



# FEBRUARY 2017



***"If you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room."  
– Peter Shankman***

**M-Step Testing Schedules:** If you aren't done with your M-Step testing schedule yet, make sure it's in the works. Make sure you understand all of the testing dates, windows and options. This MDE-provided [PDF](#) provides a full calendar and additional information.

**PSAT/SAT Reminders:** Remember that the Pre-Id window for PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10 and SAT is through February 14. Additionally, the deadline to request or submit changes to accommodations is also February 14. As far as your testing schedule goes, remember that PSAT 8/9 and 10 can be administered in the afternoon. SAT must begin at 8:30 a.m.

**School Counselor Week:** It's time to plan ahead to honor a profession that excels in being flexible and going with the flow. National School Counselor Week is slated for Feb. 6-10; the goal is to raise awareness of the work of school counselors, and to thank them for all they do.

**Black History Month:** Black History Month brings to the forefront the inspiring stories of African-American icons – many of whom overcame great odds to leave their mark on our nation. Make sure you've planned a way to celebrate Black History Month at your school during February. Here are a few resources that might help:

- Resources from the Library of Congress: [africanamericanhistorymonth.gov](http://africanamericanhistorymonth.gov)
- A wide array of resources from [biography.com](http://biography.com) including videos, photos, articles and study guides
- Great info from the [National Archives](#)
- Educator Resources from the [Smithsonian](#)

**School Sponsored Spring Break Trips:** Check your Board policy on school sponsored trips to ensure that all groups are meeting the requirements including such things as: parent permission forms that include a "return home at parent expense clause" as well as emergency and medical information. Verify the itinerary with staff members in charge and establish a communication plan in case of emergency on the trip. Be sure to have your own copy of parent contact and medical information just in case.

**Spring Break Planning:** Students often return from spring break trips with a variety of problems... postings they regret on social media, inappropriate t-shirts (advertising alcohol and/or inappropriate behavior), etc. Start now to be proactive about these concerns by advising students on these issues before the break. Take time to caution students about the dangers of underage drinking, breaking the law in a foreign county and of posting pictures on social media. When students leave home unsupervised for the first time they are more likely to make poor decisions that can have a lasting impact. Echo your comments to the students in an email to parents asking for their support.

**Emergency Drill Audit:** This is a good time to check and make sure that you have held all of your pre-planned drills. If an unexpected day off school caused a drill to be cancelled, you will need to make it up. Make sure that you are posting your drills on your website as required by law. You can find the detailed law governing emergency drills on the [MASSP website](#).



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**CPR/AED Drill Week:** It's quickly approaching – Feb. 6-10. Make the commitment to hold a CPR/AED Practice Drill during one of these weeks. Remember that state law says that schools are now required to adopt and implement a cardiac emergency response plan. This is also a good opportunity to raise awareness for the need for AEDs and proper training. More information regarding CPR/AED Drill Week can be found at [www.aedrill.com](http://www.aedrill.com).

**Teacher Evaluations Observations:** Once you return from spring break, the time until the end of the school year will fly by. It is a good practice to ensure that you have at least 75% of your teacher observations complete. You will want to use May/June to complete the final evaluation document. If you haven't done so, make a calendar with the remaining observations on it and make it a priority to get it done. You will have a much better spring break if you do!

**End of Year Calendar:** Update your school calendar to make sure you have included all the spring events. Share that calendar with your staff to make sure everyone has correct dates. Include in PD or staff meetings so that your staff can pre-plan to attend.

**Personal Progress Check:** Take some time to revisit the goals you have set for yourself this school year. Have you achieved them or made documented progress? Continue to gather and keep documentation on your goals to be shared with your supervisor during your evaluation. Some documents you may need include:

- Samples of your teacher evaluations
- Professional development for staff targeted at your school improvement goals
- Assessment, attendance and discipline data to document student growth

**Meeting Agenda:** Do you create and distribute an agenda prior to staff meetings and professional development? Research shows when students know the purpose of a "lesson" prior to beginning it they will be 25% more engaged. This is true for adult learners, too. At least 24 hours in advance teachers should be told what the content of the meeting/training is and what they need to do to prepare for it. If we want teachers to practice best instructional practices, then administrators need to model it.

**Monthly Meetings:** Here are two items you should consider adding to your staff meeting agenda this month.

- **Staff Meeting Icebreaker of the Month: Cinderella's Shoe:** Pairs of people should sit next to one another in a circle. Have one of the partners close their eyes. The other partner takes off one shoe and throws it in the middle of the circle. When a leader says go, all the people with their eyes closed go to the middle and bring back the right shoe that belongs to their partner. Their partner can scream and yell from their seats, but cannot touch or physically guide them to their shoe. The person must bring back the right shoe in order for the game to be stopped and Cinderella to live happily ever after.
- **New Teacher Meeting Topics of the Month and Mentor Teacher Checklist:** (PHD) E-mail the mentor checklist each month to encourage conversation with untenured teacher mentees.