



News from Commissioner Mitchell Chester & the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner's Weekly Update - April 8, 2016

Opportunity to Join the Working Group for Streamlining Educator Licensure Regulations & Policies:

The Department plans to engage a Streamlining Licensure Regulations & Policies Working Group of stakeholders to, among other things, review the existing regulations and licensure system as well as proposals about the requirements to enter and advance within the profession. This work is aligned with [Governor Baker's Executive Order 562](#) to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden.

The Department is seeking pre-K-12 educators, individuals involved in preparing new educators, newly licensed teachers, and other interested individuals for the working group. Participants should have knowledge, experience and/or an educational background related to educator licensure, license renewal/professional development, and professional teacher and administrator standards and indicators. The Department expects a workgroup of approximately 15-20 individuals so that the work can move expeditiously while being broadly representative of the educator workforce.

To apply to join the working group, submit the following three documents to Tonya Safford at tsafford@doe.mass.edu by **Friday, April 22, 2016**: a resume of two pages or less, including relevant experience, education and publications; a one- to two-page statement of interest written in 12-point Times New Roman font indicating the applicant's particular area of expertise/interest and responding to the following question: If you could change one thing about the existing licensure regulations, what change would you make?; and a commitment to participate in the following four meeting dates from 4-6:30 p.m. (Tuesday, May 10, 2016; Wednesday, May 25; Tuesday, June 14; and Tuesday, June 28), including availability for preparation work in advance of meetings and feedback on documents in between meetings. All meetings will be held at ESE, 75 Pleasant St., Malden.

All applicants will be contacted by Wednesday, April 27, 2016. Anyone with questions can contact Brian Devine, director of the Office of Educator Licensure at bdevine@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3124.

Workgroup recommendations will go through a public vetting process before the Board of elementary and Secondary Education adopts any changes to licensure regulations.

Charter School FY17 Pre-Enrollment Report Posted:

All Massachusetts charter schools have completed their FY17 pre-enrollment report, which they submit to ESE to help satisfy ESE's statutory requirement to inform superintendents of the expected number of charter school students from their district for the following year. Statewide, charter schools report 43,648 students are pre-enrolled for next year. The [FY17 pre-enrollment memo and report](#) are available online.

School choice vote reminder:

Every school committee must vote prior to June 1 about whether their district will accept school choice pupils in the 2016-2017 school year. If the district will accept school choice students, the vote may also specify which grades and how many openings are available, although that information is not required and is not binding. Results of the vote should be summarized and sent by letter or email to Roger Hatch in ESE's School Finance office (rhatch@doe.mass.edu). The information is [published](#) on the school choice area of our website in order to guide prospective students.

Picture of the Week:

On March 24, 2016, Commissioner Chester and Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston visited three schools in Springfield, including the High School of Commerce, where the commissioner visited classrooms and met with students. The initiatives underway at Commerce include an International Baccalaureate program. Elsewhere in the district, the [Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership](#) is working to turnaround middle schools, and throughout the district, the schools will have one-to-one computing next year for grades 3-12. (Photo courtesy of Springfield Public Schools)

Student Government Day: Commissioner Chester would like to thank all who participated in the 69th annual Student Government Day at the State House on April 1, 2016. Over 450 high school juniors and seniors and their chaperones spent the day in simulated Senate, House, and Supreme Judicial Court activities and heard from Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and other state officials. Abigail Sullivan of Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in Malden was selected as the Student Governor and told participants, "Our common good is not to reject the ideas of others. Everyone's opinion matters and has a role in government."

Implementing Security Processes for ESE Security Portal:

It is important that Directory Administrators within school districts take the time to maintain the members list within each district and school at all times. Individuals who are no longer employed by the district or school should be removed immediately from the application and should have all access terminated. This also applies to school-level staff who move from one school to another. In such cases, access to any secure data for the prior school should be removed and access for the new school added as applicable. Security processes should be put into place within each district to be sure that all data and information within the Security Portal remains secure at all times.

Director Administrators should also be sure all physical and mailing addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, email and web address information are up to date. That information is used to populate ESE's School and District Profiles page as well as provide information for the MCAS shipping list.

For instructions on how to remove, add or change users and update contact information, please go [here](#) and download the Directory Administration Quick Reference Guide. To address any problems, please submit a helpdesk ticket through our [Contact Us](#) page and from the subject dropdown box, choose MassEdu Gateway/Security Portal.

Plan Now to Host a Go Higher! Event in 2016-17:

The [Department of Higher Education](#) invites school districts to submit applications for a limited number of free “Go Higher!” college readiness programs for the 2016-17 school year. The program brings five to six University of Massachusetts, state university, and community college students into high schools for a student-to-student exchange on making a successful transition from high school to college. Students from the state’s 29 public campuses share personal stories about their own high school experiences; how they chose a college and a major; and how they learned to organize their time, get involved in campus activities, and either commute to or live on campus. Districts may also apply for a public college and university admissions fair or evening program for parents. An [application and further information](#) are available on the Department of Higher Education's website.

For Your Info:

- **Name change in nutrition:** Effective March 21, 2016, ESE's Office for Nutrition, Health and Safety Programs has been renamed the [Office for Food and Nutrition Programs](#).
- **Brain Building:** April 10-16, 2016 is Brain Building in Progress Week, an initiative of the state's *Brain Building in Progress*SM campaign, which was launched by the Department of Early Education and Care and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of young children's healthy development. More information, including [event listings and resources](#), is available online.
- **Fulbright opportunity:** Through the [Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Program](#), K-12 educators can apply for grants to engage in two- to eight-week collaborative projects in Botswana, India, Mexico, or Vietnam. Grants cover travel costs, lodging, meals, local transportation, and related costs. The deadline for applications is April 18 for summer 2016 programs and May 9 for fall 2016 programs.
- **U.S. Department of Education and Teacher Appreciation Week:** The U.S. Department of Education wants to extend a personal thank you to great teachers during the week of May 2-6, 2016 and is [looking for recommendations](#) on whom to recognize. While they might not reach every recommended teacher that week, they might use the information at other points during the year.
- **School climate tools:** The U.S. Department of Education has released new [school climate surveys](#) and a [guide on making school climate improvements](#) to help foster and sustain safe and supportive environments that are conducive to learning for all students.
- **Career readiness grant:** The Department has received a \$100,000 [career readiness planning grant](#) as part of initiative that JP Morgan Chase developed in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers and Advance CTE.

Subscriber Information: Superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and charter school leaders will receive the update 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*)