

# Education Leaders Quarterly Webinar

**Spring 2026**

Commissioner Martinez

Thursday June 11, 2026



# Agenda

- **Statewide Graduation Council: Graduation Standards Update**
- **Family Portal Overview**
- **Time Out Guidance Resources**
- **Reminder: Immigration Guidance**
- **Reminder: MassLeads Act**
- **Preview: Interpretation and Translation Regulations**
- **Q+A**

# Graduation Standards Update

# Stakeholder Engagement Summary

- 8 Listening Sessions with 400+ attendees
- 3 student-specific sessions with 300+ attendees
- Statewide Survey with 6,600+ responses
- District Leader Survey with 100+ respondents
- 5 Advisory Groups with 79 individuals and 23 meetings
  - Including an LEA Leader specific advisory group
- Public Input Form with 800+ responses
- 14 Statewide Graduation Council meetings
  - Including a representative from M.A.S.S.

# Primary Components

Primary Components	Recommendation
<b>Foundational Coursework</b>	Students will complete <b>MassCore</b> , a rigorous program of study that aligns with the admissions requirements for higher education and keeps all postsecondary options available to students.
<b>End-of-Course Assessments</b>	Students will complete end-of-course assessments in specified MassCore subjects. End-of-course assessments are designed, administered, and scored by the state. <b>Performance on the EOC assessments will meaningfully count toward students' academic record and path to graduation.</b>
<b>Postsecondary Planning</b>	Students will develop a postsecondary plan that meets required year-by-year milestones defined in the state's MyCAP framework, along with locally determined activities. Required milestones will include financial literacy, <b>artificial intelligence and digital literacy</b> , work-based learning, and FAFSA/MASFA completion or opt-out.
<b>Culminating Experiences</b>	Students will complete a <b>culminating experience</b> , which can be either a capstone project or a portfolio of work. The state will define the parameters of the culminating experience and establish a standardized rubric specifying what students must demonstrate. Student work will be assessed locally using the state-developed rubric.

# Embedded Components

Embedded Components	Recommendations
<b>Financial Literacy</b>	Students will develop financial literacy knowledge and skills through a required MyCAP milestone. Students may further demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills through a culminating experience and/or a potential Seal of Distinction.
<b>Work-Based Learning</b>	Students will engage in work-based learning experiences through a required MyCAP milestone. These experiences will support career exploration and preparation. Students may further demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills through a culminating experience and/or a potential Seal of Distinction.
<b>FAFSA/MASFA</b>	Students will be educated on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) through a required MyCAP milestone. Students will then complete the FAFSA or MASFA form, or choose to opt out.
<b>Artificial Intelligence &amp; Digital Literacy</b>	Students will develop artificial intelligence (AI) and digital literacy knowledge and skills through a required MyCAP milestone. These competencies will be integrated across the graduation framework through MassCore coursework, relevant culminating experiences, and a potential Seal of Distinction.
<b>Civic Readiness</b>	Students will develop civic knowledge and skills through coursework and applied learning experiences. These competencies will be integrated across the graduation framework through MassCore coursework, required Civics Action Projects, relevant culminating experiences, and a potential Seal of Distinction.

# Seals of Distinction

**Recommendation:** The state will develop and define a list of State Seals of Distinction. **Districts will offer a minimum number of these state-designated seals that all students have access to attain.** The criteria and parameters for issuing seals will be determined by the state.

# Implementation Timeline

- The recommended timeline for the MassCore requirement to take effect is for the incoming 9th grade cohort in the fall of 2027 (current 7th graders)
- The recommended timeline for the remaining requirements to take effect is for the incoming 9th grade cohort in the fall of 2028 (current 6th graders)

# A majority (70%) of high schools already *require*, or are one subject away from *requiring* MassCore

- DESE collected local graduation *requirements* from LEAs in school year 2025-2026. Based on the reported data:
  - 46% of schools *currently require* MassCore
  - 24% of schools are one subject area away from *requiring* MassCore
- Additionally, 82% of Massachusetts graduates meet MassCore requirements, suggesting that while MassCore may not be required at scale, most schools make the program of study available and most students complete it.

# Districts don't need MassCore fully operational on day one of Fall 2027

- **Current regulations (603 CMR 30.00)** already require 2 years of ELA, 2 years of Math, 1 year of Science, and 1 year of History - largely covering students' first two years of high school
- The incremental MassCore requirements (the additional years of math, science, history, and the addition of world language and arts) largely don't come into play until students are in **11th and 12th grade**
- **This gives the districts that need to add requirements a longer runway**

# Next Steps

- **DESE is committed to providing guidance and assistance in the coming year to support districts in meeting MassCore**
- DESE will continue to encourage innovation and flexibility in course offerings that may satisfy the subject area requirements of MassCore (such as engineering counting as a math unit)

# Family Portal Overview

# MCAS Family Portal - Overview

- The MCAS Family Portal will provide secure, online access to MCAS results for parents and caregivers, giving families earlier access to their students' results.
- Results for MCAS and MCAS-Alt are anticipated to be released as follows:
  - June 26 (target date; no later than June 30)
    - Preliminary student-level spring 2026 results in ELA
    - Official results from past years (2023–2025)
  - August
    - Preliminary student-level spring 2026 results in math, science and civics
  - September
    - Official spring 2026 results, including SGPs and comparisons to school, district, and state-level results (official results will replace the preliminary results)

# MCAS Family Portal – Additional Information

- The Family Portal is desktop and mobile enabled.
- A Spanish translation is available (users can toggle back and forth between the English and Spanish versions).
- A letter from the Commissioner to families, a quick-start guide, and a longer help guide will all be available, with translated versions in more than a dozen languages.
- All resources will be available on [DESE's website](#).

# MCAS Family Portal – Next Steps for Districts

- DESE will provide one-time registration codes to districts, who will disseminate the codes to families.
- Once families sign up using the code, they can log in anytime to view results as they become available this year and in future years.
- DESE is holding a webinar on June 12 for district test coordinators, school test coordinators, and principals to provide details about how to access and distribute the codes, and other logistical information

# Timeout Guidance Resources

# Implementation of Regulatory Amendments

## Why These Changes?

Massachusetts has taken a phased approach to reducing the use of restrictive practices and strengthening behavioral supports for students.

Key drivers include:

- National guidance from the U.S. Department of Education
- Ongoing enforcement activity by the U.S. Department of Justice
- Statewide stakeholder engagement
- Monitoring findings and implementation data
- Public feedback

**Key Milestone:** The amended regulations become effective **August 17, 2026.**

# HOW WE GOT HERE

## A Phased Approach to Regulatory Change



### NATIONAL CONTEXT 2016–PRESENT

- U.S. Department of Education guidance regarding restraint and seclusion
- U.S. Department of Justice enforcement and settlement agreements nationwide
- Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports and recommendations
- Multiple states adopting restrictions on seclusion practices

### PHASE 1: GUIDANCE & MONITORING 2020–2021

- DESE engaged stakeholders regarding time-out practices
- Issued guidance: *Reducing or Eliminating the Use of Timeout Rooms During the 2021–2022 School Year*
- Encouraged schools to:
  - ✓ Implement proactive behavioral supports
  - ✓ Reduce or eliminate reliance on time-out rooms
  - ✓ Improve data collection and parent notification
- Public School Monitoring and OASES increased monitoring of time-out practices and spaces

### PHASE 2: INVESTMENT IN ALTERNATIVES 2024

- DESE awarded **\$1.5 million** in competitive grants
- **19** districts, collaboratives, charter schools, and approved special education schools funded
- Focus on professional development, behavioral supports, and alternatives to restrictive practices

### PHASE 3: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2024

- DESE convened a statewide working group
- Included educators, administrators, advocates, families, attorneys, collaboratives, approved special education schools, and state agencies
- Gathered feedback on potential regulatory updates

### PHASE 4: REGULATORY AMENDMENTS 2025

- **January 2025:** Board presentation on time-out practices in Massachusetts
- **March 2025:** Proposed amendments to 603 CMR 46.00 and 603 CMR 18.00 released for public comment
- **June 2025:** Regulations adopted following extensive stakeholder feedback
- Implementation date extended to August 2026 to allow for training, guidance, and local planning

### PHASE 5: STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION 2025–2026

- **78** implementation grants awarded
- **\$3.6 million** invested statewide
- Guidance document released (February 2026)
- Training materials, reporting tools, and monitoring updates developed
- Ongoing technical assistance and implementation support

### AUGUST 17, 2026



### NEW REGULATIONS TAKE EFFECT

- Updated definitions of time-out and seclusion
- Limited emergency use of seclusion with safeguards
- Updated reporting, monitoring, and implementation expectations



**OUR GOAL:** Promote student safety, dignity, and inclusion through proactive supports, clear expectations, and appropriate use of behavioral strategies.

# What Changed?

- Updated definition of seclusion
- Updated definition of time-out
- Added requirements for any room or area used for seclusion
- Added emergency circumstances under which emergency seclusion may be used
- Added safeguards for emergency seclusion

# Resources Available Now

- [Guidance document & Policy Memo](#) (posted February 2026)

## Updated Regulations

- [603 CMR 46.00 Amended Regulations](#)
- [603 CMR 18.00 Amended Regulations](#)

# Resources to be available in July

- Frequently Asked Questions document (FAQ)
- Three asynchronous professional development modules
- Reporting requirement training
- Updated seclusion reporting tool
- Updated monitoring criteria for LEAs

# Preparation for Implementation

- Review and revise policies and procedures
- Assess your spaces
- Review your data to look at frequency patterns
- Determine training and professional development needs
- Develop parent notification letters, tracking logs or tools, update data forms, procedures, and processes

# Immigration Guidance Reminder

# Immigration Officer Guidance

5.28.26 On The Desktop linked to State Guidance for Education Entities re: Executive Order 650: *Protecting Access to Essential Services and Keeping Massachusetts Communities Safe* which includes:

- Guidance regarding Interactions with Federal Immigration Officers
- Guidance for Designating Nonpublic Spaces within Education Entities
- Rights of a Person Being Arrested/Detained and Rights of a Bystander
- Supports for Students and Children
- Human Resources/Labor/Union Issues
- Trainings on Policies to Promote Safety in Massachusetts Communities
- Additional Resources

# Mass Leads Act

# Mass Leads Act – Background

- The Mass Leads Act, signed into law on November 20, 2024, contained a number of education provisions including:
  - Research, evaluation, and data initiatives
  - Educator preparation and licensure initiatives
  - K-12 district initiatives
- The two key provisions that impact K-12 districts are:
  - The development of district diversity plans
  - The appointment or hiring of a diversity, equity and inclusion officer or establishment of a diversity team and advising school committees on DEI efforts

# Mass Leads Act – Next Steps

- DESE will issue guidance for diversity plans in the coming months; including how the requirement may be met by existing plan requirements
- DESE will issue guidance on the appointment/hiring of a DEI officer or establishment of a DEI team; this will include how the role and responsibilities of a diversity officer or team may be assigned to an existing school employee or existing school entity. The guidance will also include recommendations for updating school committees on DEI efforts.

# Protect Education Equity Act - Regulations

# 603 CMR 57: Interpretation and Translation Services in Schools

- In February 2026, BESE voted to solicit public comment on proposed new regulations for Interpretation and Translation Services in Schools (603 CMR 57.00).
- DESE invited public comment on the proposed regulatory changes from February 25, 2026 through April 24, 2026.
- BESE will vote on final, proposed regulations on June 23, 2026.
- Highlights from February proposed regulations:
  - **Two-tiered interpreter qualifications** requiring demonstrated language proficiency and completion of a DESE-approved training course; second tier includes deeper specialized terminology knowledge
  - **School translator qualifications** requiring written proficiency in both languages plus knowledge of ethics, confidentiality, and relevant terminology
  - **Legacy provisions** for both roles allow experienced practitioners (2+ years for interpreters, 1+ year for translators) to qualify via superintendent/executive director endorsement letter
  - A provision regarding the use of **machine translation**
  - **Effective September 1, 2027**

# Questions