GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 (FY16)

The following self-assessment checklist was developed as a result of information gathered through numerous conversations with school personnel, site visits, and technical assistance sessions over the course of several years. It also encompasses changes for FY16 programs. We hope new and veteran coordinators will find it a useful tool for program design, review of the Funding Opportunity Request for Proposals (RFP), and completion of the application.

Additional notes: Please periodically visit the Academic Support web pages (http://www.doe.mass.edu/as) for dates regarding data submissions, workshops, and training sessions. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) reserves the right to withhold funds from districts that fail to submit data within identified timelines.

I. CHECKLIST
This checklist indicates the elements that are required when completing the FY16 Academic Support grant application.

☐ As outlined in the Priorities section of the RFP, students eligible for services include the following:
  a. students from the classes of 2003-2015 (post 12th graders) who have not yet met the Competency Determination required for high school graduation;
  b. students in the classes of 2016-2020 (grades 8-12) who have scored at the Warning/Failing level on their most recent MCAS test(s) in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering; and
  c. students in the classes of 2016-2020 (grades 8-12) who are new to the district and have not taken MCAS but whose academic history and assessments would indicate that additional support services are needed in order to gain the skills and knowledge to pass the 10th grade MCAS tests required for graduation. (This documentation must be available if requested.)

Programs may also serve students in the classes of 2018-2020 (grades 8-10) who have scored at the Needs Improvement performance level on their most recent MCAS in English Language Arts and Mathematics if the needs of all the priority students noted above are already being met.

☐ Students targeted to receive services in a subject area must have the appropriate MCAS scores or documentation in that specific subject area. Note that Science and Technology/Engineering is being defined as one subject area for this purpose and a student may receive support for an upcoming Science and/or Technology/Engineering test that is a different test than the one taken that made the student eligible for services.

☐ Teacher/guidance recommendation, parent request, class failures, or school year grades cannot be used as the sole basis for student selection. MCAS scores should generally be the basis for student selection unless they are not available (see the Priorities section, of the RFP for more information).

☐ The FY16 Assurances Document must be signed and submitted with Fund Code: 632/625 applications proposing to serve eligible students from any/all of the classes of 2018-2020. The document outlines requirements regarding plans for supporting students in the classes of 2003-2017 who have not yet earned their Competency Determination.

☐ Academic Support funds are to be used in a supplementary capacity and are not being used to develop curriculum outside of the scope of the Academic Support program. Programs occurring during the school day are supplementary (additional) and do not replace the regular course of study classes. For summer programs, the Department is able to permit a district to provide core course credit recovery for participation in state-funded Academic Support grant programs where appropriate and consistent with RFP requirements. For more detailed information regarding parameters, please see the credit-recovery advisory on the Academic Support website.
Education Proficiency Plans (EPPs) have been developed for students in the classes of 2016-2017 who have scored below Proficient on the 10th grade English Language Arts and/or Mathematics MCAS.

All charts in the Part III - Required Program Information are complete and an unduplicated count is included on the first page under General Information, question number 7a.

On line items 1, 2 and 3 in the Budget (Part II-A): Identify hourly rates. NOTE: Funds should be listed on the FTE lines only if the funds will be a part of a salary. Otherwise list as a stipend.

School day teachers are not being paid with Academic Support funds to provide services during their free, planning, or duty periods.

Planning/professional development has been provided to teachers, but the ratio of planning/professional development time to direct service instruction is no more than 1:2.

Ratio of students to teachers is no more than 10:1.

Academic Support funds are not being used to support high school student tutors/mentors.

Not more than 25 percent of the total amount of funding available to the district may be budgeted for supplies plus any funding for licenses related to computer software (line 8 – memberships/subscriptions). This also includes any instructional/non-instructional equipment costing more than $5,000 or having a useful life of less than one year.

Not more than 15 percent of the total amount to the district may be used for program coordination costs (stipends for a program coordinator, bookkeeper, secretary, evaluator, etc.). Programs must supplement currently funded local, state, and federal programs at the school or district.

There is no program charge to students for participation (including refundable registration fees) and students do not receive wages and/or fiscal compensation including gift cards as direct compensation for participation in the Academic Support program. Programs are encouraged to use non-financial incentives to increase student participation in programming such as field trips and project based learning.

The following required forms must be completed.

NOTE: If applying for both school year and summer grants (Fund Codes 632 and 625, respectively), separate versions of Parts I and II are required to be submitted. Only one version of the Part III and Assurances documents should be submitted.

- Signature Page – Part I
- Part II Workbook: II-A Budget Pages and II-B Budget Narrative
- Part III - Required Program Information
- Assurances Document [if proposing to serve students in the classes of 2018, 2019 and/or 2020 (grades 8-10)]
- FY15 Academic Support data and evaluations must be submitted (if an FY15 program was run).

II. SUGGESTIONS FROM PROMISING PROGRAMS

- A team from the school/district, including the program contact person, administrator, and direct service provider(s), is formed to ensure the purpose and priorities of the Academic Support program are understood and implemented.

- Clear evidence is provided that the Educational Proficiency Plans (EPP) and other student success plans are used to identify knowledge gaps for individual students and that instruction is targeted appropriately.

- Teachers are involved with helping to plan engaging, hands-on, and relevant curriculum that addresses the aforementioned gaps in students’ knowledge and skills.

- The program is part of a more comprehensive program of college and career readiness that engages students in planning for their future.

- The program supports and provides continuity with classroom instruction.
The program design provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning and for teachers to provide feedback to the students and parents/guardians.

At the end of the program, teachers have time to plan, revise, and evaluate the program and update EPPs with information on students’ progress.

The proposed number of students to be served is realistic and based on data from previous programs and increased outreach efforts, rather than on simply a count of eligible students.

The program is integrated with and complements other local, state, and federally-funded programs.

The program is cost effective.

The district has analyzed how best to use the Academic Support funds given that student attendance may be lower in extended day and summer programs vs. mandatory school day programs for the population served.

At least one person responsible for time sensitive submission of data has been identified.

III. OTHER NOTES

The Academic Support website: http://www.doe.mass.edu/as contains pages on grants, data collection, professional development, program product examples, pathways to success (an outline of available academic support options), and reports.

The Department’s MCAS site has a resource, the MCAS Question Search, that groups released items according to the type of question. http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html.