This newsletter is published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and will provide Massachusetts educators with information, advice, and support to teach the Massachusetts learning standards to students with significant disabilities, and to conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

"Education is more than filling a child with facts. It starts with posing questions"

--D. T. Max

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Fall Training

Thank you to the 3,000 teachers and administrators who attended the Fall MCAS-Alt Educator and Administrator training sessions! It was wonderful to see so many of you.

If you were unable to attend the training in October, or if you recently were assigned a student who is taking the MCAS-Alt, we will offer the Introduction to MCAS-Alt again in January, concurrent with the Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions. (See details below).

All of the training materials provided on flash drives to Fall training participants are available at www.mcas-alt.org/materials.

January Portfolios-in-Progress

The Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions will be held during the week of January 12. Educators can bring their portfolios and questions and receive feedback as they work in small groups. Teachers may also use the time to work on their own portfolios.

Plan to attend one of the regional sessions listed below. Registration will be available online beginning December 3. Each school, district, and educational collaborative will be faxed registration information during the first week of December.

Dates and locations for these sessions are as follows:

♦ January 12—Marlborough, Best Western
♦ January 13—Springfield, Marriott
♦ January 14—Taunton, Holiday Inn
♦ January 15—Danvers, Doubletree
Reminders:

♦ Be sure to use the Fall 2014 edition of the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities.
♦ The Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt and the Resource Guides are available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.
♦ MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.
♦ The 2014 MCAS-Alt State Summary, including which students participated, is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/results.html.

Where Should You Be in the Process?

For educators conducting the MCAS-Alt, you should have…

♦ Organized students’ folders by subject and strand;
♦ Identified who can support you in gathering evidence for the MCAS-Alt portfolios (e.g., general educators, paraprofessionals, or related service providers);
♦ Considered how you will find time to work on your portfolios, and proposed a plan to your principal for flexible scheduling, classroom coverage by others, or another method to find a small amount of time each (or every other) week that would allow you to work on portfolios throughout the year;
♦ Begun collecting work samples, data, and other evidence for students’ portfolios;
♦ Sent home Consent Form(s) to Photograph or Videotape Student, if needed. These are kept on file at school.

Administrator’s Corner

Supporting Teachers Who Conduct the MCAS-Alt

We encourage you to check-in with teachers responsible for compiling MCAS-Alt portfolios to be sure they have begun the process. It is important for educators to establish a routine that includes opportunities to work on their MCAS-Alt portfolios throughout the year and collaborate with others engaged in similar activities.

We’d love to hear from you.
Please let us know if there is a topic you’d like us to address in a future MCAS-Alt newsletter.

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