
Subject:

On the Desktop- January 29, 2016



*News from Commissioner Mitchell Chester & the
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

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The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is launching a new survey to gather direct feedback from Massachusetts educators. The Department is extending its invitation to participate in the VISTA survey to *all districts*. The Views of Instruction, State Standards, Teaching, and Assessment (VISTA) survey invites educators to share their views on the implementation of five statewide initiatives:

- (1) curriculum frameworks,
- (2) educator growth and development,
- (3) the role of educator evaluation in educator growth and development,
- (4) personalized learning tools, and
- (5) digital learning tools.

All Massachusetts superintendents and principals are invited to participate in VISTA, as well as all teachers in districts that decide to participate.

This message is to request your district's participation in the teacher portion of this year's VISTA survey. The benefits of participation are numerous, but one key benefit is that your district will receive district and/or school-level findings, not just state-level results.

To support Massachusetts educators, ESE needs reliable information that it can use to improve its resources, programs, and policies. Commissioner Chester and ESE's program offices strongly encourage you to participate in the VISTA survey project. With educator feedback, ESE can better serve Massachusetts educators and their students.

The Department is working hard to reduce the number of surveys our program offices administer. Content from five program offices is represented in the VISTA survey, with the result that five annual ESE surveys have been consolidated into one survey. The attached FAQ provides more information and answers to several questions that commonly arise about participating in ESE's surveys.

ESE acknowledges the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) has expressed concerns over the VISTA survey, and we have attached our response to those concerns. We hope that you will share this information when discussing this project with your local union representative, as ESE has made significant changes to its sampling design in order to ensure teacher anonymity.

We would appreciate your decision regarding this request no later than February 5, 2016.

Thank you for considering our request to participate in the VISTA survey. The Department, in collaboration with our survey vendor, Westat, has made available informational webinars for districts whose teachers might participate (D-T districts); we will host two webinars next week on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 and Thursday, February 4, 2016. The webinar login details can be found in the attached document. If you have any immediate questions, please direct them to Shelagh Peoples, our VISTA coordinator, at speoples@doe.mass.edu. Please also email Shelagh with your decision. The surveys are available on our webpage <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vista/> for all educators to preview.

Thank you,

Lauren Greene
Assistant Chief of Staff
MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
[781-338-3107](tel:781-338-3107)
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