
Welcome Back!

The beginning of the school year is always an exciting time! We want to take this opportunity to thank you for the work you do each day to provide all students in Massachusetts with high-quality educational experiences. Massachusetts educational collaboratives provide critical programs and services, complementing the educational programs of member school districts in a cost-effective manner and increasing opportunities for students and families to access a high-quality public education.

As we kick off the new academic year, please review the Commissioner's [Back-To-School Update](#). We encourage you to keep abreast of key updates throughout the year by reading Commissioner Riley's weekly updates. If you do not already receive his weekly message, you may register for it [here](#).

The Department has revamped our aMAzing Educators [webpage](#) which features educators and invites the public to tell us about their favorite teachers. Commissioner Riley asks you to join him in recognizing the crucial role that teachers play in improving children's lives.

This document contains a number of important reporting reminders and links to other potential opportunities. We encourage you to review it, and pass on the information to others as appropriate. As staff in the Office of Regional Governance (ORG), we look forward to supporting all 25 educational collaboratives currently operating across Massachusetts and encouraging new partnerships that enhance regional educational resources. We send you our best wishes for a successful 2018-2019 school year!

Reminders

The upcoming academic year brings new leadership in a number of collaboratives. We welcome the new leaders and thank the veteran leaders who have returned for another year. Additionally, we invite new collaborative leaders to reach out to [Paulajo Gaines](#) or [Ruth Hersh](#) with questions or for support. We strongly encourage you to visit the School Finance: Educational Collaboratives [webpage](#), where you will find a variety of helpful resources including links to the FY18 Annual Report and Annual Independent Audit submission instructions. While there have been no substantive changes to our guidance in recent years, we encourage you to review all guidelines and guidance documents on the website, prior to submitting your required reports, to ensure that you are using the correct dates and the requested cumulative surplus calculation worksheet.

Boards of Director Meetings – Each collaborative:

- must hold at least 6 (six) board meetings,
- must post the 2018-19 Board meeting schedule to the collaborative website, noting the date for the FY18 Annual Report and Independent Audit Report presentation and votes,
- must post all agendas and approved board meeting minutes per Open Meeting Law requirements, and
- should submit an electronic (pdf) board packet to ORG, prior to each scheduled board meeting.

Board Member Management System (BMMS)

- Board members must complete the online training within 60 days of appointment.
- Board members must revisit and complete the online training every 6 years.
- Collaborative staff must update board membership lists to ensure current compliance.
- Collaborative staff must retain board member completion certificates, on file, at the collaborative.

Annual Report – Required content includes:

- information on all programs and services provided by the collaborative,
- discussion of the cost-effectiveness of all programs and services offered, and
- discussion of the progress made toward achieving the objectives and purposes as outlined in the collaborative agreement.

Annual Independent Audit - Required content includes:

- the names, duties and total compensation of the five most highly compensated employees,
 - transactions between the collaborative and any related for-profit or non-profit organization,
 - amounts expended on services for individuals aged 22 years and older,
 - amounts expended on administration and overhead,
 - accounts held by the collaborative that may be spent at the discretion of another person/entity,
 - transactions or contracts related to purchase, sale, rental or lease of real property, and
 - annual determination and disclosure of cumulative surplus.
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For Your Information

Board Member Training Update

The required board member training course has been updated and launched on the Board Member Management System (BMMS) platform. We thank you for your patience as we updated and tested the system during the summer.

As you are aware, all collaborative board members must take the training within 60 days of appointment and every 6 years thereafter. The system will send automated email messages to those who will need to retake the training. Copies of the notification emails will be sent to each collaborative director and ORG will provide specific instructions on the renewal process in the spring of 2019.

Audit and Compliance Reviews

This year, the Audit and Compliance unit will complete the 6 year compliance review visit cycle for collaboratives that began in 2013, with the passage of the collaborative law. We join them in thanking you for your cooperation with the initial reviews and for providing valuable feedback on the process.

For the next round, they will conduct brief check-ins to follow-up on and monitor the resolution of issues identified in earlier reports (e.g., internal controls, independent audit findings, material weaknesses, etc.). We will provide details on the process later this fall.

Collaborative Board of Director Meeting Visits

This year, ORG staff will visit as many board meetings as possible, prioritizing the November and December meetings where the FY18 Annual Independent Audit and Annual Reports are presented for votes of acceptance. Due to staffing constraints in the ORG, we will attend board meetings upon request and whenever possible. Please contact [Paulajo Gaines](#) with scheduling requests.

2018 Special Education Professional Development Series

The 2018-19 [Special Education Development Series](#), listed by topic, has been posted on the DESE website. We remind you to review the schedule of topics and encourage your staff to take advantage of the professional learning opportunities.

Urban Leaders Network for School Climate and Student Support (ULN)

The ULN is a state network (similar to the Urban Superintendents Network) facilitated by DESE and partner organization, the School & Main Institute, where district leaders, school leaders, and DESE staff put a spotlight on *school climate*, *social emotional learning*, and *student support*. The network is a peer learning group, a place to share promising practices, challenges of practice, and be exposed to new content and ideas. Meeting topics this year will include: Chronic absenteeism, race/equity/inclusion, mental health and trauma, redesigning staff roles to support all students, and triangulating data for systematic use. The network meets five times per year, with one summer retreat. New members always welcome! For more information, contact [Andrea Ricotta](#) at DESE.

Special Education Regional Meetings

As you may be aware, DESE has re-established regional meetings to keep special education directors informed of changes and updates in special education procedures. These meetings were well received last year and will continue in FY19. Please contact [Vani Rastogi-Kelly](#) at DESE or [Mandi Yanez](#) at MOEC for the complete list of meeting dates and times.

Reporting Timelines

Data Collection	Deadline
October 1 SCS	12/06/2018
October 1 EPIMS	12/06/2018
EOY SCS	08/01/2019
EOY EPIMS	08/01/2019
SSDR	07/18/2019
Restraint	07/28/2019

Speak with your data liaison for details

Annual Reporting January 1, 2019

- FY18 Annual Independent Audit Report
- FY18 Annual Report

Amendments to Collaborative Agreements:

Membership Changes

- ORG must review proposed changes prior to presentation to the collaborative board for vote of approval
- Collaborative board vote of approval
- School Committee votes of approval
- Final ORG Review 04/01/19
- Commissioner Approval 04/30/19

Language Changes

- ORG must review proposed changes prior to presentation to the collaborative board for vote of approval
- Collaborative board vote of approval
- School Committee votes of approval
- Final ORG Review
- Commissioner Approval

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Massachusetts is celebrating its aMAzing educators. [Tell us](#) about your favorite teacher!