

## **The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Revised Plan for Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Goal**

The following plan was developed in response to the United States Department of Education's (USDE) request that each state submit a revised state plan for meeting the highly qualified teacher (HQT) goal. This document outlines the plan that Massachusetts will implement in the current school year as well as subsequent school years – pending USDE's approval. The Massachusetts plan outlines the current status of teacher quality in the State, the progress that the State has made in meeting the federal highly qualified teacher requirements as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the steps that will be taken in the next year and subsequent years to ensure that a good-faith effort is being made by the State, districts and schools to meet the goal of having 100% of core academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers.

*Please note that throughout the plan, the Massachusetts Department of Education references districts. By districts, the MA DOE means traditional school districts as well as charter schools.*

### **PART I – Background: Recent Teacher Quality Initiatives in Massachusetts**

On June 18, 1993, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act was signed into law. This historic legislation created the framework for unprecedented improvements in (1) establishing new standards and programs for students that ensure high achievement; (2) administering a fair and equitable system of school finance; (3) working with school districts to create a governance structure that encourages innovation and accountability; (4) enhancing the quality and accountability of all educational personnel; and (5) improving the MA Department of Education's capacity and effectiveness in implementing Education Reform. As a result, Massachusetts has been implementing policies and programs that provide a solid foundation and that complement the No Child Left Behind Act.

In the area of educator quality, the Education Reform Act has guided Massachusetts efforts to elevate the standards by which individuals become teachers in Massachusetts as well as improve the conditions that impact the profession such as those related to professional development, beginning teacher support and induction, recruitment, and career advancement. In addition to the Education Reform Act, in 1998 the Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE) established the "12 to 62" Plan which utilized a budget surplus to establish a fund that would support innovative programs in the area of teacher quality. This fund created signing bonuses for mid-career professionals and recent college graduates who chose to teach in high need content areas as well as high need districts. In addition, the fund supported numerous "Tomorrow's Teachers" clubs at schools throughout the state – increasing interest in the teaching profession at an early age. A loan forgiveness program, Master Teacher bonus program tied to National Board certification and mentoring, as well as mentor training and beginning teacher support programs, were also established by MA DOE to further the goal of educator quality.

Though the “12 to 62” fund has become a victim of a difficult state fiscal period, the State of Massachusetts continues to build on the momentum of the Education Reform Act and “12 to 62 Plan”. Currently, the Department has created a set of licensure regulations that require a full year of mentoring and induction in every teacher’s first year of employment and a strong focus on content knowledge that aligns with the State’s Curriculum Frameworks (student learning standards). The strong focus on content is applied to preparation programs – at both the district and higher education levels – which are required to undergo an approval process to ensure the content focus is sufficient, and also meeting the detailed requirements for programs that are outlined in our regulations. Additionally, since 1999, the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) Program is the State’s teacher testing program. New educators and those seeking to add an additional license must take and pass the appropriate MTEL in order to obtain licensure. The tests are content focused, address the content requirements embedded in the licensure regulations, and are also aligned with the Curriculum Frameworks. Finally, Massachusetts requires all veteran educators to go through a relicensure process every five years. This process requires these educators to participate in professional development activities in the content of their license.

Massachusetts continues to offer programs and provide policies that support recruitment and retention of high quality educators. District-based programs throughout the state are one example of how districts are developing “grow your own” programs to support their own shortage areas and to prepare educators that have been “schooled” in the environment within which they teach. In the next year, one of the priorities of the MA DOE, in collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education is to revise our licensure regulations to create a system that not only helps facilitate differentiated roles for educators, but also moves the preparation of educators to the district level, creating a system whereby educators are being prepared in their places of employment.

Though Massachusetts has created and is developing additional policies and programs to prepare, recruit, support and retain educators, there are also several factors that impact the current state of educator quality, or at least “how business is done” in Massachusetts. First, Massachusetts is a state that has strong local control. While the MA DOE provides solid parameters through regulation and policy, districts have the sole responsibility for hiring, placement and retention of educators. Strong collective bargaining agreements guide the work of principals and superintendents in these areas.

Second, Massachusetts has not previously had the resources to develop a comprehensive educator database which would enable the MA DOE to capture and track individual teacher information such as -- where individuals are working; what they are teaching; how many new teachers leave the profession in a given year (or after 3-5 years in the field); what are shortage areas for specific districts or schools; what preparation programs are preparing the highest quality teachers; etc. Currently, the MA DOE collects educator data through two sources – the Educator Licensure and Recruitment (ELAR) System and the District and School Staffing Report (DSSR).

ELAR captures licensure information for all educators who have been licensed in Massachusetts, but does not collect information about whether those individuals are actively teaching in Massachusetts, or where they are teaching. The DSSR collects

information at the district and school level in the aggregate. The information collected from this tool includes licensure status (whether or not individuals are licensed) and HQT information in the aggregate by assignment area. Districts and schools report their teacher data in the aggregate by Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) for each of the assignment areas. The DSSR is implemented annually in the late fall/early winter of every year and provides a “snap-shot” as of October 1 of that year.

Massachusetts is currently addressing our shortcomings in relation to educator data. Over the past two years, the Department has been laying the groundwork for and actively developing an educator database. EPIMS (Educator Personnel Information Management System), funded to date by a \$1 million state bond and another \$1 million anticipated by this winter, will complete its first upload of individual educator data for 39 pilot districts this fall. The expectation is that the pilot project will yield success and the remainder of the 350+ districts in the state will be required to submit data through EPIMS in the fall of 2007. Further, Massachusetts has allocated \$5.2 million this fiscal year for the purchase of an enterprise education data warehouse with unlimited licenses for educators, policy leaders, parents and students to access and analyze a wide range of data and the relationships among various data sets. This will allow educators at every level to understand the relationships among educator recruitment, preparation, licensure, hiring, class assignments, HQT status, and student performance and to use this information to identify best practices, the impact of investments, and where improvements are most needed. Please refer to Attachment E for a list of the data elements that will be included in EPIMS.

In the area of local control, Massachusetts has been exploring different ways to leverage some movement on the front of educator quality, especially as it relates to student performance and initiatives that support differentiated staffing roles for educators. Modifications to our licensure regulations will be the first step. The Department also hopes to provide tools for districts across the state through the development of EPIMS. This database, combined with the development of an education data warehouse, will allow the state and districts to link educator and student data, providing the state, districts, and schools with the tools to employ growth models in the development of policy and programming. In addition, the Department is exploring how it can leverage federal funds through the Teacher Incentive Fund to implement a pilot performance-based compensation system in collaboration with a small number of Massachusetts’ districts. This pilot could serve as a model for districts across the state.

### ***Teacher Quality Responses to No Child Left Behind***

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, the Massachusetts Department of Education has worked diligently to understand the requirements of the Act, develop policies that reflected the requirements in the law, including the HQT provisions, and implement the law across the Commonwealth. To this end, the Department developed the Statewide NCLB Implementation Committee (SNIC), which was comprised of district representatives, members of the professional educator associations in the state, and DOE staff. This group assisted the Department with the first two years of the implementation of the law, providing a sounding board related to policy development and anticipated implementation. Currently, the Educational Personnel

Advisory Council (EPAC) has replaced the SNIC group and advises the Department on NCLB policies that relate to educator personnel, including HQT.

As a result of these advisory groups, the Department has crafted policy statements, documents and guidance that have been used to clarify the requirements of the law. The Department has a webpage dedicated to the HQT requirements, which includes materials that will help districts and schools implement the requirements. As policy clarification has been offered by USDE, the Department has updated policy to reflect those clarifications.

Massachusetts has over 370 LEAs (school districts including charter schools, regional school districts and vocational/technical schools) spread across the state. There are over 1,800 public schools within the Commonwealth that educate over 970,000 students with a workforce of over 73,000 educators. With the passage of NCLB, MA DOE has worked to ensure that these districts, schools and educators understand the requirements of the law and are implementing the requirements accordingly.

The Department has offered a variety of technical assistance and outreach to districts, schools and teachers since 2002, including offering workshops a few times a year in several different locations. The workshops have focused on hot topics in NCLB. HQT has always been a feature of those workshops. Additionally, HQT presentations have been made at annual DOE Title I Director conferences and charter school leader conferences. The Department has worked with the Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators to ensure that this group has an understanding of the requirements. We have also worked with the Massachusetts teachers' associations to ensure that we have a working understanding of the requirements and that we are interpreting policy and law in the same ways to ensure smooth implementation. The Department has also dedicated staff to the HQT initiatives. These individuals have led workshops and have provided individualized technical assistance sessions for individual district and school leaders through face-to-face meetings, email and telephone.

## **PART II – Meeting the USDE Revised Plan Requirements**

### **Requirement 1: Detailed State-Wide and District Analysis of Classes Not Being Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers as well as An Analysis of Classes Not Being Taught by Highly Qualified Teacher in Hard to Staff Schools**

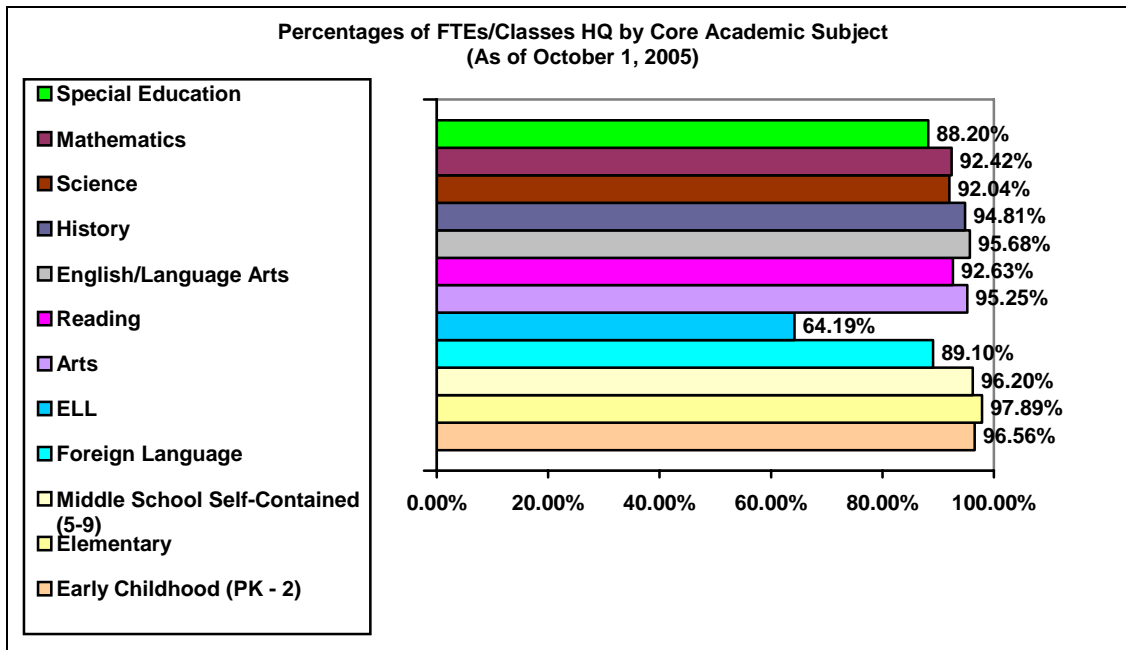
Massachusetts' current status, in relation to the HQT requirements, shows that 94% of FTEs in the state meet the highly qualified teacher requirements. The data reflects the data collected during the 2005-2006 school year, which was a "snap-shot" of staff as of October 1, 2005. The Department uses FTEs as an equivalent to classes in order to meet the federal requirements in the absence of an individual educator database that would

collect information at the class level. We will have our statewide educator database implemented statewide during the 2007-2008 school year<sup>1</sup>.

The MA DOE began collecting HQT data since the 2003-2004 school year and the state percentage has not fluctuated much over the past two years – falling between 93% and 94%. The Department has included the data: Attachment A of this document includes the HQT data for districts; Attachment B includes the HQT data for schools that are not making AYP; and Attachment C includes the most recent HQT data for schools that fell within the High and Low poverty ranges for 2005-2006. The Department can provide HQT for all schools upon request.

***Analysis of FTE and Course Data***

When the 94% state total is disaggregated, the disaggregated data clearly shows areas that can be improved upon. As the chart below indicates, Massachusetts English Language Learner teachers are having difficulty meeting the HQT requirements. In addition, Special Education, the Sciences (especially General Science), Math, Foreign Languages, and Reading are also areas that show the lowest percentages of HQT classes.

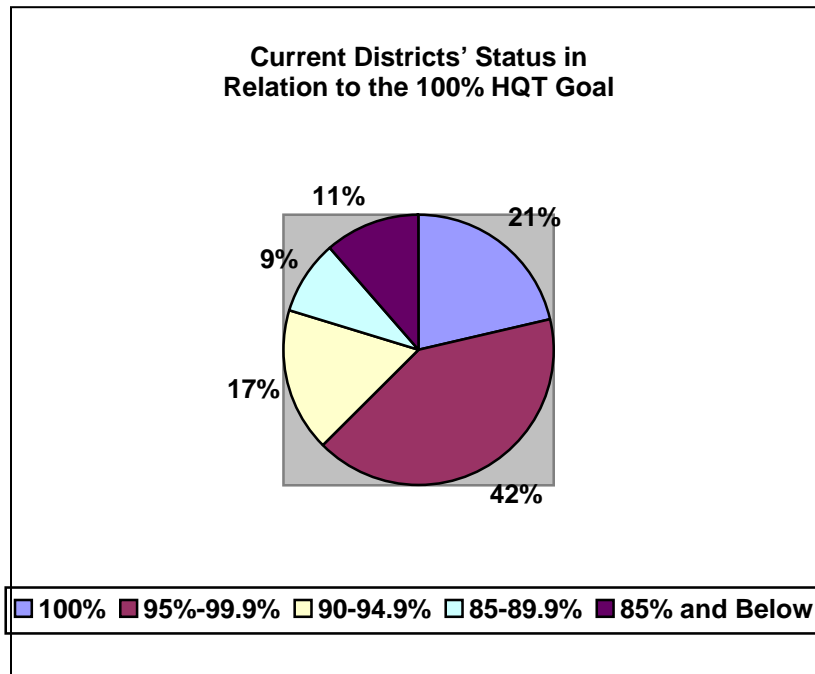


***Analysis of District-Level Data***

When the State data is analyzed at the district level, we see that the majority of districts have HQT percentages above 95%. Twenty-one percent of districts have met the 100% goal, while 42% of districts currently have HQT percentages that fall between 95 and

<sup>1</sup> We have received acknowledgement by Bob Stonehill of the USDE that FTE is an acceptable equivalent to class. We expect the percent Highly Qualified to be far closer to 100% in our October 1, 2006 data collection report.

99.9 percent. Twenty percent of districts currently have less than 90% of their FTEs/classes meeting the HQT requirements. The district data is included in Attachment A of this document.



***Analysis of School-Level Data by School Type and High/Low Poverty Classification***

In 2005, schools across the state were reporting that 93.8% of their classes were being taught by HQ teachers. When broken down by elementary and secondary schools, there was a 2.5 percentage point difference between elementary and secondary schools across the state in 2005; elementary schools had 94.5% HQT, and secondary schools had 92% HQT. This was an increase from the previous year when there was only a 1.4 percentage point difference favoring elementary schools. Additionally, when two years are compared (2004-2005 and 2005-2006), secondary schools remained unchanged in their HQT percentages while elementary schools show a 1.1 percentage point gain.

When the data is analyzed further to look at the subgroups of high and low poverty elementary and secondary schools, high poverty secondary schools did not make a gain between the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years; they actually decreased by 1.6 percentage points. During the same timeframe, high and low poverty elementary schools and low poverty secondary schools made gains in their HQT percentages. When the data for high and low poverty elementary schools is examined for 2005, it shows a 6-percentage point difference in favor of low poverty elementary schools. The 2005 data for high and low poverty secondary schools shows almost an 11-percentage point difference in favor of low poverty secondary schools. When two years of data is considered and compared at the elementary level, the gap shows that there is only a .8 percentage point difference between high and low poverty elementary schools in favor of the low poverty schools between the two years. In addition, for secondary schools there is a 3-percentage point gap in favor of low poverty schools between the two years.

Clearly, high poverty schools are having a more difficult time recruiting HQ teachers, helping existing teachers become HQT and retaining teachers that are already HQT; high poverty secondary schools show more difficulty than high poverty elementary schools. High poverty secondary schools have shown the greatest decrease in HQT percentages between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. In addition, the gap between high and low poverty secondary schools has grown to be larger than the gap between high and low poverty elementary schools.

<b>Two Year HQT Data for Elementary and Secondary Schools Including Breakdown by High and Low Poverty Classification</b>		
School Type	Calculated Percentage of Core Academic Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers (2004-2005)	Calculated Percentage of Core Academic Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers (2005-2006)
All Schools in State	93.0	93.8
<b>Elementary Level</b>		
High-Poverty Schools	88.8	90.0
Low-Poverty Schools	94.6	96.6
All Elementary Schools	93.4	94.5
<b>Secondary Level</b>		
High-Poverty Schools	86	84.4
Low-Poverty Schools	93.7	95.1
All Elementary Schools	92	92.0

***Analysis of School Level Data for Those Schools Not Making AYP***

The HQT data for schools that are not making AYP has not changed much from 2004 to 2005. We believe, however, that districts and schools have been making substantial progress in the past year – districts and schools are more familiar with the law and policies, and more comfortable with the implementation of those policies – and we anticipate an increase once the Fall 2006 DSSR data submission is completed. The total percentage for schools in this category has hovered around 91% HQT for the past two years. There are currently 619 schools that have been identified with an AYP status; 55% of those schools have HQT percentages between 95% and 100%, while 7% fall below 75% HQT.

Additionally, 48% percent of the schools that fall within the high poverty category are also schools that are not making AYP. Sixty-five percent of this sub-group have HQT percentages above 90%; approximately nineteen percent have HQT percentages between 80% and 90%; and sixteen percentage fall below 80% HQT. Please see Attachment B for data related to the schools that are not making AYP.

### ***Factors Affecting State HQT Status***

There are several factors that the MA DOE believes have impacted the state's HQT status that are worth mentioning. First, districts have had only a few years to implement the HQT requirements and reach the HQT goal. The MA DOE has spent a large amount of time providing technical assistance and outreach to ensure that districts understand the requirements before designating individuals as HQT or non-HQT. There has certainly been a learning curve as districts have applied an additional set of standards to core academic subject teachers that in some cases go beyond what Massachusetts requires for licensure. Further, districts have needed to develop and implement data and verification systems in order to be able to report HQT status. The MA DOE expects that the HQT percentage will increase with the data that districts and schools will be submitting during the fall 2006 DSSR data collection.

Additionally, there are realities at the local level including retirements, teacher attrition, lack of qualified (much less "highly qualified") teachers in shortage areas that sometimes make it difficult to make the most appropriate classroom assignments. When the HQT requirements are added to the equation, the difficulties become compounded. The Department has worked toward the 100% HQT goal and will continue to make a good-faith, strong effort while balancing these realities that force districts and schools to make difficult assignment decisions. Some districts are also using their latest round of collective bargaining agreement negotiations to resolve attracting highly qualified candidates for shortage area positions and for hard-to-staff schools. The Department will be promoting such promising practices statewide.

### **Requirement II: MA DOE Action Steps to Ensure that Each District Has an HQT Plan in Place**

#### ***Identification of Districts That Have Not Met Annual Measurable Objectives***

Each year the MA DOE receives HQT data from every district and school in the state through the District and School Staffing Report. Attachment A of this plan includes a summary of the data received for the past two years including each district's annual measurable objectives and their status in relation to meeting those objectives. The data shows that:

- 81 districts that have met the 100% goal during the 2005-2006 school year.
- 97 districts have met their annual measurable objectives for either the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year.
- *200 districts have failed to meet annual measurable objectives for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.*

#### ***District Action Steps***

Based on this data, the Department has created cohorts of school districts that are at different stages of meeting the HQT requirements; each cohort will be required to meet

several different plan requirements in the 2006-2007 school year. The specific cohorts and applicable requirements are outlined below.

***COHORT A*** – *Districts that have 100% HQT.* The Department will require these districts to submit a plan that outlines the recruitment, hiring and retention strategies that will help them maintain the current status into the future.

***COHORT B*** – *Districts that are not yet at 100% HQT, but have met their annual measurable objectives for either the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school year.* These districts have made progress toward meeting the 100% HQT goal, however, they are not yet at 100% HQT. These districts will submit a plan that includes how Title IIA and Title IA funding is being targeted to help teachers meet the HQT requirements as well as how the activities will help eliminate the achievement gap separating low-income and minority students from other students. The MA DOE will ask for a detailed description of what districts will do in the coming year to ensure that those teachers who are not currently HQT become HQT as soon as possible. The Department will monitor progress of this cohort through the District and School Staffing Report as well as a mid-year progress report.

***COHORT C*** – *Districts that have failed to meet annual measurable objectives for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.* These districts will be required to develop a comprehensive Teacher Quality Improvement Plan. These plans will outline how the district plans to address the issues/circumstances that are impacting its ability to meet the highly qualified teacher goals. It will serve to put a plan and processes in place to address current and future problems related to educator quality. The plan will consist of the following information:

- An analysis/needs assessment using district data including –
  - Teachers by FTE who are not currently highly qualified and the reason they are not highly qualified (licensure, subject matter competency or both)
  - A breakdown of the highly qualified teacher data by core academic subject area
  - HQ percentages for all schools within the district that are not at 100% HQT and a flag for those schools that have not made AYP in the last two years
- Specific strategies for ensuring that individual teachers meet the highly qualified requirements by June 30, 2007.
- Strategies that will assist the district in addressing specific core academic subjects that have higher percentages of non-highly qualified teachers than other core subject areas, including how the district proposes to revise its current policies and processes to ensure that the problem is addressed in a systematic way. For instance, if many of the district's science teachers are having problems meeting the subject matter competency requirements, the district will be asked to conduct an analysis to determine if this is due to the way they are recruiting and hiring science teachers, or if this problem is related to how the

district is assigning teachers, perhaps assigning those who are skilled in other subjects to teach science classes.

- Strategies, based on their data analysis, for how the district will work with the affected teachers/schools including the specific steps that the district will take to ensure that each principal is actively working with those teachers who are not yet HQ to develop and implement a plan to meet the HQ requirements by June 30, 2007.
- An overview of the funding – local, state and federal – that will be used to help the district meet the 100% goal by June 30, 2007. This overview should include specific information about how Title IIA and Title IA funding will be used to help those teachers not HQT become HQT as quickly as possible. A description of how the funding will specifically target those teachers in schools that are having difficulty meeting AYP should also be included.
- A description of what the district will do in the area of teacher quality to recruit, support and retain a highly effective teaching staff. This description should include details about how the district recruits (especially for high need subject areas), how assignments are made, what type of support new teachers receive and the extent of time for which this support is available, the type of support that veteran teachers receive, whether those who are struggling will be provided with targeted support, and how teachers are retained within the district (e.g., what are the specific strategies such as bonuses, varied assignments, and/or leadership opportunities available to retain highly effective teachers within the district).

The Department will provide plan templates for Cohorts B and C. All plans must be submitted to the Department electronically by December 1, 2006. The Department will review these plans and provide districts with approval no later than January 15, 2007. Districts should proceed with their plans until/unless they hear otherwise from the Department. In addition, any district that does not submit a plan by the December 1, 2006 deadline will risk having the next installment of their Title IIA funds held until they submit their plans.

#### ***MA DOE Action Plan to Ensure that All Districts Have HQT Plans in Place***

The Department will take the following steps and provide the technical assistance outlined below to ensure that districts have plans in place to assist non-HQ teachers to become HQT as quickly as possible:

- The MA DOE will offer districts the opportunity to request an individualized technical assistance session to be held via conference call with MA DOE staff that specializes in the federal HQT requirements. Districts that have schools that are not meeting AYP will be given priority and schools representatives will be required to participate.
- The Department will offer a web cast in October to all school districts. The web cast will outline the requirements of the plan, allow for districts to pose questions and provide districts with tools and resources for plan development.

- The Department will facilitate two online workgroups and forums – one for all districts and the other for districts/schools not making AYP. Interested districts/schools may participate and receive technical assistance from the Department on the development of their plans.
- Technical assistance will be provided to those districts with general questions related to HQT and the development of their plan through telephone inquiries and the HQTHelp mailbox.
- The MA DOE’s website will be updated with tools and materials that districts can use to develop their HQT plans.
- The Department will continue to provide a networking group for urban superintendents across the state. The Urban Superintendents Network provides district leaders with an opportunity to share ideas, concerns and solutions. It also allows the Department to provide targeted assistance to urban superintendents who have a variety of challenges including those related to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. The MA DOE will continue working with these urban superintendents to address specific issues that arise in relation to broad educational issues as well as the implementation of specific sets of requirements such as the HQT provisions.
- The Department will assign specific staff – HQT Specialists, Licensure Specialists, School and District Accountability Liaisons and others as deemed appropriate – to assist districts with the development and implementation of the district HQT plans. Please refer to the charts on this page and page 17, which detail specific staff assignments to-date.
- The Department will provide the districts with strategies/program/initiatives to assist them as they develop and implement their plan. Some of these strategies are outlined in the Requirement III Section of this document.

<b>MA DOE Implementation Workplan</b>			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Staff Assigned</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Memo from Commissioner outlining HQT Plan requirements	September 2006	MA DOE HQT Specialists	All district leaders will be informed of the revised plan and timeline for district plan development and TA being offered by MA DOE.
MA DOE-led conference calls with districts; priority will be given to schools not meeting AYP	October- November2006	MA DOE HQT Specialists	

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Staff Assigned</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Web-cast for districts	October 2006	MA DOE HQT Specialists	Provide districts with an online presentation of plan requirements as well as an online TA session.
Online workgroup/forum for all districts	October 2006 – ongoing	MA DOE HQT Specialists; MassOne administrators	An online opportunity for districts to share ideas/problem-solve with one another. MA DOE will offer online TA through these forums/workgroups.
Online workgroup/forum for districts/schools not making AYP	October 2006 – ongoing	MA DOE HQT Specialists; MassOne administrators	A targeted online opportunity for districts/schools not making AYP to share ideas and problem-solve with one another about their plans. MA DOE will offer online TA through these forums and workgroups.
Submission of Plan to MA DOE	December 1, 2006	MA DOE HQT Specialists	All districts will submit plans according to MA DOE deadlines and template.
Follow-up with districts that did not submit by deadline	December 4, 2006	MA DOE HQT Specialists	Districts that do not submit by the deadline will have the next installment of their Title IIA funding withheld.
Review of plans by MA DOEe	December 2006/January 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists	All plans will be reviewed.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Staff Assigned</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Districts notified of MA DOE approval or need for submission of revised plan	By January 15, 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists	MA DOE will notify districts of plan approval by January 15, 2007.
Implementation of HQT plans	November 2006	Districts; schools	Districts should begin the implementation of plans prior to MA DOE approval.

**Requirement III: MA DOE Technical Assistance, Programs and Services that will be Offered to Districts and the Resources Districts Will Use to Meet their HQT Goals.**

At the State level, Massachusetts is proposing specific strategies, programs and services that will be administered and initiated by the MA DOE to assist districts and schools in meeting the HQT goals. These initiatives will not only involve working directly with districts to address their individual needs, but also to address trends that are surfacing across the state according to the data available. The MA DOE uses available federal and state funds to carry out these initiatives and many of the initiatives are targeted to schools that are underperforming. *The chart in the previous section also provides detail about the technical assistance that the Department will be providing in addition to the information provided below.*

***MA DOE Assistance with District Plan Execution including Targeted Assistance to Schools not Making AYP***

The Department will provide the following technical assistance to assist districts as they implement their HQT plans:

- The online forums established to help districts with the implementation of their plans will continue to provide technical and targeted assistance to districts throughout the implementation of their plans. Two forums will be created -- one for all districts and the other for districts/schools not making AYP.
- Technical assistance will be provided to those districts with general questions related to HQT and the development of their plan through telephone inquiries and the HQTHelp mailbox. At any time, districts/schools can request “live” technical assistance with the Department via teleconferencing or in –person meetings.
- The MA DOE’s website will be updated with tools and materials that districts can use to develop their HQT plans.
- The MA DOE will ask schools that are not making AYP to require their non-HQ teachers to participate in the appropriate Department-sponsored Content Institutes outlined on page 15 of this document.
- The MA DOE school and district improvement staff who are assigned to the schools not meeting AYP, through the Department’s District and School Accountability process, will work directly with these schools to provide technical

assistance, support and monitoring to underperforming schools in relation to the HQT requirements and goals. The School district and accountability staff will triage issues raised by these schools and contact the Department's HQT Specialists to provide direct-targeted assistance.

***Programs and Services that the MA DOE will Offer to Assist Teachers and Districts Successfully Meet HQT Goals and Address Specific Areas of State Need as Identified by the MA DOE's Data Analysis.***

The MA DOE has worked closely with school districts and teachers to assist them in meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements and goals. The Department will continue these efforts by offering the services and programs outlined below. Schools not making AYP are given priority and may be required to participate in these services and programs.

**General Assistance for Teachers that Need to Meet the Licensure Requirements:**

- Assistance with Licensure – The Department will provide two avenues to districts related to meeting the Massachusetts licensure requirements. Upon a superintendent's request, specific licensure issues will be assigned to an individual in the licensure office to review and resolve. This will provide districts with expedited assistance and guidance, which will reduce the impact of licensure issues on meeting HQT goals.

Teachers who have questions about the licensure requirements are able to access MA DOE staff members trained to understand the intricacies of the MA licensure process. The Department offers a Call Center that is accessible to teachers or those wanting to become teachers.

*The Department will be using both state and Title IIA State Activities funds for these initiatives.*

- Development of District-Based Preparation Programs -- Districts that are experiencing large numbers of non-HQT teachers in specific content areas will be offered technical assistance related to the development of district-based preparation programs. These programs will allow districts to "grow their own" teachers in core academic areas that have proven difficult to fill with appropriately licensed staff.

*The Department uses both federal Transition to Teaching and Title IIA State Activities funds for these initiatives.*

**General Assistance for Teachers that Need to Meet the Subject Matter Competency Requirements:**

- MTEL Test Preparation -- The Department has recently developed several online MTEL practice tests, and additional practice tests will be added each year. These practice tests provide information that is helpful to teachers as well as districts that are assisting teachers who are having difficulty passing the State's content

tests. Since new teachers must take the test as part of the licensure process and existing teachers can take the test to demonstrate subject matter competency for HQT, the practice tests will help non-HQ teachers meet the HQT requirements.

*The Department uses both federal Title IIA State Activities funds and funds generated from testing fees for these initiatives.*

- Title IIA SAHE Grants. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education has awarded competitive grants to 19 partnerships using federal Title IIA funding. Each funded partnership includes institutions of higher education and high poverty, and non-AYP school districts. Funds will be used to conduct professional development activities in core academic subjects to ensure that teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals have subject matter knowledge and computer-related technology experience to enhance student learning. The program is designed to raise student achievement in the core academic subjects, through activities that improve teaching and learning, and increase the number of highly qualified teachers and principals. Districts will be encouraged to participate in the SAHE grant opportunities.

*The Department uses both federal Title IIA State Activities and SAHE funds for these initiatives.*

- MA DOE Collaboration with Teachers Associations across the State – The Department has developed a collaborative working relationship with the Massachusetts teachers unions as it relates to the highly qualified teacher requirements. The MA DOE and the teachers associations have and will continue to work together to provide teachers with accurate information and options for meeting the federal HQT requirements.

### **Targeted Assistance for Subgroups of Teachers Outlined in Requirement 1:**

*Below are the targeted services/programs that the Department will provide to the subgroups of teachers outlined in the Requirement 1 section of this document. As the Department implements our educator-level data collection system, EPIMS, we will move from an aggregate level data collection and analysis to a more detailed collection and analysis. EPIMS will better enable the Department to identify the subgroups of teachers (and classes) that are in most need of assistance as well as enable us to provide more targeted services and programs that address the specific HQT needs of subgroups of teachers across the state.*

#### *Teachers of English Language Learners*

- Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners -- It has become evident to the MA DOE through the HQ data and other data that the state licensure regulations related to ELL teachers are complicated and complex. The result may include dissuading candidates to become ELL teachers, thereby exacerbating shortages of these teachers in districts. The MA DOE recently modified the licensure regulations to clarify the purpose of the ELL license by giving it a more appropriate name, and removing unnecessary barriers to acquire

the ELL license without sacrificing standards. These steps will likely improve the ability of individuals to become licensed to teach the ELL population in Massachusetts, as well as positively impact the ELL HQT numbers.

In addition, beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, districts have been required to implement a state law governing the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students. These students are required to receive sheltered English immersion (SEI) instruction until they are proficient in English. In response to this, the Department has developed and will continue to provide targeted professional development to ELL teachers.

This summer the MA DOE offered four opportunities to help districts, charter schools, and educational collaboratives build capacity by training teams of qualified individuals to conduct Sheltered English Immersion Professional Development in their communities. These opportunities focused on Enhancing English Language Learning in Elementary Classrooms, Teaching Reading and Writing in Secondary Sheltered Content Classrooms and Enriching Content Classes for Secondary ESOL Students. The Department will be using universal monitoring to make sure every district has implemented these four competencies to ensure that even those teachers that have one ELL student in their classroom have the skills and knowledge needed to teach that child.

*The Department uses state and federal Title I and III funds for these initiatives.*

#### *Special Education Teachers*

- Special Education Initiatives – Through funding, the Department has several special education initiatives in place to assist with the recruitment, preparation, professional development and retention of HQT and highly effective special education teachers in high poverty and non-AYP school districts. These initiatives include a conference distance learning conference series, which is offered at no cost to Massachusetts school districts and educational organizations. The subjects range from, Getting the Most Out of Your Partnerships: Using Knowledge Management and Communities of Practice, Making the Grade: Effective High Schools for All Students to, Differentiated Reading Instruction: Teaching Every Child.

In addition, through federal funds, the Department will continue to provide school districts and approved special education schools and programs funding for professional development activities that will help to improve the skills and capacity of special education teachers, and providers of related services, to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The priority of these two grants is to develop district-based induction and mentoring programs and to advance the skills of educators involved with students with disabilities through professional development activities.

*The Department uses NASDSE funds and federal Special Education funds for these initiatives.*

### *Math and Science Teachers*

- Modifications to the MTEL Tests In Math and Science – The Department recognizes that, within high poverty and non-AYP districts, math and the sciences are areas of high need; we need to attract and prepare HQ and highly effective teachers in these areas across the Commonwealth and ensure that these teachers are able to teach our children the content in those subjects. One way the Department will address this is by revising the state general curriculum MTEL to include a stronger focus on math as well as the sciences. The general curriculum MTEL is one of the tests that all prospective elementary and special education teachers are required to take and pass in order to be licensed.

*The Department uses both federal Title IIA State Activities funds and funds generated from testing fees for these initiatives.*

- Content Institutes – For the past eleven years, Massachusetts has offered content institutes to educators free of charge during the summer months. These content institutes provide interested educators with free graduate-level professional development that is designed to increase the content knowledge of participants. These professional development opportunities are offered in many of the core academic subjects. Content Institute providers are selected based on rigor, and priority is first given to science offerings and then to mathematics, english language arts, foreign languages and the arts. Participant priority is given to teachers who are in need of becoming “highly qualified” in specific content areas, with a focus on those teaching in high poverty schools, and those teachers who teach in schools that are not making AYP. The Department will continue the support of these Institutes into the future, as they have proven to be quite successful and are a strong means for addressing many of the core academic subjects that fall short of the HQT goal.

*The Department uses federal Title IID, Title IIA and Title IIB funds for these initiatives.*

- Mathematics and Science Partnership Grants – The MA DOE will continue to fund Mathematic and Science Partnerships between districts that are non-AYP and high poverty, and a science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (STEM) department from an institution of higher education using federal Title IIB funds. These partnerships offer professional development to teachers in high need districts in order to increase the amount of high quality professional development that they receive in relation to the content that they teach, as well as increase their ability to obtain the HQT status. The Department’s most recent request for proposals gave priority points to high need school districts that have two or more schools identified for aggregate improvement in mathematics. Attached is a list of project summaries from the 2006 program year.

*The Department uses federal Title IIB funds for these initiatives.*

### *Reading Teachers*

- *Massachusetts Reading First Initiative* -- The MA DOE's federally funded Reading First Program targets high need schools and high-need districts. Reading First supports school districts and schools in implementing proven scientifically-based methods of reading instruction in K-3 classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties, and have all students be proficient readers by the end of Grade 3. Currently, forty-one districts and 89 schools are participating in the Massachusetts Reading First Plan in the 2005-2006 school year. Each district is assigned an implementation facilitator (IF). The implementation facilitators are members of the Massachusetts Department of Education staff who work directly with schools to implement Reading First. Among many activities, their assistance encompasses the integration of Teacher Reading Academy (professional development) content, the implementation of reading programs, and the administration and interpretation of assessments. In addition to content and instructional expertise, they work to transfer their skills in project management, team building, and school change. Small teams of IFs work together to provide ongoing, sustained professional development through bimonthly regional meetings.
- *John Silber Early Reading Program*. This state-funded program is provided to targeted high need districts that did not receive funds from the Reading First federally funded program. The John Silber Early Reading Program supports thirty-two identified high need school districts and thirty-seven high need schools, in implementing proven scientifically-based methods of reading instruction in K-3 classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties and have all students be proficient readers by the end of grade 3.

### *Foreign Language Teachers*

- *Content Institutes* – For the past eleven years, Massachusetts has offered content institutes to educators free of charge during the summer months. These content institutes provide interested educators with free graduate-level professional development that is designed to increase the content knowledge of participants. These professional development opportunities are offered in many of the core academic subjects. Content Institute providers are selected based on rigor, and priority is first given to science offerings and then to mathematics, english language arts, foreign languages and the arts. Participant priority is given to teachers who are in need of becoming “highly qualified” in specific content areas, with a focus on those teaching in high poverty schools, and those teachers who teach in schools that are not making AYP. The Department will continue the support of these Institutes into the future, as they have proven to be quite successful and are a strong means for addressing many of the core academic subjects that fall short of the HQT goal.

*The Department uses federal Title IID, Title IIA and Title IIB funds for these initiatives.*

***Use of Available MA DOE Funding to Assist Teachers Who are Not Highly Qualified***

As outlined above, the Department is using a variety of funding sources to address the needs of teachers who are not yet highly qualified and to support the development and implementation of the programs, services and technical assistance described above. These funding sources include state funds, federal Title I, IIA, IIB, IID, III funds, federal special education and Reading First funding, and federal Transition to Teaching Funds.

Title IIA State Activities Funds will be used to provide assistance to school districts and teachers in relation to meeting the licensure as well as subject matter competency requirements of HQT. This includes using the funding to provide technical and targeted assistance to school districts. Title I funds will assist schools and districts that are not making AYP by providing them with targeted/individualized technical assistance, services and programs for improving student achievement, teacher quality (including professional development for meeting the HQT provision), and school/district-wide improvement efforts.

**Requirement 4: Meeting the HQT Goal by the End of the 2006-2007 School Year and Corrective Action Measures for Those Districts that Fail to Meet This Goal**

***MA DOE Monitoring Plan***

The Department will monitor district HQT Plans throughout the coming school year. Districts will be required to submit an electronic report to the Department in early February 2007 that outlines the district’s overall progress and individual school progress in meeting the HQT goals/strategies.

***Report Components: Monitoring HQT Percentages and High-Quality Professional Development***

The report will also ask schools/districts to report on the percentage of teachers who are receiving high quality professional development. In addition, the reports will ask districts and schools to provide an update on the status of individual teachers who were identified in the district plans as not having met the HQT requirements for their assignments. The Department’s HQT Specialists will conduct desk audits of these reports. Based on these audits, the Department will conduct site visits to districts; these visits will be conducted for districts that have the highest percentages of non-HQT and have schools that fall within the “high poverty” designation, or that have been identified as not making AYP.

<b>MA DOE Monitoring Timeline</b>			
<b><i>Activity</i></b>	<b><i>Timeline</i></b>	<b><i>Staff Assigned</i></b>	<b><i>Outcome</i></b>
Technical assistance for districts and schools related to plan implementation via online forums and “live”	November-June 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists; MA DOE School/District Accountability Liaisons	Districts/schools will receive targeted assistance. Special targeted technical assistance for

technical assistance sessions.			districts with schools that are not making AYP as well as to those schools.
<b><i>Activity</i></b>	<b><i>Timeline</i></b>	<b><i>Staff Assigned</i></b>	<b><i>Outcome</i></b>
Districts submit HQT reports	February 2007	MA DOE Data Collection Team; MA DOE HQT Specialists.	Districts will provide updated HQT data, which will be used to gauge district progress in meeting their plans.
Review of HQT reports	February/March 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists	Determine those districts that are making progress and those that are not.
Scheduling of HQT visits	March 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists	Site visits will be scheduled for districts that have the highest percentages of HQT and have schools that fall within the “high poverty” designation, or that have been identified as not making AYP.
Follow-up technical and targeted assistance to all districts. Districts with schools not making AYP will receive targeted assistance from the Department’s School District and Accountability liaisons.	March 2007	MA DOE HQT Specialists; MA DOE School/District Accountability Liaisons	Technical assistance will be provided to help districts/schools understand where they are in relation to HQT as well as what they need to do going forward. Those districts that are not making progress, per the reports, will corrective action provisions below applied to them.
Implementation of corrective action provisions for all districts including those not making AYP	March 2007	HQT Specialists; Title IIA Specialists	Provisions outlined below will be implemented.

***Corrective Actions for Districts that Fail to Meet HQT and AYP Goals***

The MA DOE will employ the following accountability measures beyond the 2006-2007 school year:

- a. Districts that have between 97% and 99% of their core academic teachers designated as highly qualified by the end of the 2006/2007 school year, or for any subsequent year, will be required to submit an updated Teacher Quality Improvement Plan.
- b. Districts that have less than 97% of their core academic teachers designated as highly qualified by the end of the 2006/2007 school year, or for any subsequent year, will be required to submit an updated Teacher Quality Improvement Plan, and will be required to target their Title IIA funds toward achieving 100% HQT. [Such districts will need to meet the HQT goal before they can resume applying Title IIA funding to other eligible activities, such as “class size reduction.”]
- c. Districts that have less than 97% of their core academic teachers designated as highly qualified for two or more consecutive years after the end of the 2006/2007 school year will submit an updated Teacher Quality Improvement Plan, will be required to target their Title IIA funds as well as Title IA funds toward achieving 100% HQT [such districts will need to meet the HQT goal before they can resume applying Title IIA funding to other eligible activities, such as “class size reduction.”], and will be denied access to the automated licensure waiver request process; they will instead be required to submit a detailed rationale for each waiver requested and obtain specific written approval from the Commissioner.

The Department’s HQT Specialists will work closely with these districts (and the schools within the district that are having difficulty meeting the HQT requirements.) These specialists will provide targeted technical assistance to these districts to address issues that the district and schools are having in making progress with the annual measurable objectives. Those schools that are not making AYP and are also having difficulty with meeting the HQT provisions will work directly with their assigned MA DOE School and District Accountability liaison to incorporate the HQT goals into their improvement plans and initiatives as well as work with the liaison to address any issues that the school may be having implementing the HQT provisions. The accountability liaisons will collaborate with the Department’s HQT Specialists.

- d. Districts that have failed to make progress toward their HQT annual measurable objectives for 3 consecutive years and have failed to meet AYP for three consecutive years will enter into an agreement with the

Department per the provisions of the law. This agreement will allow the State to collaboratively develop, with the district; professional development strategies and activities that help the district meet its HQT goals. As part of the agreement, the Department will also work with the district to target their Title IIA and Title IA funds to the most appropriate activities, strategies and programs available to help them assist their non-HQT teachers become HQT as quickly as possible. Districts will work directly with the MA DOE School and District Accountability staff, HQT Specialists and Title IIA Coordinator. In addition, through the agreement the same provisions and restrictions outlined in (c.) above will apply to these districts.

#### **Requirement 5: Massachusetts Limitation of HOUSSE Procedures**

*Please note that the original Peer Review Panel previously determined that this requirement successfully “Met” the standards outlined in the Review Protocol.*

The MA DOE proposes using the HOUSSE option for teachers who are not new to the profession through June 2007. Therefore, for teachers licensed prior to 1999, HOUSSE will remain an option through June 2007. Teachers licensed after 1999 are required to take the appropriate MTEL exam.

HOUSSE will be phased out at the end of June 2007 for all teachers except the specific population of teachers listed below.

HOUSSE will remain available to specific populations of teachers in shortage areas such as ELL and special education teachers as a way to demonstrate subject matter competency in the multiple subjects that they teach through one avenue instead of taking multiple MTEL exams, or obtaining multiple graduate degrees. The HOUSSE option will enable teachers from these categories to meet the HQT subject matter competency requirements so long as they are highly qualified in language arts, mathematics, or science at the time of hire.

#### **Requirement 6: Massachusetts Equity Plan**

Please refer to Attachment D for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Equity Plan, which addresses the NCLB requirements.

## **Attachment D**

### **Massachusetts Equity Plan**

#### **Preface**

The Massachusetts Department of Education has developed this Equity Plan, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, to ensure that poor and minority children throughout the Commonwealth are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than are other children.

*Please note that throughout the plan, the Massachusetts Department of Education references districts. By districts, the MA DOE means traditional school districts as well as charter schools.*

#### ***Plan Components***

The Plan presents the current and future initiatives in eight different areas that the Department will employ to meet this goal. The Council of Chief State School Officers has outlined the following eight areas as important components of a State Equity Plan. They include:

- Data and Reporting Systems – Developing the teacher data and reporting systems needed to identify and correct inequities in the distribution of quality teachers in high-poverty/high-minority schools vs. low-poverty/low-minority schools.
- Teacher Preparation – Building a Pipeline of Prospective Teachers for High-Poverty, Low-Performing Schools.
- Out-of-Field Teaching – Reducing the incidence of out-of-field teaching (particularly in mathematics, science, special education, and bilingual education/English as a Second Language) in high-poverty, low-performing schools.
- Recruitment and Retention of Experienced Teachers – Building a critical mass of qualified, experienced teachers who are willing to work in hard-to-staff schools.
- Professional Development – Strengthening the skills, knowledge, and qualifications of teachers already working in high-poverty, low-performing schools.
- Special Knowledge and Skills – Ensuring that teachers have the specialized knowledge and skills they need to be effective with the populations of students typically served in high-poverty, low-performing schools (including Native American students, English language learners, and other students at risk).
- Working Conditions – Improving the conditions in hard-to-staff schools that contribute to excessively high rates of teacher turnover.
- Policy Coherence – Improving internal processes or revising state policies that may inadvertently contribute to local staffing inequities.

In addition to providing strategies in each of the areas listed above, the Department will support this plan by:

- *Working with district leaders to highlight the equitable distribution of teachers as one of the Department's priority goals.* The MA DOE will work with the Urban Superintendents Network, the Educational Personnel Advisory Council, Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and the two Principals' Associations to clearly communicate the Department's priority goal of equitable distribution of teachers. Some districts are also using their latest round of collective bargaining agreement negotiations to resolve attracting highly qualified candidates for shortage area positions and for hard to staff schools. The Department will be promoting such promising practices statewide.
- *Providing Targeted Assistance to High Need Schools.* Through the Department's District and School Accountability System, the Department will work directly with schools to identify and address inequitable distribution of teachers as part of the school improvement process.

### ***Current Inequities in Teacher Assignment***

The Department has used its HQT and licensure data, gathered through the District and School Staffing Report (DSSR), to understand the current distribution of inexperienced and unqualified teachers throughout the state. In addition, the Department has used the data to examine high poverty schools and schools not making AYP as its basis for poverty. Please refer to Attachments A, B and C of the State's Revised HQT Plan which have been attached.

Based on this data, the Department has determined that high poverty schools are having a more difficult time recruiting HQ teachers, helping existing teachers become HQT and retaining teachers that are already HQT; high poverty secondary schools show more difficulty than high poverty elementary schools. High poverty secondary schools have shown the greatest decrease in HQT percentages between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. In addition, the gap between high and low poverty secondary schools has grown to be larger than the gap between high and low poverty elementary schools. Please see Attachment C of the state's revised HQT Plan for a list of districts that fell within the high poverty classification for the 2005-2006 school year including their HQT data for that year.

The total percentage of HQT in 2005-2006 for schools currently not making AYP has hovered around 91% for the past two years. There are currently 617 schools that have been identified with an AYP status. Forty-eight percent of the schools that fall within the high poverty category are also schools that are not making AYP. Sixty-five percent of this sub-group have HQT percentages above 90%, compared to 73% HQT for the AYP schools as a whole; approximately nineteen percent have HQT percentages between 80% and 90%, compared to 16% HQT for the AYP schools as a whole; and sixteen percent fall below 80% HQT, compared to 11% HQT for the AYP schools as a whole. Please see Attachment B of the state's revised HQT Plan for data related to the schools that are not making AYP.

This plan addresses these inequities as well as general inequities that exist throughout the state. Through the development and implementation of Massachusetts' Educator Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS), the Department will have the capability to acquire educator-level data, with respect to tracking the state's teacher population including teacher assignment.

**The Department is currently working with approximately 30 pilot districts in the EPIMS pilot project.** These districts represent a broad cross-section of the State's school districts in terms of size, geographic location, school types and technical sophistication. Working with these pilot districts and with an internal DOE subcommittee consisting of members from units across the Department, the Department has developed the list of data elements that will be collected by the EPIMS project. The data elements are grouped into two record types: staff roster (SR) records and work assignment (WA) records. Districts will submit one staff roster record per employee for each data collection and multiple work assignment records for that individual depending on his or her individual assignments. The pilot data collection is based on the snapshot of district employees on October 2, 2006 and will be submitted to MADOE before the end of December 2006. The following link provides an overview of the pilot districts as well as an FAQ document regarding EPIMS including: Project Background, Data Access and Usage, Information about the Unique Identifier, Data Elements to be Collected and Data Collection Process (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/epims/epimsfaq.html>).

The timeline for EPIMS and the updating of our Equity Plan based on EPIMS data is as follows:

- Fall 2006 – Pilot district data collection.
- Winter 2006/Spring 2007 – Modify system to reflect lessons learned from pilot districts.
- Spring/Summer 2007 – Train districts across the state on EPIMS.
- Fall/Early Winter of 2007 -- The first full, statewide EPIMS data collection will be conducted and will be based on a snapshot of employees as of October 1, 2007.
- Spring of 2008 -- The Department will have data from EPIMS (absent system glitches) which will enable us to conduct more detailed analysis on the equitable distribution of teachers. The data gathered through EPIMS will allow the state to determine the classrooms and students that are affected, and the teachers that are inexperienced, or unqualified, based on more detailed definitions (rather than relying solely on the HQT and licensure data to analyze high poverty and underperforming schools).
- Late Spring/Early Summer of 2008 -- The Department will submit an updated equity plan to the United States Department of Education; this plan will reflect the more robust data and subsequent analysis.
- Fall 2008 – The Department will be able to monitor district progress with relation to the equitable distribution of teachers. See information below.

### ***Implementation and Monitoring of Equity Plan and District Efforts***

As the Department develops more sophisticated and value-added data systems, it will amend the plan accordingly to reflect updates to policies, programs and initiatives. The EPIMS data collection will provide the Department with the data needed to determine those schools and districts that may need to be monitored or reviewed with relation to the equitable distribution of teachers. Since EPIMS will provide information on individual teachers and the assignment of those teachers across the state, it will allow the Department to monitor annually how schools and districts are (or are not) equitably distributing teachers as well as trends that may be occurring across schools, districts and the state as a whole. The data collected through EPIMS will provide the information that the Department needs to understand where issues of distribution are occurring.

Coupled with EPIMS, the Department will monitor the issue of equitable distribution of teachers at the local level through the implementation of the plans that districts are required to submit, as outlined in the State's Revised HQT plan. The district-planning template includes a section for districts to address how they will tackle the equitable distribution of teachers within their schools. This source of monitoring will be especially important initially since EPIMS will not be fully implemented statewide until the 2007-2008 school year.

Finally, the Department will coordinate the review of those schools and districts that through EPIMS and the HQT plans are flagged to have problems or concerning trends related to the distribution of teachers. These reviews will use several existing monitoring/outreach mechanisms that the Department has in place including the monitoring process outlined in the Revised State HQT Plan, the Coordinated Program Review process, and the District and School Accountability process.

### **Strategies**

The Department outlines strategies below that will be used to address the equitable distribution of teachers across the Commonwealth. The strategies include policy changes that have been determined to have a positive impact on the equitable distribution of teachers, as well as the development or continuation of programs that the Department or other partners have in place.

The programs, policies and overall strategies included in the plan have been selected from those practices for which we have evidence (or are reasonably certain) that they will positively impact the equitable distribution of teachers and have a positive impact on the eight components below.

Using data from a 50-state survey of policies, state case study analyses, the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a study made by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy examined the ways in which teacher qualifications and other school inputs are related to

student achievement across states, and suggested that policies adopted by states regarding teacher education, licensing, hiring, and professional development may make an important difference in the qualifications and capacities that teachers bring to their work.

## 0. Data and Reporting Systems

The Department currently utilizes the District and School Staffing Report (DSSR) as a means to collect educator data at the district and school levels. The DSSR also allows the Department to analyze inequities in the distribution of quality teachers by comparing the HQT and licensure data for high/low poverty schools (See Attachment C of the State's Revised HQT Plan), as well as looking at the HQT and licensure data for schools that are low performing (not making AYP) (Attachment B of the State's Revised HQT Plan).

The DSSR provides the Department with macro level data – district and school progress in meeting the HQT requirements as a whole, as well as licensure requirements, and HQT percentages broken down by core academic subjects for a particular school or district. The current data system, however, does not provide educator-level data needed for the micro-analysis of individual teachers, including where individual teachers are teaching, what they are currently (or have in the past) been assigned to teach, and their educational and professional history.

**As a result, the Department has been working on the development of the Educator Personnel Information Management Systems (EPIMS), funded to date by a \$1 million state bond and another \$1 million anticipated by this winter. EPIMS will be piloted this year with over 30 participating districts, including Boston – the State's largest urban school district. The pilot group represents each of the geographic regions of the state, as well as urban, suburban, rural populations. During the 2007-2008 school year, the EPIMS educator database will be fully operational across the state. This database will provide the MA DOE with the means to monitor the equitable distribution of teachers across the state and within individual schools and districts at a more granular, individual educator level.**

**EPIMS will be linked to the Department's Licensure database (ELAR), which also includes information about the educational history of the state's licensed teachers. In addition, it will be linked to the Massachusetts Teacher Retirement Board (MTRB) database to ensure that every employed educator in the state has been captured in the EPIMS database. For additional information about EPIMS please refer to Attachment E which includes the data elements for the EPIMS project (these elements may be revised at a later date depending on what is learned from this year's pilot implementation of the database).**

Massachusetts has allocated \$5.2 million this fiscal year for the purchase of an enterprise education data warehouse with unlimited licenses for educators, policy leaders, parents and students to access and analyze a wide range of data and the relationships among various data sets. This will allow educators at every level to understand the relationships among educator recruitment, preparation, licensure, hiring, class assignments, HQT status and student performance, and to use this information to identify best practices, the impact of investments, and where improvements are most needed. The educator database, combined with the education data warehouse, will provide the state, districts, and schools with the tools to employ more data-driven decision making, including the use of “growth models” in the development of educator quality policy and programming.

## 1. **Teacher Preparation**

As veteran educators retire across the state and industry attracts our best and brightest, Massachusetts must build a pipeline of prospective teachers for all teaching assignments across the state, but particularly for our students in most need – those in high-poverty/low-performing schools. In an effort to address this, the Department is committed to the following policies/programs/initiatives:

- *Massachusetts Board of Education’s Teacher Preparation Priority.* Teacher preparation and quality has been established as one of the priorities of the Massachusetts Board of Education in the coming year. Recently, the Board agreed that they will develop a timeline and process for engaging teachers and administrators, higher education representatives, business leaders and other interested parties in a dialogue that will lead to specific proposals for improving teacher preparation, recruitment, induction, and professional development, including proposals that address these areas in high need subjects and schools. The Commissioner will bring policy recommendations to the Board within the next several months.
- *Massachusetts Regulations for Licensure and Preparation Program Approval.* To ensure that all teachers, regardless of assignment, have the requisite skills and content knowledge needed to positively impact student achievement, the State’s *Regulations for Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* were revised in 2001 to include a stronger focus on content. This content focus has been infused into each of the teaching licenses. The regulations also require each of the teacher preparation programs in Massachusetts to go through a MA DOE program approval process to ensure that each of the programs addresses the content and other licensure requirements outlined in the licensure regulations.
- *District-based preparation programs.* Forty-five of the Commonwealth's school districts, charter schools, educational collaboratives, private training providers, and professional associations are at various phases of design and implementation of district-based programs. The Department encourages districts that have hard-to-staff schools and subject areas to create these “grow your own” programs.

These programs give districts the opportunity to invest in teachers from the beginning of their careers, and it provides teachers with an opportunity to participate in on-the-job-learning.

- *Success Factors Study.* The MA DOE recently completed a “Success Factors Study”, which evaluated the district-based programs across the state. The Department has and will continue to use the information gathered through this study – successful models, challenges encountered by these programs, strengths and weaknesses – to inform its policies related to these programs. The Department will also use the lessons learned by those existing programs located in high poverty/low performing districts/schools to target its future technical assistance and marketing to prospective programs in poverty/low performing districts/schools.
- *Massachusetts Initiative for New Teachers (MINT).* *The Massachusetts Initiative for New Teachers (MINT) is an intensive teacher preparation program that provides a unique opportunity for the most qualified and motivated recent college graduates and mid-career professionals to make an immediate impact in the classrooms. MINT participants earn their Massachusetts teaching credentials - an Initial license - through an intensive summer training initiative, followed by an on-going support and assessment program during their first year as a teacher of record in a public school. The mission of the MINT program is to recruit and train aspiring educators with the expertise and commitment to teach a high-demand subject area (mathematics, science and English) in an eligible high-need school district. The MINT program is funded by the federal Transition to Teaching grant.*
- *Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program.* In order to meet the increasing demand for top quality teachers for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' public schools, the *Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program* was established in 1999 by the Massachusetts legislature. This program offers scholarships to academically talented high school students who wish to pursue a teaching career. The scholarships are renewable for four years and are awarded to students who; plan to attend Massachusetts's colleges or universities; agree to teach for four years in Massachusetts' public schools upon graduation from college; and who meet the program requirements. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education administers this scholarship program. The MA DOE will work with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to explore and develop an outreach plan that informs prospective and current scholarship recipients of the critical need for quality teachers in high poverty/low performing schools.
- *Incentive Program for Aspiring Teachers Tuition Waiver.* The Incentive Program for Aspiring Teachers provides support to qualified students who, after enrolling in college and earning a minimum 3.0 grade point average, decide to enter a certification program in a field with demonstrated teacher shortages. Students who participate in the program must commit to teaching for two years in a public school in the Commonwealth, upon successful completion of a bachelor's degree from the college or university. The Massachusetts Board of Higher

Education also administers this program. The MA DOE will work with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to explore and develop an outreach plan, in conjunction with the Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program outreach plan outlined above.

- *Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program.* The purpose of the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program is to provide financial assistance to Massachusetts residents who are currently employed as paraprofessionals in Massachusetts public schools, but wish to become certified as full-time teachers. This grant is designed to help reduce financial barriers that often become obstacles for many paraprofessionals in attaining higher education. The program is also an attempt to help address the Commonwealth's current teacher shortage. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education also administers this program. The MA DOE will inform high need schools and districts of this opportunity so that they may share this information with eligible paraprofessionals.
- *Troops to Teachers.* The Department is currently exploring collaboration with the local Troops to Teachers chapter. The Troops to Teachers Program helps members of the armed forces meet state teacher licensing requirements, and find them employment in high-need school districts. Through this prospective collaboration, the Department hopes to increase our recruitment and outreach to a group that has not been targeted in the past, and increase the number of qualified individuals that seek employment in high poverty/low performing schools.
- *Provide Districts with the Tools that Will Help Them Recruit and Assign HQT Teachers.* The Department will encourage districts and schools across the state to utilize our free online Massachusetts Educators Career Center (MECC) to post employment opportunities. MECC provides districts with a useful tool for recruiting qualified individuals into their schools. The tool allows districts to post employment opportunities, smart search resumes that match the job description profile, and much more. MECC is linked to the Department's Educator Licensure and Recruitment System (ELAR), and therefore automatically confirms the job seeker's licensure status. This online recruitment tool also allows job seekers to create a profile and post their resumes online for free. Job seekers have the option to receive automatic email notifications of potential job matches. The above are only some of the many features available to make a more streamlined recruitment process for districts.
- *Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fund (STEM Pipeline).* The Acts of 2003 Economic Stimulus Trust Fund legislation established the Massachusetts Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Pipeline Fund and directed the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to administer it in the amount of \$2.5 million. The purposes of the Pipeline Fund are to; 1) increase the number of Massachusetts students who participate in programs that support careers in fields related to mathematics, science, technology, and engineering; (2) increase the number of qualified mathematics, technology, engineering and science teachers in the Commonwealth; and 3) improve the mathematics, technology, engineering and

science educational offerings available in public and private schools. The funds support networks and a variety of projects aimed toward carrying out the goals of the Fund.

### **3. Out-of-Field Teaching**

The Department has and will continue to implement policies that will help reduce the incidence of out-of-field teaching (particularly in mathematics, science, special education, and bilingual education/English as a Second Language) in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Below are some of those policies:

- **Add License Requirement in MA Licensure Regulations.** *The Massachusetts Regulations for Educator Licensure and Program Approval allow many existing teachers who hold an Initial or Professional license to add an additional license by taking the appropriate Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL), rather than completing an additional educator preparation program. This simplifies the licensure requirements for out-of-field teachers to become licensed in the out-of-field area.*
- **Limits on Out-of-Field Teaching.** In Massachusetts, teachers are allowed under state regulation to teach out-of-field for twenty percent of their time (603 CMR 7.14(9)(a)). The Department maintains this flexibility for districts as they address the teacher shortage in specific content areas. However, in an effort to control the use of this provision so that it does not contribute to practices that are not in the best interests of the Commonwealth's students, the Department will implement new policies that will allow for less flexibility. These policies will include requiring schools to limit the total number of teachers who are teaching out-of-field in a specific subject area within a school.
- **Massachusetts Math and Science Partnership (MMSP) Program.** The purpose of the MMSP program is to improve student achievement in mathematics, science, and technology/engineering through intensive, high-quality professional development activities that focus on deepening teachers' content knowledge. MMSP partnerships must include a high need school district and a mathematics, science, or engineering department from an institution of higher education. One of the goals of this program is to increase the number of STEM teachers in the partner school districts who are licensed in the subject area(s) and grade level(s) they teach – thus giving them an opportunity to become licensed in out-of-field math/science areas.
- **Attracting Teachers of English Language Learners.** *It has become evident to the MA DOE through the HQ data and other data that the state licensure regulations related to ELL teachers are complicated and complex. The result may include dissuading candidates to become ELL teachers, thereby exacerbating shortages of these teachers in high need districts. The MA DOE recently modified the licensure regulations to clarify the purpose of the ELL license by giving it a more appropriate name, and*

*removing unnecessary barriers to acquire the ELL license without sacrificing standards. These steps will likely improve the ability of individuals to become licensed to teach the ELL population in Massachusetts, as well as positively impact the ELL HQT numbers, and increase the number of ELL teachers in the state.*

#### **4. Recruitment and Retention of Experienced Teachers**

The Department will continue to build a critical mass of qualified, experienced teachers who are willing to work in hard-to-staff schools. Below are some of the programs/initiatives/policies that will enable the Department to carry out this goal:

- *New Induction and Mentoring Initiatives.* Through the Department’s current licensure regulations, all districts are required to provide an induction and mentoring program to new teachers during their first year of practice. The Department will be revising its licensure regulations to eliminate some of the current redundancies and implementation challenges. The Department hopes to include stronger mentoring/induction requirements and also move much of the preparation of teachers to an on-the-job model; thus tying teacher preparation with mentoring and induction to eliminate or reduce the steep learning curve that many new teachers experience during their first year in the classroom. By addressing this, the Department hopes to address new teacher attrition and require all districts and schools – including hard-to-staff schools – to provide new teachers with the support needed to be successful in the classroom and remain in the teaching field.
- *Rubrics/Tools for Urban Districts to Use in Making Hiring Decisions.* New teacher retention is a problem for many districts, but is increasingly difficult to address for high poverty/low performing schools. As a result, these districts and schools do not have the experienced group of teachers who can provide quality teaching and consistency to our Commonwealth’s at-risk students. One of the tools that the Department will share with our at-risk schools and districts to address this is a rubric that will provide districts with information about the skill sets and characteristics of individuals who have proven successful in working within urban schools. Districts and schools can use this rubric as they hire prospective individuals. This rubric was designed for the Department and implemented with great success by the Department for one of its programs.
- *Special Education Task Force.* MA DOE was selected to receive targeted services from National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers (Personnel Center), a federally-funded center at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). These services include direct, on-site, technical assistance in the areas of personnel recruitment, preparation and retention, including the facilitation of statewide workforce development planning and comprehensive personnel needs assessment. The Personnel Center recently facilitated a state-wide taskforce on recruitment,

preparation and retention of special education personnel to outline MA DOE needs in these areas.

- *Critical Shortage Program.* The Critical Shortage Program provides for the earnings limitations on re-employment of retirees in Massachusetts public schools to be eased in the event of a "critical shortage", in a position as determined by the Department of Education. The DOE has adopted regulation 603 CMR 7.14(13)(b), allowing the Commissioner of Education to deem that a district has a "critical shortage", upon the request of a superintendent, and demonstration that the district has made a good-faith effort to hire non-retirees and has been unable to find them. This program allows districts to retain quality, experienced veteran teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas without it adversely affecting their retirement benefits. The Department has frequently informed districts of this program and will begin, on an annual basis, to provide targeted outreach and information regarding this program to high poverty/low performing schools and districts.
- *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.* The Department encourages individuals to participate in the professional growth experience, offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification process. This process affords participants an opportunity to reflect upon their practice. The Department has included this certification as a means for meeting one of the requirements for the Professional teaching license in Massachusetts. Through the National Board Program, the Department administers application subsidy funds, giving teachers in high-need schools priority to receive those funds.
- *Master Teacher Program.* Through the Massachusetts Master Teacher Program, the Department has developed a cadre of accomplished teachers who have participated in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification process and who choose to mentor in their district. These individuals receive a state-funded salary bonus for participation in the program. Annually, the Department provides approximately 270 of these bonuses to program participants – many who teach in high need urban districts. In addition to the salary bonus, these individuals are recognized by their schools and districts as invaluable teacher leaders, and call upon these individuals to lend their expertise in a wide variety of areas.

## **5. Professional Development**

The Massachusetts Department of Education has a historical commitment to encouraging and supporting the professional development and growth of educators in the field. The Department has and will continue to support programs and initiatives that strengthen the skills, knowledge, and qualifications of teachers already working in high-poverty, low-performing schools.

- *District Professional Development Plan Requirement.* The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 requires all school districts to annually develop a professional development plan for all principals, teachers, other professional staff employed by the district, and school council members. Districts are strongly encouraged to connect professional development with continuous district- and school-improvement planning and to connect their district professional development plan to the School Improvement plans that are also required through the Education Reform Act. This connection is strengthened by [relicensure](#), which requires educators to have professional development plans that are in line with school and/or district improvement plans. While the [relicensure](#) regulations outline minimum requirements for professional development, the Department encourages educators to participate in professional experiences that support and expand their content and professional skills *beyond* the minimum requirements. Accordingly, districts may choose to offer additional incentives, through collective bargaining, for educators to go beyond the minimum requirements for recertification and to continue to participate in professionally-relevant and academically-meaningful professional development.
- *Massachusetts Relicensure Requirements.* The Commonwealth's relicensure/recertification regulations require individuals with a Massachusetts Professional license to engage in sustained professional development that strengthens professional knowledge and skills relevant to their licenses. The Massachusetts Department of Education has designed a recertification process that requires all educators to prepare an Individual Professional Development Plan for each five-year renewal cycle. Educators must obtain 150 professional development points in each five-year cycle; 120 of those points must focus on the content/pedagogy of the license, and a minimum of 90 of the 120 points must be focused on the content of the license. The plan must be consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district, and enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning.
- *Content Institutes.* For the past eleven years, Massachusetts has offered content institutes to educators free of charge during the summer months. Over 12,000 educators have participated in these institutes since 1995, and over 800 educators participate annually. These content institutes provide interested educators with free, graduate-level professional development that is designed to increase the content knowledge of participants. These professional development opportunities are offered in many of the core academic subjects. Content Institute providers are selected based on rigorous selection criteria, and priority is first given to science offerings, and then mathematics, english language arts and the arts. Participant priority is given to teachers who are in need of becoming “highly qualified” in specific content areas and those who teach in “high need” districts.
- *Title IIA SAHE Grants.* The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education has awarded competitive grants to 19 partnerships using federal Title IIA funding. Each funded partnership includes institutions of higher education and high-need school districts. Funds will be used to conduct professional development activities in core academic subjects to ensure that teachers, paraprofessionals, and

principals have subject matter knowledge and computer-related technology experience to enhance student learning. The program is designed to raise student achievement in the core academic subjects, through activities that improve teaching and learning, and increase the number of highly qualified teachers and principals.

***\*\*\*Many of the programs outlined in the section below are also professional development opportunities that the Department is offering to strengthen the skills, knowledge, and qualifications of teachers already working in high-poverty, low-performing schools.***

## **6. Specialized Knowledge and Skills**

Below are specific programs/services that the Department has and will offer to ensure that teachers have the specialized knowledge and skills they need to be effective with the populations of students typically served in high-poverty, low-performing schools (including Native American students, English language learners, and other students at risk):

- *Professional Standards for Teachers and Pre-service Performance Assessment.* Included in the Massachusetts Regulations for Licensure are the Professional Standards for Teachers. These Standards define the pedagogical and other professional knowledge and skills required of all teachers across the state. These Standards are used by; teacher preparation providers in preparing their candidates; the Department in reviewing programs seeking state approval; and by the Department as the basis of performance assessments of candidates. Candidates demonstrate that they meet the Professional Standards by passing a Performance Assessment for Initial License. The Professional Standards include: Plans Curriculum and Instruction, Delivers Effective Instruction, Manages Classroom Climate and Operation, Promotes Equity, and Meets Professional Responsibilities (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=08>). The Department has provided specific guidelines for these Pre-Service Performance Assessments, and for each of the Standards:  
[http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/PPA\\_guidelines.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/PPA_guidelines.doc).
- *SEI Professional Development Initiative.* In addition, beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, districts in Massachusetts have been required to implement a state law governing the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students. These students are required to receive sheltered English immersion (SEI) instruction until they are proficient in English. In response to this, the Department has developed and will continue to provide targeted professional development to ELL teachers. This summer the MA DOE offered four opportunities to help districts, charter schools, and educational collaboratives build capacity, by training teams of qualified individuals to conduct Sheltered English Immersion Professional Development in their communities. These

opportunities focused on Enhancing English Language Learning in Elementary Classrooms, Reading and Writing in Secondary Sheltered Content Classrooms and Enriching Content Classes for Secondary ESOL Students.

- NASDSE Satellite Conference Series. *The MA DOE Special Education Planning and Policy Office has purchased a site license for distance learning opportunities from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). The satellite conferences are available at no cost to Massachusetts school districts and educational organizations. The subjects range from, Getting the Most Out of Your Partnerships: Using Knowledge Management and Communities of Practice, Making the Grade: Effective High Schools for All Students to, Differentiated Reading Instruction: Teaching Every Child.*
- *Special Education Improvement Grants.* The MA DOE Office of Special Education Policy and Planning offers two types of grant programs to school districts and approved special education schools and programs to fund professional development activities that will help to improve the skills and capacity of special education teachers, and providers of related services, to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The priority of these two grants is to develop district-based induction and mentoring programs and to advance the skills of educators involved with students with disabilities through professional development activities.
- *Massachusetts Reading First Initiatives.* The MA DOE's federally funded Reading First Program targets high need schools and high-need districts. Reading First supports school districts and schools in implementing proven scientifically-based methods of reading instruction in K-3 classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties, and have all students be proficient readers by the end of Grade 3. Currently, forty-one districts and 89 schools are participating in the Massachusetts Reading First Plan in the 2005-2006 school year. Each district is assigned an implementation facilitator (IF). The implementation facilitators are members of the Massachusetts Department of Education staff who work directly with schools to implement Reading First. Among many activities, their assistance encompasses the integration of Teacher Reading Academy (professional development) content, the implementation of reading programs, and the administration and interpretation of assessments. In addition to content and instructional expertise, they work to transfer their skills in project management, team building, and school change. Small teams of IFs work together to provide ongoing, sustained professional development through bimonthly regional meetings.
- *John Silber Early Reading Program.* This state-funded program is provided to targeted high need districts that did not receive funds from the Reading First federally funded program. The John Silber Early Reading Program supports thirty-two identified high need school districts and thirty-seven high need schools, in implementing proven scientifically-based methods of reading instruction in K-3

classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties and have all students be proficient readers by the end of grade 3.

0. **Working Conditions**

The MA DOE recognizes the impact working conditions have on excessively high rates of turnover, particularly in hard-to-staff schools. It also understands the role that school and district leadership plays in developing and sustaining a working environment that leads to high student and educator expectations and performance. Below are specific initiatives that the Department will focus on to improve the conditions in hard-to-staff schools:

- *Commonwealth School Leadership Project.* The goal of the Commonwealth School Leadership Project is provide educational leaders in every school and district in the Commonwealth with the knowledge, skills and support they need to help teachers educate all students to high standards. Action is needed to change the jobs of educational leaders to become more manageable, and to enact policies that ensure a qualified leader in every position in districts throughout the Commonwealth, especially in those districts with a high concentration of low-achieving students. Through a bold and comprehensive approach, the project will redefine school leadership, building structures and introducing policy to expand the supply of qualified and visionary school leaders needed for the 21st century. The Project is aimed at assisting state leaders and decision makers in redesigning policies needed to strengthen the leadership abilities of their superintendents and principals.
- *National Institute for School Leaders (NISL) Initiative.* The Department's NISL Initiative is being offered to educators from some of the state's neediest districts in the Commonwealth. The NISL initiative, starting in the summer of 2007, is an intensive two-year training program, aimed at strengthening the districts' organizational and instructional leadership skills to lead their schools to higher student achievement, including addressing issues related to working conditions. The program is being offered by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Urban Superintendents Network, and is part of the state's educator leadership agenda.
- ***School Accountability and Targeted Assistance.*** **Forty-eight percent of the high poverty schools are also schools that are not making AYP. The Massachusetts Department of Education's Accountability and Targeted Assistance Center will assist these schools to improve the conditions within the schools that lead to high teacher turnover, as well as other teacher quality issues that lead to poor student achievement. As part of the MA DOE's accountability system, these schools will participate in panel reviews, fact-finding reviews, improvement planning and targeted initiatives provided by Department liaisons, along with school support specialists. These efforts will assist schools with; 1) the diagnosis of the school's strengths, and areas for**

**improvement by focusing on the causes / reasons for low student performance (including teacher quality issues and working conditions); and 2) development of strategies, and a plan to address those areas for improvement. Throughout this process, these schools will receive ongoing MA DOE oversight and support during implementation, including regular periodic visits by DOE staff to the school, during which time DOE staff will meet with leaders and staff and observe planned initiatives underway in the school and the classroom.**

- *Urban Superintendents Network.* The Urban Superintendents Network is a group of urban district superintendents (mostly from districts that have schools that aren't meeting AYP) that meets monthly to share ideas, concerns and solutions to a variety of issues that arise. The meetings are held by the Department and provide the MA DOE with an opportunity to provide targeted assistance to urban superintendents who have a variety of challenges, including those related to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. The MA DOE will continue working with these urban superintendents to address specific issues that arise in relation to improving student achievement, including improving working conditions in hard-to-staff schools.
- *Distributed Leadership.* We are finding that district planning for improving student performance, along with the logistics of running a school, are crowding out some of the most important teacher quality components of their jobs, such as providing support to new and veteran teachers (including induction and mentoring), and teacher selection and assignment, to name just a few. Because of the magnitude of these functions, and the sensitivities associated with many of them, they cannot and should not be accomplished by the principal alone. Rather, they are *led, supervised, and coordinated* by the principal, who, in a distributed leadership model, works with staff at all levels to provide opportunities for leadership and skills development while ensuring the best possible outcomes for student achievement. The Department is exploring options to provide additional support to principals, many of whom are responsible alone for faculties of 40 to 60 teachers.

### **1. Policy Coherence**

The Department will continue to improve internal processes and state policies that may inadvertently contribute to local staffing inequities. In the coming year, the Department will:

- *Limit the Scope of the Utilization of the State's 20% Rule:* The Department will limit the use of the 20% rule as outlined in Section 3 of this document.
- *Limit the Granting of Teacher Licensure Waivers:* Districts that have less than 97% of their core academic teachers designated as highly qualified for two or more consecutive years after the end of the 2006/2007 school year will be

required to submit an updated Teacher Quality Improvement Plan, target their Title IIA funds toward achieving 100% HQT, and denied access to the automated licensure waiver request process; they will instead be required to submit a detailed rationale for each waiver requested and obtain specific written approval from the Commissioner.

- *Continue Collaboration with the Educational Personnel Advisory Council (EPAC).* EPAC advises the Commissioner and the Board of Education on issues pertaining to all educational personnel. The Department will continue to meet monthly with the Council to garner feedback from the field regarding policy development and implementation related to teacher preparation, licensure and quality policies and initiatives. This council is comprised of representatives from each of the professional teacher and administrator associations in the Commonwealth, school districts, institutions of higher education, higher education organizations and Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators. The current focus is on accountability and support for educator quality at every level, specifically in the areas of recruitment and retention, induction and mentoring, preparation program approval, and resources for educators. This council is a forum to discuss implementation issues related to MA DOE policy.
- *Streamline the Licensure Process.* The licensure process will be streamlined through revisions to the *Massachusetts Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*. The modifications will maintain the content requirements of the regulations, while eliminating barriers to recruiting, preparing, and retaining high quality educators in all of the Commonwealth's classrooms.
- *Propose and Implement Changes to the School and District Accountability System.* In the course of implementing the school and district accountability system during its first six years, the Department's capacity to identify and provide support to improve underperforming schools has expanded considerably. Through this work, important professional relationships between state and district leaders have been formed, and work processes have evolved and matured.

At the June Massachusetts Board of Education meeting, the Department proposed amendments to the Regulations on Under-Performing Schools and Districts, 603 CMR 2.00. The proposed amendments will simplify and shorten the process for identifying and providing state assistance to underperforming schools, clarify expectations regarding the kinds of improvement actions that schools and districts must take, and establish different levels and types of intervention appropriate to each situation. The Board voted to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments, which the Commissioner will bring back to the Board for a final vote in October.

- *Pilot a New Educator Database.* Additionally, the statewide implementation of Educator Personnel Information Management Systems (EPIMS) during the 2007-

2008 school year will enable the Department to analyze equity issues on a granular level. It will also provide the Department with a systematic and quantitative means of monitoring the implementation of policies that affect educator recruitment, preparation, HQ status, licensure, assignment, and retention.

- *Explore Performance-Based Compensation Systems.* The Department will continue to explore how it can leverage funds and build support for the implementation of a performance-based compensation system in the Commonwealth.
- *Adopt and Implement a New Strategic Plan.* The Department's new strategic plan entitled, *Framework for Leadership and Action*, outlines how the Department will work more strategically to carry out its current work. This work includes improving student achievement and educator quality in working with high need schools and districts. The plan provides a structure and focus to ensure that policies are having their intended affect and internal processes are streamlined so as not to adversely impact the field.

### Conclusion

The Department pledges its commitment to the strategies, programs, policies and ideas outlined in this plan. The Commonwealth has built a successful tradition of excellence in relation to educator quality throughout the state. There is, however, a great deal more that can and should be done in the area of educator quality as it relates to our at-risk students throughout the State. This plan will enable the Department to address and recognize success for those students.