local level
- The College Board's Accuplacer test. Accuplacer is required for students entering Massachusetts public colleges and the University of Massachusetts and is used to determine readiness for placement into credit bearing math and English coursework
- State Algebra II end-of-course test being developed by Pearson under the direction of Achieve, Inc.

Additional information on each assessment option along with an updated EPP Question and Answer document will be posted to <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp/> in October.

### **MassCore**

MassCore recommends a comprehensive set of subject area courses and units as well as other learning opportunities that are to be completed before graduating from high school.

The recommended program of studies includes: four years of English, four years of mathematics, three years of a lab-based science, three years of history, two years of the same foreign language, one year of an arts program, and five additional "core" courses such as business education, health, and/or technology. MassCore includes additional learning opportunities including AP classes, dual enrollment, a senior project, online courses for high school or college credit, and service or work-based learning. Additional MassCore information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/masscore/>.

### **Forum Dates/Locations/Times**

**Please register at the location desired at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=564>.** If you need additional information on the Forums, please contact Donna Pisaturo at [dpisaturo@doe.mass.edu](mailto:dpisaturo@doe.mass.edu)

Dates	Locations	Time
October 22, 2008	Greater Lawrence RVTS, Andover	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
October 24, 2008	Hudson High School, Hudson	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
October 29, 2008	Wareham Middle School, Wareham	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
October 30, 2008	Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center, Springfield	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

ESE Phone: 781-338-3000

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## Update on Required Teaching Licenses for Persons Engaged in Reading Instruction

To: Superintendents of Schools and Other Interested Parties

From: Mitchell Chester, Ed.D.  
 Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: September 16, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to respond to questions that have been raised regarding the appropriate license for educators providing intensive reading interventions or other responsibilities beyond those of a general classroom teacher. This update is a summary of guidance issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education over the past five years and does not represent new policy. Please share this memorandum with your staff.

1. Requirements for licensed teachers who deliver recognized intensive reading interventions or tutorial programs that require training in a specific reading methodology.

These include but are not limited to the following programs:

- Reading Recovery
- Wilson Reading Program and Wilson Foundations
- Orton-Gillingham
- Project READ
- Other intensive reading interventions (e.g., Early Reading Intervention, Language!, and Corrective Reading)

Since licensed teachers implementing these structured programs generally do so in a tutorial session format (i.e., working with only one student or a few students at a time) and have been trained in the use of a very prescribed methodology, a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education teacher license is acceptable

for performing this function for those educators who have obtained the appropriate training. However, it is preferable to have licensed reading specialists providing intensive interventions for struggling readers.

**2. The Reading Specialist License is required for educators who have a broad range of responsibilities for reading curriculum, instruction, assessment, and coaching (e.g., Title I reading programs, Reading First, and the John Silber Early Reading Initiative) including providing intensive interventions and tutorial instruction as described in #1 above.**

These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Literacy coaching;
- Literacy leadership on the implementation of tiered systems of curriculum delivery including the selection and use of core instructional programs and supplemental and intensive interventions;
- Oversight and/or administration of screening, diagnostic, or outcomes reading assessments, data analysis, and use of data to inform instructional practices;
- Professional development on reading research and instruction at the school and district levels; and
- Intensive interventions for struggling readers.

Teachers performing the above activities are considered to be employed in the role of a reading specialist and thus must have a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Reading Specialist license. Generally, this requires completion of an approved program leading towards the reading specialist license, a passing score on the Massachusetts Reading Specialist Licensure Test, a passing score on the Massachusetts Communication and Literacy test, possession of at least an Initial teaching license, and at least one year of teaching experience under the prerequisite license.

Barring exceptional circumstances, all staff employed to perform the responsibilities of a reading specialist should hold a Massachusetts Reading Specialist license. However, if a district has made a good-faith effort to hire a teacher who holds a Reading Specialist license and is unable to find one then the district may seek a waiver from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Information regarding waivers can be found by visiting: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/waiver\\_setup.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/waiver_setup.html).

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Cheryl Liebling at [cliebling@doe.mass.edu](mailto:cliebling@doe.mass.edu) or (781) 338-6225.