



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

August 11, 2016

Dear Superintendent or School Leader,

Let me be among the first to welcome you to the 2016-17 school year! Thank you for the work you have done during the summer to lay the foundation for your students' success in the coming 10 months.

Attached to this email are resources that I hope you'll find helpful as you convene your staff and students' families. The first attachment is a **PowerPoint presentation** that includes a summary and updates of the work that this agency and Massachusetts educators are doing to develop the next-generation MCAS and strengthen the English language arts and mathematics learning standards. You might find that the presentation, which you can adapt to fit your needs, would be useful at staff orientations, school committee meetings, and back-to-school nights. Please share it with your principals and encourage them to share it with their staff and with students' families.

The second attachment is a **three-page parent document** that provides a brief overview of how the state and local districts work together in different capacities in Massachusetts public schools. It includes the distinction between learning standards and curriculum and notes the role of assessments. We're asking districts to email this PDF to their students' parents.

In addition, my staff has created a **video with a back-to-school message** from me, which is available on the Department's [YouTube site](#). Again, please feel free to share this with your networks as you see fit.

I wish you, your faculty, and your students the best for the year ahead. All of us here in Malden look forward to working with you. If you have suggestions for other communications materials that would be useful to you in your work this year, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Greene, our Assistant Chief of Staff, at 781-338-3107 or via email at lgreene@doe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mitch D. Chester".

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner