



400 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02110 • tel 617-737-3122 fax 617-737-3126 • www.mbae.org

MASSACHUSETTS
BUSINESS ALLIANCE
FOR EDUCATION

MBAE Urges Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to Delay Vote for Postponement of History MCAS Requirement

As we all face the challenge of meeting Massachusetts students' educational needs with diminishing resources and increased fiscal constraints, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education urges the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education not to retreat from the education reform initiatives that have made progress possible since 1993. Budget reductions must avoid jeopardizing the gains achieved by the Commonwealth's previous investments in education.

MBAE therefore urges the Board to reject Commissioner Mitchell Chester's recommendation to waive its bylaw and to postpone the requirement that seniors graduating in 2012 pass a history MCAS exam. Fiscal realities may well delay the requirement's original start date, yet MBAE believes the Board should not vote on this matter until the Department has provided more detail about alternatives. The Department should present information to its Board and to the public about costs associated with implementing the history and social science MCAS requirement, and prioritize the steps that districts can take with current resources to ensure that students meet the standards set in the history and social science curriculum frameworks. Lack of funds should not deter us from efforts to meet the 2012 goal of reaching measurable student proficiency in these subjects.

Massachusetts students lead the nation because of our state's high standards and accountability for educating every student to meet these benchmarks. Despite accolades for this performance, Massachusetts education leaders have acknowledged that we must raise achievement further for our state to remain competitive and for *all* of our students to be assured a secure and successful future. Business leaders look to the state's consistent dedication to high educational standards--in bad times as well as good times--as a reason to stay and invest in the Commonwealth. Honoring the commitment to the history and social science MCAS schedule should be viewed as an investment in economic recovery.

MBAE supports state efforts to bring our education system into the 21st century and to ensure that all students master the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy and society. We know this will be extremely challenging for the Department and for districts, as it is for Massachusetts companies, during this recession. It is therefore even more important to retain and strengthen the system that has brought the Commonwealth so much progress over the past fifteen years, and will be essential for moving forward in the eventual economic recovery.

For more information, contact:
Linda M. Noonan, Executive Director
LNoonan@mbae.org 617-737-3122