



Getting Set for School Year 2008-2009

Massachusetts PIRC
Parent Information and Resource Center

Available online in **Español** and **Português**
at www.pplace.org or call 1-877-471-0980.

a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs

Parents and guardians can do some homework now to prepare their families for the school year ahead. The timeline below will help your family be aware of key dates. Each school district sets exact dates, like the first day of school. Watch your mail for a district calendar, check the school website or call the school.

August 2008

Around August 30, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) will send preliminary notices to school districts as to whether or not their schools have met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals.

September 2008

Notice of AYP status: Parents receive notice of the school's AYP status. Parents of children whose Title I school did not meet AYP goals must be notified of the school's status if it means the school must offer School Choice (the student may transfer to a better performing school) or if the school must offer **free tutoring** (see Supplemental Education Services or SES).

First day of school: Exact date varies across the state.

Back-to-school events: Find out the schedule for Open Houses, Back to School Nights, meetings for Parent/Teacher Conferences, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Parent Advisory Council (PAC) for special education and for English Language Learners. Participate in elections for parent members for School Council

Parent-Guardian MCAS Report: Late September to early October, families receive their child's spring 2008 MCAS test results. Students with disabilities who took the MCAS-ALT also receive a report.

October 2008

October 1 - 29: MELA-O For: LEP students in kindergarten; LEP students in grades 1-12 who did not participate in spring 2008 MELA-O

October 20 - 29: LEP students in Grade 3, and only those in Grades 4 - 12 who did not take the spring 2008 MEPA-R/W tests will be tested in their ability to read and write English.

SES (Supplemental Educational Services)

Notice to Families: Parents of children in Title I schools that have not met AYP goals may begin to receive notice of their child's eligibility for **free tutoring** or SES. If your child is in a Title I school, call the principal or Title I Coordinator to see if the school must provide SES.

November 2008

November 5 - 7: MCAS Retests in English Language Arts (ELA) for 11th & 12th Graders, repeating 10th Graders and those out of school who did not pass the MCAS.

November 12 & 13: MCAS Retests in Math.

Student Report Cards: Schools with 4 marking periods issue report cards mid- to late-November. Students with disabilities will also receive progress reports.

December 2008

Student Report Cards: Schools with 3 marking periods issue student report cards early to mid-December.

Winter School Vacation

January 2009

Kindergarten Registration for Fall 2009: Begins in many districts.

K - 12 Registration: Registration for 2009-10 school year begins for districts that offer school choice.

February 2009

February 2 - 3: Grades 9, 10 & 11 Biology.

February 23 - March 17: LEP students in grades K - 12 take MELA-O.

Mid-Winter School Vacation



March 2009

March 2 - 6: MCAS Retests in Math and ELA.

March 9 - 17: LEP students in Grades 3 - 12 take MEPA-R/W.

March 26: Grade 10 takes MCAS Language & Literature, Sessions 1 & 2.

March 30 - April 10: Grades 3, 5, 6, & 8 take MCAS ELA Reading Comprehension.

March 31: Grades 4, 7 & 10 take MCAS ELA Composition.

NCLB School Report Cards: MDESE set March 30 as the deadline for districts to get these report cards to parents.

April 2009

April 7: Make-up MCAS ELA Composition for students in grades 4, 7, & 10 who missed the March 25 test.

April 17: Due date for MCAS-ALT portfolios for Grade 12 students working for a Competency Determination (CD, needed for High School Diploma).

April 1 - 10: Grades 4 & 7 graders take MCAS ELA Reading Comprehension.

Spring Vacation

May 2009

May 8: Due date for MCAS-ALT portfolios for Grades 3 - 4.

May 11 - 28: Grades 3 - 8 take MCAS Math.

May 11 - 28: Grades 5 & 8 take MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering.

May 11 - 28: Grades 5 & 7 take MCAS History and Social Science.

May 19 - 20: 10th grade MCAS Math, Sessions 1 & 2.

May 21 - 28: Grades 10 & 11 U.S. History MCAS.

June 2009

June 4 - 5: High School MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering, Sessions 1 & 2.

Last Day of School: Exact date varies across the state.

Visit www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation or call the Student Assessment Services office at 781-338-3625 for more information on MCAS and students with disabilities and LEP students.

Additionally, Massachusetts PIRC staff members are available to answer your questions about your child's education. Call us at 1-877-471-0980.

ALPHABET SOUP

AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress: The amount of progress each school must make each year for all students to become proficient in Math and English by 2014. Each school's progress for the year is measured, in part, by its students' Spring MCAS scores.

CD or Competency Determination: Students must attain a Competency Determination as one condition for high school graduation. Students earn a CD when they meet or exceed the Proficient (grade-level) score of 240 on both the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests, OR meet or exceed the Needs Improvement score of 220 on both the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP).

ELA or English Language Arts: The subject area that includes Reading, Reading Comprehension, Composition, Language and Literature.

EPP or Educational Proficiency Plan: An EPP is a planning tool schools must use to help students who do not achieve the 240 Proficiency level gain competency in ELA and Mathematics. Information about EPP components and requirements can be found at www.masspirc.org or by calling Mass PIRC at 1-877-471-0980.

LEP or Limited English Proficiency:

Descriptor for students whose native language is not English and who are not yet able to do classroom work in English. English Language Learners (ELL) is also used.

MCAS or Massachusetts Comprehensive

Assessment System: Tests given to Massachusetts' public school students to measure their progress toward meeting state educational standards.

MCAS-ALT or MCAS Alternate

Assessment: Tests designed for the small number of students with the most significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests even with accommodations. MCAS-ALT is a portfolio of a student's work including work samples, instructional data, videotapes, and/or other supporting information.

MCAS Retest: Students in Grades 11 & 12, repeating 10th Graders, and students who are out of school who did not yet earn a passing grade have further chances to pass by taking retests in the spring and fall.

MELA-O or Massachusetts English

Language Assessment-Oral: The state-mandated assessment of English listening and speaking skills for LEP students in grades K-12.

MEPA or Massachusetts English

Proficiency Assessment: Annual tests that measure the ability of LEP students to read, write, understand, and speak English, as well as to measure their progress in learning English. MEPA consists of the MELA-O and MEPA-RW.

MEPA-RW or Massachusetts English

Proficiency Assessment-R/W: Assesses an LEP student's proficiency in reading and writing at Grades 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12.

NCLB School Report Cards: The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states and school districts to provide annual report cards on how well schools are educating their students. The report cards give parents and others a snapshot of student performance and teacher qualifications in their local schools.

SES or Supplemental Educational

Services: Free tutoring or other extra academic help, outside the school day, for eligible students in Title I schools that have not met their AYP goals for 3 or more years in a row.