



March 17, 2014

Dear Superintendants and Kindergarten Coordinators,

We are writing to thank you for your ongoing involvement in the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) initiative, and to provide you with information about updates to the implementation plan. Your district is participating in MKEA as part of Cohort One or Two, and as a condition of receiving the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant.

In collaboration with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is implementing the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) system to support school districts in using a formative assessment tool that measures growth and learning across all developmental domains during the child's kindergarten year. Based on feedback from participants in Cohorts One and Two, the following changes have been made for Cohort Three that may have implications for your district:

- School districts in MKEA Cohort 3 will *all* utilize the *Teaching Strategies-GOLD* System (with training during 2014, and using the assessments first during the 2014-2015 school year)
- School districts in all Cohorts will focus on assessing children in two developmental areas; Social-Emotional and Approaches to Play/Learning
- School districts in all Cohorts will focus on assessing children in full-day classrooms
- EEC will absorb the cost of online child licenses through 2015-2016.

As we move forward with these modification, it presents several implications and opportunities for districts in Cohorts One and Two. Those districts that are currently using the Work Sampling System (WSS) have two choices. They can either continue to use the WSS or they can elect to change to the Teaching Strategies-GOLD System. Should districts choose to change, they will have access to professional development on the tool, online licenses for their children and stipends/substitutes to cover the cost for attending the required professional development on GOLD. For planning purposes, districts choosing to switch must notify either Pam or Donna by March 31, 2014.

While Cohort One and Two have currently been implementing the tool in all developmental areas, districts have the option of focusing their efforts on the two developmental areas for 2014-2015. In the 2015-2016 school year, districts will need to assess children across all developmental areas. Assessing children in half-day Kindergarten programs will be optional for the remainder of the project. A survey will go out soon requesting information on how many child portfolios will be needed in 2014-2015.

**Additional Information**

EEC has recently awarded a grant to the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) to design, deliver and coordinate screening and assessment system training. CES will also be coordinating with Educator and Provider Support (EPS) grantees and Readiness Center Grantees to ensure that districts engaged in formative assessment have adequate technical assistance and support following the training to integrate screening and assessment into their programs.

For information on MKEA, including tools, support, resources and contact information for all grantees supporting assessment, please visit the webpage at <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/mkea/>.

We would appreciate if you could forward this important information to personnel who will be working on MKEA in your district. Please direct any questions regarding MKEA to Pam Roux at EEC ([Pam.Roux@state.ma.us](mailto:Pam.Roux@state.ma.us) / 617-988-7820).

Thank you for your participation in this important *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant* initiative, and for your ongoing commitment to educating the children of Massachusetts. We look forward to partnering with you on MKEA.

Sincerely,



Donna Traynham, Learning Support Services  
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



Pam Roux, Educator and Provider Support  
MA Department of Early Education and Care