IN THIS ISSUE

Important Dates
PARCC Readiness
Edwin Updates
Edwin Teaching and Learning
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (CMVS)
District Readiness
Digital Literacy
Assistive Technology and Accessibility
Connections

IMPORTANT DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/5/14 – 6/6/14</td>
<td>Testing window for PARCC end-of-year assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/14</td>
<td>State House hearing on the IT infrastructure bond bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/16/14</td>
<td>PARCC conference call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/16/14</td>
<td>Webinar on application process for new virtual schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/16/14</td>
<td>Application deadline for new standards panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/23/14</td>
<td>PARCC conference call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/28/14</td>
<td>PARCC conference call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/13/14</td>
<td>Next anticipated snapshot of Tech Readiness Tool (TRT) data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARCC READINESS

The Department will host conference calls for superintendents, district education technology directors, and district test coordinators to give information about making the choice between PARCC or MCAS for grades 3–8 for ELA and Mathematics for spring 2015 (the early decision deadline is June 30). Calls will be held from 10:00–11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 14, Friday, May 23, and Wednesday, May 28.

Due in June – Tech Readiness Tool data
Please update your district’s data in the Tech Readiness Tool (TRT) by the beginning of June, if necessary (if your data are up-to-date, you do not need to access the tool). These data are invaluable in helping us identify your device and infrastructure needs, not just for assessment, but for strengthening teaching and learning through technology. As such, we encourage all districts to strive for the “recommended” benchmarks to support digital learning now and in the future. We anticipate taking the next snapshot of data on Friday, June 13.
EDWIN UPDATES

Edwin Teaching and Learning (ET&L)

ET&L update
Edwin Teaching and Learning (Edwin T&L) participation has grown to just over 160 districts! Through the end of the 2013-14 school year, we will continue to roll-out Edwin T&L to all participating RTTT districts; the system will be available for all districts in the Commonwealth during the 2014-15 school-year or at the end of the RTTT funding period. To date, 50 additional non-RTTT districts have contacted ESE to implement Edwin T&L. Check out the Edwin T&L website for more information or email edwintl@doe.mass.edu.

ET&L – the IT side of the story
Our Edwin team continues to collaborate with the project vendor, Thinkgate, to integrate new information and functionality. To date, the Curriculum Frameworks for all academic and vocational subjects have been loaded, and we continue to load released MCAS items.

Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) integration has been established with many districts and continues to grow daily. The integration supports near real-time updates of student, teacher, and course information from a district’s student information management system into Edwin T&L.

Several other components have recently been released:
• Connection to PBS Learning Media content
• MA lesson plan and model curriculum unit template
• Competency tracking system for Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE)

Access to PBS Learning Media through Edwin Teaching and Learning includes both correlation to MA Frameworks for each resource and the ability to search for resources by standards again via a single login, making it more efficient for educators who may be working on curriculum development to search for relevant digital resources. Without that subscription, only “national” standards are provided. Stay tuned for more updates!
Application Process for Proposed New Virtual Schools
The Department has posted the application for proposed new virtual schools scheduled to open in the 2015-2016 school year (or later). The application is a two-stage process, beginning with a prospectus, due July 1, 2014. In early August, after reviewing the prospectuses, the Commissioner will invite selected applicants to submit final applications, which will be due October 6, 2014. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will vote at its January 2015 meeting whether to grant certificates for a new virtual school to operate. A webinar will be held Friday, May 16, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. to familiarize potential applicants with the application process and requirements.

Note that, according to the virtual schools law, only Massachusetts school districts and collaboratives are eligible to apply at this time. Also, no more than three virtual schools are permitted to operate in 2015-2016. Since two certificates were previously granted, only one additional school can be approved in 2015. (For 2016-2017, three additional certificates will be available.)

Second Commonwealth Virtual School Approved
In February, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to grant a certificate to the for the state’s second virtual school. TEC Connections Academy (TECCA) Commonwealth Virtual School, a virtual school proposed by The Education Cooperative (TEC) in Dedham, will open in fall 2014. The school may enroll up to 2,000 students in grades K-12 through 2016-17, the proposed year it would reach full capacity. Details are on the Department’s website.

New Regulations for Virtual Schools
Massachusetts has new virtual school regulations, which were approved by the Board in March. The regulations are going through the final editorial and legal review, and they will be posted on ESE’s Laws and Regulations web page in the next few weeks. If you are thinking about submitting an application for a new virtual school, you may find it helpful to read these regulations.

DISTRICT READINESS

Public Hearing on IT Bond Bill
The Senate Committee on Bonding and Capital Expenditures is holding a public hearing on the IT bond bill (H. 3770) Wednesday, May 14, at 10am in room A-2 of the State House. Line item 1599-7062 has $38 million for school district technology infrastructure upgrades. Members of the public are welcome to attend and provide testimony.

Technology Plan Approval Letters
Approval letters will be emailed by the end of May to districts that indicated (via the Digital Learning Survey), that they applied for Priority 2 E-rate funds. Note that approval letters are no longer required for districts applying only for Priority 1 funding. If you have questions about this process, please write to odl@doe.mass.edu.

Digital Learning Survey
Thanks to everyone who completed the Digital Learning Survey! There were 224 districts that participated. Over the next month, we will create the annual report, Digital Learning in Massachusetts,
which will be published online. Here’s a brief preview of what the survey showed:

- 34 districts have a one-to-one initiative in place
- 55 districts plan to implement a one-to-one initiative in the next two to three years
- 43 districts have a bring your own technology (BYOD) policy for their high schools
- 63 districts are in the process of developing a BYOD policy for their high schools

DIGITAL LITERACY

Seeking applicants for standards panel
The Department is partnering with the Massachusetts Computing Attainment Network (MassCAN) to expand computer science education opportunities for all students. To support this goal, the Department plans to update our current Technology Literacy Standards to create voluntary Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards. The Department is now soliciting applications for a Standards Panel, which will assist in developing the updated standards and in presenting draft standards to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in winter 2014-15. Applications are due by Friday, May 16, 2014.

Technology Leadership
The US Department of Education is seeking nominations for attendees at its Connected Superintendents’ Summit, which will be held Tuesday, October 7th, 2014 in Washington, D.C. If you know of a district leader who is doing extraordinary work transitioning to digital learning, you can make a nomination online. Approximately 200 superintendents will be selected to attend the event. The first round of nominations will close on May 27th, 2014.

The Summit will provide opportunities for leaders to share lessons learned with each other and with the Department to help disseminate promising approaches across the nation. Superintendents selected to participate will also be recognized for their role in helping lead the transition within their schools.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Summer Professional Development Offered
Check out the Department’s Professional Development website to learn about summer institutes and other professional development opportunities. There will be two institutes on assistive technology, in addition to many other topics.

Free Webinars and Multimedia Book from CAST
CAST is offering a series of webinars on Universal Design for Learning, along with an archive of webinars that you may have missed. You can check out the details on CAST’s website. The February webinar highlighted a new book, UDL Theory and Practice, by Anne Meyer, David Rose, and David Gordon. This book is the first significant new statement on Universal Design for Learning since 2002. A multimedia presentation of the book’s is available online at (a free login is required).

Information on PARCC’s Universal Design Features
PARCC has a new flyer explaining the accessibility features that are built into the new online assessments. Examples of these features include
• A highlighter tool
• A pop-up glossary
• An on-screen notepad
• A spell checker
• Text-to-speech capability

The flyer also includes links to detailed information about PARCC and its accessibility features and accommodations.

CONNECTIONS

Twitter
Follow the Office of Digital Learning on Twitter for up-to-date information.

Subscribe to the Commissioner’s Updates
The Commissioner’s weekly update provides valuable information on key statewide initiatives, many of which may be of interest to technology directors. Superintendents, principals, and charter school leaders will receive the Commissioner’s Updates automatically. For others wishing to subscribe, send an email to imailsrv@list1.doe.mass.edu with the following information in the body of the email: subscribe ESEUpdate Your Name. (Example: subscribe ESEUpdate John Smith) To unsubscribe, send an email to the same address with the following information in the body: unsubscribe ESEUpdate Your Name. (Example: unsubscribe ESEUpdate John Smith)