

MCAS-Alt

Same Standards

High Expectations for All Students

September 2006

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www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt

This newsletter will provide Massachusetts educators with the information, advice, and support to teach the Massachusetts learning standards to students with significant disabilities, and to conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."

-Henry David Thoreau-

Welcome back to school!

We hope you had an interesting and fulfilling summer. This newsletter will provide information to help you conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) this year.



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Updates

Summer Scoring Institute

Thanks to all the remarkable teachers who worked this summer to score just over 7,000 portfolios. This feat was accomplished in just 10 days by 275 teachers.

New Resource Guide

The *2006 Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* is coming in October! The new version includes:

- History and Social Science standards for PreK-grade 8, World History I and II, and U.S. History I and II
- Revised high school standards for Science and Technology/Engineering
- Suggested access skills for each standard for students who are not yet ready to access the curriculum directly
- Updated entry points and instructional ideas

Print copies of the 2006 Resource Guide will be distributed at the October training sessions (listed below).

The 2007 Educator's Manual is now posted!

Print copies of the *2007 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*, including a one-page summary of changes for 2007, will be available at fall training sessions and is currently posted online.

An Order Form for the Resource Guide and the Educator's Manual will be posted online in mid-October.

Forms and Graphs Online Coming Soon

MCAS-Alt digital forms, graphs, and work description labels will be available again this year. These will allow educators to complete forms on the computer and print them for inclusion in their students' portfolios. Student information is entered more easily, and is replicated on each form, graph, and label, so teachers spend less time filling out paperwork. You will have a choice of either a "download" version (for use on a single computer) or a "Web-based" version (for use on multiple computers, with information stored on a secure Web site). Both formats can be accessed at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt.

MCAS-Alt Score Appeal

If you believe that a student's portfolios was scored incorrectly, you may appeal the score in writing no later than Friday, September 29th, using the *2006 MCAS-Alt Score Appeal Form* and instructions for submission posted on the MCAS-Alt Web page.

MCAS-Alt Web Page

The MCAS-Alt Web page has a new look! The site has been re-organized to make it easier to find and use the information. In addition, a new "Headlines" section has been added to update you on current events regarding MCAS-Alt. Please visit the site at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt

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Fall Training Workshops

The Department will conduct training for administrators and educators in MCAS-Alt across the state during October.

Flyers and registration information are posted to the MCAS-Alt Web page and are being mailed to every school and collaborative.

Register online at www.mcasservicecenter.com

Administrators' Overview will be held on the dates shown below. Topics will include:

- IDEA-04 and student assessment
- AYP: Counting 1% & 2% of students
- Reporting of students to DOE via SIMS
- 2006 MCAS results for students with disabilities
- Decision-making on standard and nonstandard accommodations
- Who should take MCAS-Alt?
- High School Science and Technology/Engineering
- Assistance and opportunities for teachers

Administrators' Overview: 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Dates	Locations
Tuesday, October 3 rd	Peabody Marriott
Wednesday, October 4 th	West Springfield Best Western
Thursday, October 5 th	Mansfield Holiday Inn
Friday, October 6 th	Worcester Crowne Plaza

Educators' Training will be held on the dates shown below. All participants will receive print copies of the *2007 Educator's Manual for MCAS Alternate Assessment* and the new *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (2006). Topics will include:

- Overview for teachers conducting MCAS-Alt for the first time
- What's new for 2007?
- Data collection strategies
- How to use the Online Forms and Graphs
- Electronic portfolios
- Portfolios submitted for the Competency Determination

Educators' Training: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Week One	Locations
Tuesday, October 10 th	Marlborough Best Western
Wednesday, October 11 th	Plymouth Radisson
Thursday, October 12 th	Springfield Sheraton
Friday, October 13 th	Peabody Marriott

Week Two	Locations
Monday, October 16 th	West Springfield Best Western
Tuesday, October 17 th	Braintree Sheraton
Wednesday, October 18 th	Taunton Holiday Inn
Thursday, October 19 th	Lowell Doubletree

Please register by October 6, 2006. Registration is limited at each site.

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Getting Organized: Helpful Hints

Here are some important suggestions for getting started on MCAS-Alt student portfolios this school year:

- **Start early!** Check IEPs to determine which students will be taking MCAS-Alt and become familiar with the academic outcomes listed for each student. Think about the skills you will teach this year and which ones are appropriate to include in the portfolio.
- **Consider the level at which a student can access the curriculum.** The Resource Guide provides entry points and access skills for addressing academic skills and content. (Note: Always start at the most challenging level for a student).
- **Consider how you will set up data charts to measure skills in each subject.** Data will help you track a student's progress over a period of time, but make certain to show that the student is learning a new skill and not one in which he or she is already accurate and independent.

We look forward to seeing you in October and wish you the very best this school year!

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We'd love to hear from you! If there's a topic you'd like addressed in this MCAS-Alt newsletter, please let us know. Contact Nancy Hanson at nhanson@doe.mass.edu

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