Special Education Leadership Academy 2014-15:

Strengthening Special Education Leadership:
Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

The Academy, offered by WestEd’s Learning Innovations, is funded through a contract with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Application Dates:** Applications are due by May 5th. Applicants will be notified by May 20th.

**Dates:** July 28 -29, 2014, August 11 -12, 2014, with in person follow-up sessions October 14, 2014, December 9, 2014, and March 10, 2015. Additional virtual sessions will be held on dates TBD.

**Location:** The Academy will be held in Worcester, MA or other central location.

**Eligible Participants:** Administrators with five or more years of experience as a special education administrator in a Massachusetts public school district or at a vocational or charter school are eligible to participate.

**Participant Costs:** The Academy sessions and materials will be provided to all participants at no cost. Lodging will be available for participants at their own expense. For those who are traveling over 40 miles one way, lodging will be paid for by the MA DESE through separate arrangement. Participants will be responsible for their own travel costs (mileage and lodging) and meals.

**Graduate Credit:** Available through Framingham State College and paid by participants.

The Academy structure will maximize opportunities for engagement and learning through a combination of lecture, small group dialogue and activities, participant presentation and sharing of successful practices, simulations, and other interactive strategies. The skills and experience of the participants as “co-teachers” of one another will be used as a way to build capacity and lay the groundwork for what will be a collaborative network or “community of practice” in the future.

**Topics of critical interest** to special education administrators will be addressed and may include: leadership and systems change; data collection and analysis; program evaluation; access to the general education curriculum; dispute resolution and conflict management; laws and regulations; and additional special topics depending on the interests of participants.

For questions or additional information, contact Susan Marks at smarks@wested.org or 802-951-8216; or Susan Villani at svillani@wested.org or 781-481-1112.

**Academy Directors**

**Susan Villani,** EdD. – Senior Program/Research Associate specializes in consulting and professional development with school administrators and leadership teams on their visioning, leadership skills, and ability to coach and evaluate teachers. Dr. Villani has written articles and books about school leadership, as well as a book about induction programs in the United States that support the growth and effectiveness of new principals and new teachers.

**Susan Marks,** J.D. – Legal and Policy Senior Program Associate specializes in special education litigation, compliance, and strategies of conflict resolution through negotiation, mediation, and facilitated discussion. Ms. Marks is an attorney who has previously represented school districts in special education matters.
About WestEd’s Learning Innovations

Learning Innovations is a program of WestEd (www.wested.org), a not-for-profit educational research and development organization. With offices in Woburn, Massachusetts, and Williston, Vermont, WestEd’s Learning Innovations has worked extensively with school districts in the northeast in areas including school improvement, leadership, school accountability, professional development, using data to guide decision-making and teacher recruitment and retention. Since 2000, WestEd’s Learning Innovations has also been home to the U.S. Office of Special Education Program’s Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC), providing technical assistance to states in the implementation of the IDEA.

This is the eleventh year that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has contracted with WestEd’s Learning Innovations to offer this leadership academy. Academy Directors and Faculty are all affiliated with WestEd’s Learning Innovations.