



Education Fact Sheets

AUGUST 1997

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Adult Education

Chapter 69, Section 1H. “. . . the Department, in coordination with other state agencies, shall develop a comprehensive system, subject to appropriation, for the delivery of adult basic education and literacy services that will ensure opportunities leading to universal basic adult literacy and better employment opportunities. . . .

The Department shall endeavor to develop the following objectives: (1) a full continuum of services that take an adult from the lowest level of literacy or English language proficiency through high school completion leading to advanced education and training; (2) a network of self-trained, full-time adult literacy and English as a Second Language professional instructors, qualified to provide high quality effective services; (3) a strong documentation and evaluation capacity that will enable the state to determine what methods of instruction and what means of service delivery are most effective in educating adults; and (4) coordinated accountability mechanisms that simplify existing reporting and refunding processes.”

Board of Education Mission Statement on Adult Education, adopted 11/93

“Massachusetts shall provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training and better employment and to reach his or her full potential as a family member, productive worker and citizen in our diverse and changing democratic society.”

Funding and Services

The Department of Education is the lead agency for Adult Basic Education (ABE) services. State and federal funding in FY 97 was approximately \$18 million, which supported 27,500 students in 245 statewide programs. FY 98 funding will approximate \$24.5 million.

The Department of Education administers the federal Adult Education Act and other federal discretionary adult education programs such as “Even Start,” workplace education grant programs, and family literacy grant programs. All programs should incorporate their activities with local community needs to offer quality adult education services. Projects such as Workplace Education, ABE for the Homeless and Citizenship Education should be integrated into the wider, diverse community through a coordinated community planning process.

Funding and Service

YEAR	TOTAL FUNDING	STUDENTS SERVED*	EDUCATION PROVIDERS	COMMUNITIES SERVED
FY93	\$8,284,782 F - \$4,124,536 S - \$4,160,246	9,219	194	65
FY94	\$7,882,598 F - \$3,716,972 S - \$4,165,626	8,573	177	65
FY95	\$9,934,162 F - \$5,728,697 S - \$4,205,465	10,276	185	65
FY96	\$13,178,737 F - \$4,933,272 S - \$8,245,465	13,295	185	75
FY97	\$16,573,844 F - \$4,828,379 S - \$11,745,465	Pending (anticipated 16,500)	179	91
FY98	\$26,205,569 F - \$6,660,104 S - \$19,545,465	Pending (anticipated 18,500)	anticipated 190	anticipated 111

F=Federal S=State

* These figures are for students directly funded by MDOE and do not include the substantial number of students served with local matching and other funding. Average hours of instruction per student has doubled since 1991.



Bilingual Education

General Laws Chapter 71A

Whenever a school district has 20 or more students in the same language classification it must provide a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program with instruction in their native language and in English in all mandatory subjects, for a period of three years or until the student is able to perform successfully in English-only classes, whichever occurs first.

Education Reform Act, Section 74

“The Governor shall appoint a commission to study the effectiveness and implementation of bilingual education programs. The commission shall examine programmatic quality, teacher certification and length of time students remain in the programs. . . .”

Regulations

In FY97, the Board of Education revised the TBE regulations (603 CMR 14). After four, statewide public hearings and review of written comments and testimony from hundreds of people, the Board of Education adopted revisions to the TBE regulations in May, 1997. Those revisions give school districts the flexibility to provide bilingual education programs which reflect Education Reform priorities in the district. For example, school districts can choose to have parent advisory councils of parents whose students are enrolled in TBE programs, or districts may actively recruit parents of TBE students to join school and district advisory councils.

Statutory Change

In April 1997, Governor Weld filed House Bill 4406, which would reform the State’s bilingual education statute. The Board of Education and Commissioner gave their general support to the bill, but the bill was not voted out of committee. Among other provisions, if passed, the law would have ensured that:

- (a) Students would be equipped with sufficient fluency in English so they could rejoin the regular education program after no more than three years. Such programs could include TBE, structured immersion, two-way bilingual, and other Board-approved programs;
- (b) Districts would provide a program in bilingual education within a self contained classroom if there are eighteen or more public school children of limited English-speaking ability in any given grade; students would not need to be of the same language group, nor would native language instruction have to be provided within the self-contained classroom; a child would not remain in a self-contained classroom for more than one year;
- (c) A student would not be determined to be of limited English-speaking ability unless he has been administered a thorough diagnostic evaluation that finds his ability to speak and comprehend English to be sharply less developed than his ability to speak and comprehend his native language;
- (d) Teachers of children of limited English-speaking ability would be fluent in both spoken and written English and in a language in which bilingual education is offered, as demonstrated by passing a Board-approved, oral and written examination and they would need to meet all other certification requirements;
- (e) Parents of children determined to be of limited English-speaking ability would have the right to choose to enroll their children in a program of bilingual education, or choose to have them remain in the regular education program.

Summary Data FY 89 - FY 97

School Year	First Language not English*	Limited English Proficient**	Transitional Bilingual Education***	Total Public School Students
1988-89	81,643	36,023	32,665	825,409
1989-90	87,847	39,747	36,427	827,396
1990-91	92,648	42,296	38,035	836,383
1991-92	96,983	42,598	38,157	848,368
1992-93	100,947	41,584	38,636	861,983
1993-94	105,902	43,690	38,725	879,663
1994-95	111,144	44,211	43,844	895,772
1995-96	114,461	45,044	44,978	916,927
1996-97	118,375	44,394	N/A	935,623

*First Language Not English includes (1) Children born outside the United States whose native tongue is not English, and (2) Children born within the United States of non-English speaking parents (Enrollment as of October 1)

**Limited English Proficient includes children whose first language is not English, who are incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English (Enrollment as of October 1)

***Transitional Bilingual Education includes children incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English



Certification

Massachusetts Education Reform Act, Chapter 71, Section 38G

"To be eligible for certification.... the candidate shall hold a bachelor's degree in arts or sciences from an accredited college or university with a major course in the arts or sciences appropriate to the instructional field and be of sound moral character."

Educators qualify for one of three licenses. A provisional certificate requires the candidate to possess a bachelors degree. An advanced-provisional certificate requires a bachelors degree and education courses. Both certificates are valid for five years of employment. The third license is the standard certificate, issued to the educator holding a masters degree and is valid for five years from the date of issue. Teachers holding certificates prior to the Education Reform Act were automatically awarded standard certificates which will need to be updated every five years.

New Certification Fees

On August 1, 1997, the fees for teacher certification increased. The cost for an initial certificate is \$100. Each additional certification is \$25. The fee increases were mandated by the Education Reform Act of 1993, but were deferred for four years to keep the former rates in effect.

New Teacher Certification Test

Massachusetts Education Reform Act, Chapter 71, Section 38G

"To be eligible for certification.... the candidate shall pass a test established by the board which shall consist of two parts: a writing section which shall demonstrate the communication and literacy skills necessary for effective instruction and improved communication between school and parents; the subject matter knowledge for the certificate."

Implementation

In November 1996, the Board of Education voted to require all candidates who apply for teacher certification after January 1, 1998 to pass both tests. This will include applicants for provisional, provisional with advanced standing, and standard certificates. Certificate holders at any stage who wish to add a certificate in a new field will be required to pass the appropriate test of subject matter knowledge. Candidates may take a test multiple times. No one will be required to pass any test more than once. Candidates from out of state will be required to pass the tests unless they have passed comparable tests in other states. Candidates will be charged a reasonable fee, to be set by the Commissioner, for taking a test.

Purpose

To set high standards and expectations for teachers; to improve the preparation of teachers; to enhance opportunities for PreK-12 students to meet the learning standards in the new statewide curriculum frameworks; and to meet the public demand for accountability.

Alignment with Education Reform

Tests will be aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and the teacher competencies in the subject matter required in the regulations. Tests will be reviewed for validity and bias, and qualifying scores will be set.

Test Formats and Availability

Both tests will contain multiple-choice and open-ended questions, and will test for essential concepts and relationships among discipline areas. The test on communication and literacy skills may be available via the computer, and other test formats will be developed in future years. A traditional paper-and-pencil version of the tests will be scheduled four to six times a year at locations throughout the state.

Test Results

Test scores will be reported to individuals, teacher preparation institutions, and the Department of Education. Colleges and universities will receive scores for their individual students/graduates, and will as well receive aggregate scores for each certificate program. Aggregate scores will be made public.

Charter Schools

Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Chapter 71, Section 89 includes a requirement for the creation of 25 charter schools. These new and independent public schools are intended to increase student achievement, offer parents more choices, and encourage school districts to improve. They are held accountable for the same results as all other public schools, and students in charter schools are required to meet the same high standards for all Massachusetts public school students.

Public charter schools are operated under a 5-year charter granted by the Board of Education. They are open to all students on a non-discriminatory and space-available basis, with admission by lottery when the number of applicants exceeds the number of available spaces. They must serve special needs students, except for those requiring private day or residential programs, and they must operate in accordance with most other provisions of law regulating other public schools.

Charter schools are created by parents, teachers, businesses and community leaders, and have the freedom to organize their activities around a core mission, curriculum, or teaching method. Their autonomy gives them the freedom to create their own budgets and to hire and fire teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, charter schools must demonstrate success within five years or lose their charters.

Charter Schools Cap is Raised. In July, 1997, the charter school cap was raised from twenty-five to fifty. Thirteen new charters will be awarded for the creation of Horace Mann public charter schools. The Horace Mann schools will need the approval of the local school committee and the local collective bargaining agent. Funding will be through the local school district, and the schools will be staffed by certified teachers paid at the same level as other local teachers. The other twelve charters will join the original twenty-five "Commonwealth" charter schools, which will have five-year charters and per-pupil tuition paid for by the student's home school district.

Projected charter school enrollment for the 1997-98 school year (*New in September 1997)

Boston	Academy of the Pacific Rim	100	Lawrence	Lawrence Family Development	298
Boston	Renaissance	1,086	Lowell	Lowell Middlesex Academy	100
Boston	City on a Hill	146	Lynn	Lynn Community	149
Boston	Neighborhood House	126	Marblehead	Marblehead Community	185
Cambridge*	Benjamin Banneker	260	Martha's Vine.*	Martha's Vineyard	105
Chelmsford*	Chelmsford Public	176	Orleans	Cape Cod Lighthouse	218
Devens	Francis W. Parker	254	Somerville*	Somerville International	550
Fall River	Atlantis	420	Springfield*	North Star Academy	108
Franklin	Benjamin Franklin	265	Springfield	Sabis International	750
Hadley*	Pioneer Valley	128	Williamsburg	Hilltown Cooperative	66
Hull	South Shore	378	Worcester	Seven Hills	664
Lawrence	Community Day	193	Total		6,600

Additional Information

The waiting lists to attend charter schools in Massachusetts currently include 5,470 students.

The Commonwealth will assume the first-year costs for students transferring to a charter school from a parochial school, private school or home-schooling program.

Districts in which charter schools are located will be required to accommodate the school day and calendar of these charter schools. If the charter school chooses not to use district transportation, the charter school can only be reimbursed for the actual transportation costs, not the average transportation cost of the district.

New Funding Provisions in FY98 State Budget

Cap Tuition Payments: The law now states that no public school district's total charter school payment may exceed 6% of the district's net school spending. Any district that already transfers 5% or more of its net school spending to a charter school(s), may not contribute more than an additional 3% in any given year.

The current charter school funding mechanism will, in large measure, remain the same, save the new provisions described below. According to MGL, Chapter 71, section 89, the districts in which charter school students reside (or the regional districts that they would have attended) are responsible for assuming the fiscal responsibility for educating that child. In other words, state and local funds appropriated to support a student in the district he or she currently attends will follow that student if he or she chooses to attend a charter school. The total projected charter school budget for the 1997/98 academic year is approximately \$43 million.

Currently, above foundation districts will be reimbursed through a three-year formula based on the year of operation of the charter school. In year one, above foundation districts will be reimbursed for 50% of their charter school losses; and for years two and three, 40%. In FY98, below-foundation districts will be reimbursed through their Chapter 70 allocations based on projected charter school enrollments.

A new three-year formula will take effect in FY99. All districts, whether above or below foundation, will be reimbursed for tuition increases by 100% (whether resulting from increased numbers of charter school students or inflation). In year two the reimbursement will be 60% and in year three it will be 40%.

Charter schools are required to notify districts in writing, annually, no later than April 1, regarding the number of students from the district who will be attending the charter school. Charter schools will not be paid for students that exceed this April 1 enrollment figure.



Curriculum Frameworks

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 calls for statewide curriculum frameworks and learning standards for all public school students. Prior to 1993, the only subjects required by state law to be taught were history and physical education.

The curriculum frameworks are broad academic guidelines for teachers to use along with their local curricula. The frameworks and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the required new statewide exam which is currently under development, will demonstrate student, school and district achievement in math, science/technology, English, history/social science, and foreign languages.

Below is a chronology of the development of the curriculum frameworks

March 1, 1995 - May 23, 1995: The Board of Education received initial public comment on the first drafts of the curriculum frameworks. On the following dates, the Commissioner presented the curriculum frameworks to the Board of Education:

March 1: common chapters and world languages

March 21: arts and social studies

April 24: English language arts and health

May 23: mathematics and science/technolog

During this period, over 10,000 educators and others commented on the drafts.

June 1995 - August 1995: Each curriculum framework draft was revised based on responses by the members of the Board of Education and by the public. The drafts underwent an intensive internal review process, as well.

September 18, 1995: Every Board of Education member reviewed one draft curriculum framework or more in preparation for an in-depth discussion at the October meeting.

October 1995: Discussion of revised curriculum frameworks.

December 12, 1995: The Board of Education voted, "to accept and endorse the revised curriculum frameworks in the arts, health, mathematics, science and technology, world languages, and the common chapters."

April 17, 1996: The Board of Education voted, "to authorize the Commissioner of Education to form framework extension writing committees in the areas of social science and English. Each committee shall have no more than 12 members, up to half of whom shall have served on the original framework development committee in their respective field."

October 21, 1996: The Board of Education rejected the revised history and social sciences framework developed by the revision committee, and voted, "that the Commissioner of Education develop concise, specific, measurable standards for history and social science using the Virginia framework and other nationally recognized frameworks and standards a guide."

December 11, 1996: The revised English language arts curriculum framework was presented to the Board by a panel of teachers who served on the English revision committee. Throughout this period, the Commissioner continued soliciting expert and other public comment on these drafts.

January 15, 1997: The Board of Education accepted the revised English language arts curriculum framework.

May 1997: The Department of Education delivered mathematics, science/technology and English language arts curriculum frameworks to every public school teacher in Massachusetts.

June 1997: The Board of Education voted to approve the revised history and social science curriculum framework.

Fall 1997: The remaining curriculum frameworks will be distributed to every public school teacher in Massachusetts.

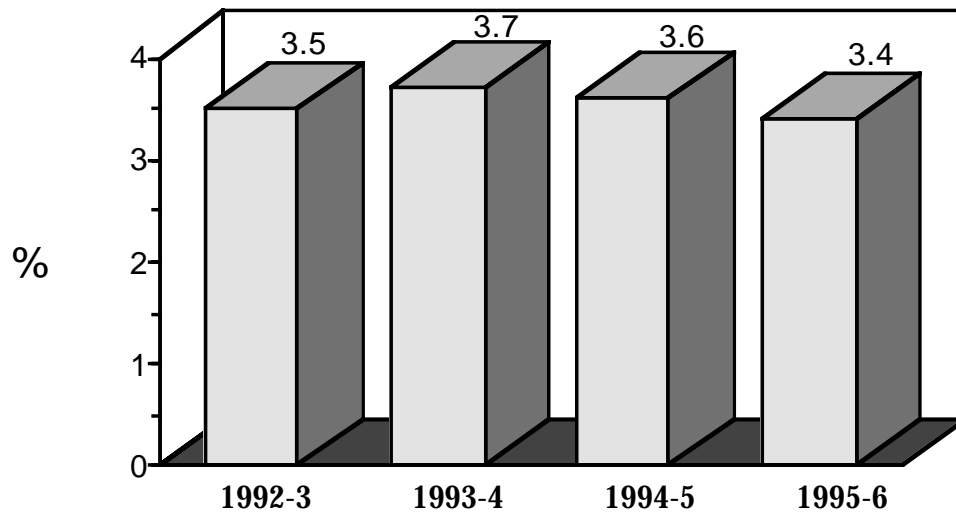
The Board of Education and Commissioner will periodically review each of the curriculum frameworks, and will make revisions to the documents, as needed.

Dropout Rates

Dropout rates are linked to Education Reform as one indicator of how well schools are successfully engaging their students. Completing school has become increasingly important if students are to lead meaningful and productive lives of work and citizenship.

The Department of Education collects dropout data at the end of the school year and compiles and analyzes it over the course of the following school year. Dropouts are defined as students who leave school prior to graduation for reasons other than transfer to another school. The annual dropout rate is the number of students who drop out over a one-year period, from July 1 to June 30, minus those dropouts who returned to school by the following October 1, divided by the October 1 enrollment of that school year. As such, this measure partially accounts for students who drop out and return to school.

Statewide Annual Dropout Rates for Public Schools: 1993-96



Number of Dropouts	7,975	8,512	8,396	8,177
Grade 9-12 Enrollment	229,142	232,046	234,608	240,347

In 1995-96, the annual dropout rate ranged from zero percent to 39.0 percent. At the low end, out of 311 schools, 10 schools had no students who dropped out, and 167 schools had dropout rates of 2.5 percent or less. At the high end, 12 schools had dropout rates in excess of 10 percent. These 12 schools comprised 3.1 percent of the state's grade nine through twelve enrollment but accounted for 13.4 percent of the state's dropouts.

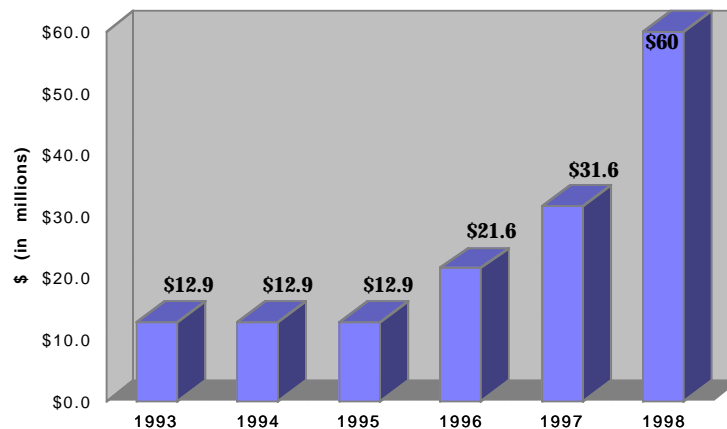
The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993

- Section 70 establishes an early childhood commission to develop a plan to provide children ages three to four the opportunity to participate in a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program.
- Section 84 directs the Department to establish a demonstration project to assess various models of parent outreach programs in working with families of children between the ages of one and three years. (Massachusetts Family Network)
- General Laws Chapter 15, Section 54 establishes an early childhood discretionary grant program to provide early care and education opportunities to children of working parents. The law also directs the Board to develop program and teacher certification standards.

Community Partnerships for Children

This is a grant program which helps community agencies build networks to combine resources to provide quality programs for children ages three and four years old and their families. The number of communities participating in the Partnerships program has grown from 109 in 1993 to 213 in 1997, with more expected in 1998. The number of children served has grown from 7,300 in 1993 to 9,000 in 1996, and there could be as many as 10,500 children in the program in 1997.

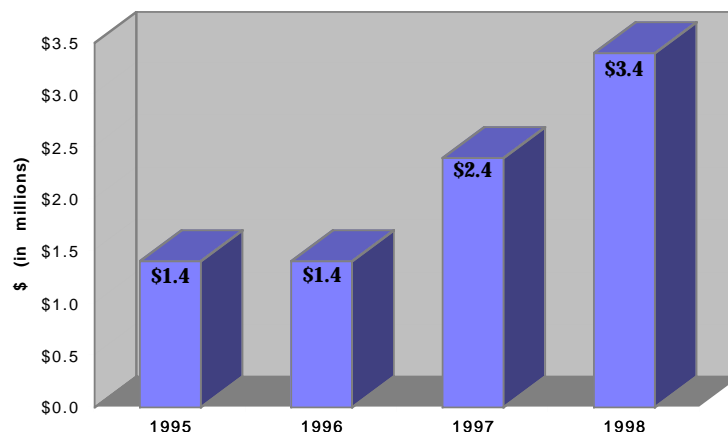
State Funding for Community Partnerships for Children (in Millions of Dollars)



Massachusetts Family Network

This is a grant program which helps community agencies build networks to combine resources to provide quality outreach and educational services for families with children ages birth through three years. Since 1995, the number of communities in the Network has grown from 57 to 80, and more communities are expected to participate in 1998. In 1996, the Massachusetts Family Network served 6,750 families with 7,445 children.

State Funding for Massachusetts Family Network (in Millions of Dollars)



Policy Reports on Early Childhood

Children First, the Report of the Special Commission on Early Childhood, was completed in December, 1995, and included the following recommendations: increase affordability and accessibility of early childhood programs for families; promote a consistent level of quality programs; support families with young children to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn; expand early childhood care and programs, and phase in the plan for expansion and integration.

The Massachusetts Family Network, a report on the programs and recommendations for the future, was submitted to the Legislature in January 1997, and included draft legislation.

An Evaluation of the Massachusetts Community Partnerships for Children was completed by Tufts University in December of 1996.



Educational Technology

The Governor, the Board of Education and the Department of Education have taken significant steps in recent years to establish Massachusetts as a leader in the use of educational technology to improve teaching and learning. The primary goals of the efforts are to use technology to: 1) enhance student learning and academic achievement and prepare students for the world of work and citizenship; 2) promote the skills, knowledge, and performance of teachers; 3) improve the efficiency of education management.

State Funding for Local Efforts Educational Technology Bond Bill

- The Governor signed the Educational Technology Bond Bill in the fall of 1996, authorizing \$30 million to be made available to local school districts through matching grants.
- The grants are available to school districts and charter schools that have approved local technology plans. School districts have been encouraged to use the grants to set in place networks and program administration. The matching funds may be used for professional development and training.
- Each grant will provide the district with \$30 per student from the state, and the district must provide an additional \$90 per student in matching funds.
- By August 1997, 203 districts and charter schools will have received \$19.5 million.

Federal Technology Literacy Challenge Grant

In 1996, Congress approved the first year of President Clinton's 5-year, \$2 billion Technology Literacy Challenge Grant. Massachusetts has received \$3,421,635 and will distribute \$3,250,000 of that amount to school districts through a competitive process.

Grants are being distributed for: Professional Development (\$1.2m), Lighthouse Technology Sites (\$1,150,000), Technology Leader Sabbaticals (\$150,000), and Projects With Statewide Impact (\$750,000).

Massachusetts school districts are currently spending an estimated \$60 million annually on educational technology, and will need to double their educational technology expenditures within two years and double again within the next five to meet the requirements of the Challenge Grant.

NetDays

Massachusetts held two "NetDays" during the this past school year. "NetDays" bring together people from business, government, education, and the community to help schools and districts wire their classrooms to each other and to the Internet. Additionally, NetDays build community support for the use of technology in the schools by serving as catalysts for restructuring--an important component of Education Reform. More than one-half of the state's school districts, a third of the schools, and 6,000 volunteers participated in the first two NetDay, and these events have proven so popular that a third NetDay is planned for October 25, 1997.

Training and Professional Development

The Department of Education has contracted with the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications (MCAT) and Merrimack Educational Center (MESC) to create a technology training and professional development delivery system. The system will have two components: 1) an on-line information and registration service with listings of professional development and training opportunities in technology education and; 2) a regional partner network to assist districts in determining their needs to achieve technology training goals.

Information Management

Massachusetts has embarked on an ambitious five-year plan to harness new information management technologies to transform the way schools, school districts, and the state do business. The goal is to replace the existing 250,000 pieces of paper currently exchanged between the Department and school districts with a state-of-the-art, World Wide Web-based information management system (DOE IMS). Eleven partner districts are participating in piloting components of the system. The new system is expected to be up-and-running within three years.



Foundation Budget

AUGUST
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Central to the Education Reform Act is the establishment of a funding formula to provide all schools with "adequate and equitable" education resources. These resources provide the foundation on which the rest of the reform components are built. If Education Reform continues to be funded according to the law, the state will gradually assume a greater share of the spending on education through the year 2000.

The Foundation Budget, Chapter 70 of the Massachusetts General Laws, is based on assumptions regarding educational service requirements for the number and types of students in attendance and a standard of local taxation for every community.

The Foundation Budget:

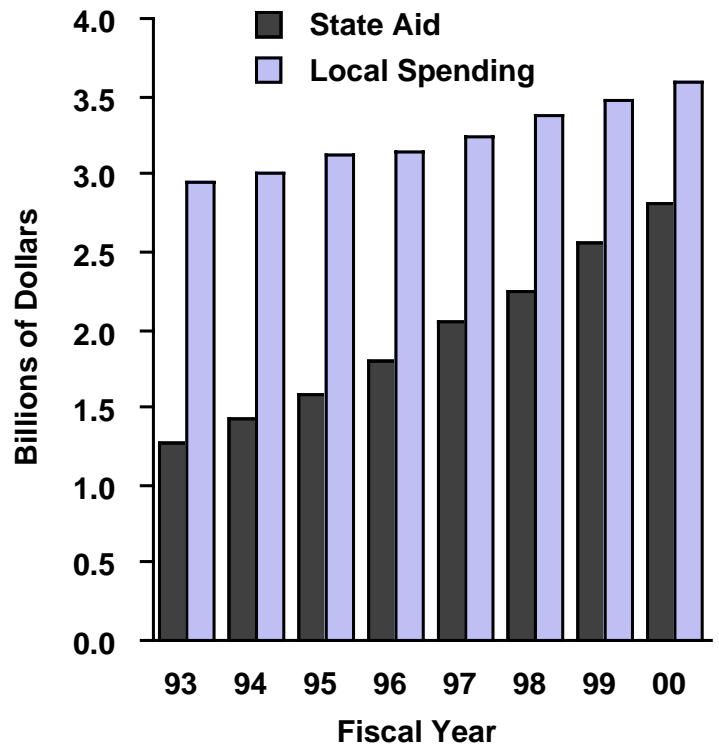
- is unique for each school system
- starts with enrollment by level (K, elementary, middle, high) and applies standards for class size, support staff, administrative staff, books and equipment, maintenance, athletics, and professional development
- adjusts for wage level differentials across the state and the number of low-income, bilingual, and vocational students in attendance

Minimum Standard of Effort (minimum amount of local taxes needed for education)

- is determined to assure fairness between communities
- is measured by property wealth and personal income and adjusts according to the community's growth/decline in revenues
- adjusts to require less of low income cities and more of wealthier communities

Foundation Gap (difference between Foundation Budget and standard of effort)

- will be filled over a phase-in period through year 2000 by a combination of increased local and state aid.
- adjusts to keep pace with inflation



FY	General Fund School Expenditures	Change from Prior Year	% Change	State Aid for Education	State Share	Local Share
93*	4,872,884,543	88,635,718	1.9	1,575,795,450	32.3	67.7
94	5,107,294,802	234,410,259	4.8	1,733,701,684	33.9	66.1
95	5,480,541,417	373,246,615	7.3	1,941,686,341	35.4	64.6
96	5,859,401,573	378,860,156	6.9	2,159,742,742	36.9	63.1
97	6,205,913,977	346,512,404	5.9	2,406,650,040	38.8	61.2

*FY93 includes equal education opportunity grants and per pupil aid, which were combined into Ch. 70 in FY94 Federal grants, state non-cherry sheet grants, and revolving/special funds not included FY97 represents budgeted spending



Gifted & Talented Education

General Laws Chapter 15, Section 1G:

Calls for the establishment of a statewide advisory council on gifted and talented education.

General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 39:

Allows a qualified student enrolled in a public secondary school to enroll as a student in Massachusetts public institutions of higher education. This Dual Enrollment program shall allow the student to earn both secondary school and college credits.

General Laws Chapter 69, Section 1B:

“The Board shall provide technical assistance, curriculum, materials, consultants, support services and other services to school and school districts, to encourage programs for gifted and talented students. The Board shall establish the standards for the recognition of high achievement by students and school districts.”

Chapter 69, section 1D:

“Subject to appropriation, the Board shall establish a grant program which shall award grants to school districts for the costs associated with establishing advanced placement courses. The Board shall promulgate regulations defining the standards of eligibility and other implementation guidelines.”

“Subject to appropriation, the Board shall establish an advance placement test fee grant program which shall award grants to school districts for the reimbursement of application fees for students based on financial need to assist students with paying the fee for advanced placement tests.”

Chapter 69, section 1I:

“Each district shall file a report with the Department every year by a date and in a format determined by the board. Said report shall include, but not be limited to, the following Programs for gifted and talented students”

The FY 1997 state budget appropriates \$437,970 . . .

“For the administration of a grant program for gifted and talented school age children; provided, that the funds appropriated in this line item shall be in addition to any federal funds available for said program; provided, further, that the department shall establish criteria for the purpose of identifying children enrolled in a public school in the Commonwealth in grades kindergarten through twelve who excel, or have the potential to excel, beyond their age peers to the extent that said students can benefit from said program; and provided further, that said programs may be made available by any city, town or regional school district.”

FACTS

- The Department is currently conducting a survey of school districts to determine what types of programs are in place to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. The survey will be compiled by the Department and disseminated to school officials, educators, and parents. Survey questions include: name of program; contact person; narrative describing the program; grades served; amount of time spent in programs; number of full-time and part-time staff; and funding sources.
- In March 1996, the Executive Office of Education, the Mass. Department of Education, and the Mass. Association for the Advancement of Individual Potential, sponsored a New England conference on gifted and talented education which drew over 500 people. The conference was co-sponsored by the five other New England Departments of Education and six advocacy groups.
- In the 1991-92 school year, the latest for which data was collected, 74 public school districts in Massachusetts offered a variety of special programs (immersion, after-school, or pullout) for gifted and talented students. Since that time, PALMS has promoted many district, regional and statewide enrichment programs in math, science and technology for all students and teachers, and districts have maintained gifted and talented programs with the aid of Education Reform money. A special Legislative appropriation is earmarked for the Mass. Academy of Math and Science at Worcester Polytechnical Institute.
- The Department of Education receives approximately 1600 inquiries annually on gifted and talented education programs.

CURRENT POLICY

- The Department’s policy is to support local districts’ efforts to provide appropriate programs to meet the educational needs of all students. Additional aid under Education Reform has been the major funding mechanism for districts to develop and maintain programs for gifted and talented students.



Goals 2000: Educate America Act

AUGUST
1997

On March 31, 1994, a national, bi-partisan commitment to education was made when the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law. Educators, business and parent organizations, as well as both Republican and Democratic elected leaders agreed to form a new and supportive partnership with states and communities in an effort to improve student achievement. Goals 2000 funding is available to any state that has a comprehensive plan for addressing higher learning standards for students, rigorous assessment, ongoing professional development for educators, accountability measures at each level of the system, and parent and community involvement. Since 1995, Massachusetts has received nearly \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Education to advance its own reform agenda, the landmark Education Reform Act of 1993.

FY95

First-year Goals 2000 funding helped support the development of a comprehensive statewide improvement plan. Based on the priorities of the Education Reform Act, the Department developed its first Five-Year Master Plan for Education Reform, approved by the Board of Education in March 1995. In addition, the Department of Education initiated three-year continuation grants across its three programmatic priorities:

- \$400,000/year to support 7 districts involved in *school restructuring and district improvement plans* (Boston, Brockton, Everett, Watertown, West Springfield, Worcester, Southern Berkshire);
- \$350,000/year to support 7 districts involved with the *preparation of educators* (Arlington, Attleboro, Cambridge, Fall River, Norton, Worcester, Amherst-Pelham); and
- \$450,000/year to support 9 districts for *professional development activities* (Fitchburg, Marlborough, Nantucket, New Bedford, Salem, Springfield, Tantasqua, Wellesley, Weymouth).

FY96

School Restructuring and District Improvement Planning: \$1 million supported nearly 80 schools and/or districts in developing comprehensive restructuring and improvement plans.

Preservice: Nearly \$2 million supported 37 partnerships between districts and teacher education programs, partnerships that aim to prepare and support beginning teachers as they incorporate the Curriculum Frameworks and Principles of Effective Teaching into their practices.

Professional Development: \$3.5 million, including \$3 million to support curriculum frameworks study groups in 260 districts, was targeted towards enhancing the quality of the education workforce.

FY97

School Restructuring and District Improvement Planning: \$750,000 supported nearly 40 schools and/or districts in developing comprehensive restructuring and improvement plans.

Preservice: \$350,000 million continued to support 7 partnerships between districts and teacher education programs, partnerships that aim to prepare and support beginning teachers as they incorporate the curriculum frameworks and Principles of Effective Teaching into their practices.

Professional Development: \$5 million, including \$4.5 million to support curriculum framework study groups in nearly 300 districts, was targeted towards enhancing the quality of the education workforce.

FY98

Beginning in FY98, the priority for grant recipients will be "Learning Standards In Action." Already, \$5 million has been set aside to support teachers as they integrate the learning standards of the curriculum frameworks into their instruction, curriculum, and classroom assessment. Grant recipients will build upon the work of the FY96 & FY97 study groups, and develop resources such as curriculum units, classroom videos or vignettes, and other support materials to ensure that the state's learning standards in the curriculum frameworks are established in every classroom across the state.

Ed-Flex

Goals 2000 aims to provide states and communities unprecedented flexibility provided they achieve results. The Goals 2000 Education Flexibility Demonstration Program allows up to 12 Chief State School Officers the authority to grant waivers from certain federal regulations. The Massachusetts Department of Education generally supports the premise that those closest to students make the most appropriate educational decisions for them. For these reasons, Massachusetts was designated the second Ed-Flex state in the country in September 1995. Since then, Commissioner Antonucci has received requests from ten districts and granted the ten districts waivers from federal regulations. The ten districts that received Ed-Flex waivers of certain Title 1 regulations are Attleboro, Everett, Fitchburg, Framingham, North Adams, Salem, Southbridge, Wareham, Watertown, and Worcester.



Principles of Effective Teaching & Effective Administrative Leadership

Chapter 69, Section 1B:

"The board shall set guidelines for establishing systems of personnel evaluation, including teacher performance standards. Public school districts in the Commonwealth shall be encouraged to develop programs and standards which provide for a more rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process. Said guidelines shall be reviewed at least every other school year."

Chapter 71, Section 38:

"The superintendent, by means of comprehensive evaluation, shall cause the performance of all teachers, principals, and administrators within the school district to be evaluated using any principles of evaluation established by the board of education . . . and by such consistent, supplemental performance standards as the school committee may require."

In July 1995, the Board of Education approved revisions to the regulations on evaluation of teachers and administrators, new principles of effective teaching and effective administrative leadership.

Principles of Effective Teaching

- Currency in the Curriculum
- Effective Planning and Assessment of Curriculum and Instruction
- Effective Management of Classroom Environment
- Effective Instruction
- Promotion of High Standards and Expectations for Student Achievement
- Promotion of Equity and Appreciation of Diversity
- Fulfillment of Professional Responsibilities

Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership

- Effective Instructional Leadership
- Effective Organizational Leadership
- Effective Administration and Management
- Promotion of Equity and Appreciation of Diversity
- Effective Relationships with the Community
- Fulfillment of Professional Responsibilities

Features

- First time the Board is articulating what it means to be an effective teacher or administrator, the Principles are in line with the values and goals for students articulated in the Common Core of Learning and the curriculum frameworks.
- School committees should establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators through local public hearings and collective bargaining, where required, all performance standards for teachers and administrators in each school district shall be consistent with and meet the Principles, and all administrators and teachers without "professional teacher status" need to be evaluated at least annually. All teachers with "professional teacher status" need to be evaluated at least once every two years.

District Reports on Implementation

- 206 districts have submitted all documents - evaluation procedures, teacher performance standards, administrator performance standards;
- 31 districts have submitted partial sets of documents;
- 53 districts have requested extensions; and
- 14 districts are in arbitration.



Professional Development/Recertification

AUGUST
1997

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38Q:

Every school district shall adopt, implement, and update annually a professional development plan for all its professional staff. The Commissioner shall prepare and the Board shall approve an annual statewide professional development plan.

Policies

In July 1995 the Board approved the following statement regarding districts' spending the \$25 per-pupil allocation for professional development (\$25 in FY 96, \$50 in FY 97, and \$75 in FY 98):

"It shall be a goal of every local school district professional development plan that the district's teachers, administrators and other professional staff will, through participation in the district's professional development offerings, enhance their ability to support all students in achieving the standards of the Common Core of Learning."

The policy states that school committees and superintendents shall ensure that these professional development plans and offerings be of high quality, and reflect research. Additionally, the plans shall focus on the Education Reform priority areas of training in the use of the curriculum frameworks, training in new approaches to educational leadership, and the expansion of technology in education.

RECERTIFICATION

General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38G:

The Education Reform Act, as amended in January 1994, replaces lifetime certificates with 5-year renewable certificates for all educators. Massachusetts joins 45 other states in requiring educators to renew their certificates periodically by demonstrating professional development that keeps them current in their field.

Timeline

Educators with a standard certificate on June 18, 1993 have until June 18, 1999 to renew at least one certificate. Each new or renewed certificate is valid for five years. In the first round, recertification applications received and approved by the Department any time prior to June 18, 1999 will be valid through June, 2004.

Recertification applies to all educators (teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, etc.) who are certified; is a relationship between the individual and the state; and is intended to improve student learning by continually improving the quality of teaching and educational administration.

Key Points

- Educators develop an Individual Professional Development Plan
- Educators are encouraged to align their professional development activity with district and state goals and priorities
- Educators engage in a broad range of quality professional development activities, including school-based and self-directed activity, to earn "Professional Development Points" for recertification.
- Educators are responsible for initiating, documenting and reporting their recertification activity
- Professional development for recertification must address content and professional skill areas in the educator's primary certificate and may address "other related educational areas"
- School districts must offer "no cost" options to their employees for recertification
- Recertification eliminates previous "lifetime certification."
- The professional development options for recertification are flexible and innovative; they include activities such as participation in school-based study groups, professional mentoring, publication of books, articles and software, as well as seminars and college/university courses.

Audits

The Department will randomly audit applications for recertification to ensure integrity. Full documentation will be requested, including a copy of the educator's Individual Professional Development Plan.



Racial Imbalance/Desegregation

AUGUST
1997

State Law

- Defines a school as racially imbalanced when it has more than 50% minority students;
- Requires the school committee to plan and implement measures to encourage and allow voluntary student transfers that will reduce or eliminate imbalance;
- States that the prevention or elimination of racial imbalance shall be an objective in all decisions involving the drawing or altering of school attendance lines, establishing of grade levels, and selection of new school sites;
- Provides various incentives to encourage and assist school committees in reducing racial imbalance, including transportation reimbursements, increased school construction aid, and funding for magnet schools and other programs to improve educational quality in desegregated schools; and
- Authorizes the Board and Commissioner to determine whether schools are making reasonable progress to reduce or eliminate racial imbalance. (*General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 37C, 37D, 37I, 37J; Chapter 15, Section 1I.*)

Federal Law

In general, under federal law the issue is not "racial imbalance" or the 50% rule, but rather whether the minority enrollment in individual schools deviates significantly from the minority enrollment in the school system as a whole and results in illegal segregation. State and local officials must avoid taking official action that would result in illegal segregation or isolation of students based on race or national origin. (*14th Amendment; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; Equal Educational Opportunity Act.*)

20 districts with voluntary desegregation plans approved by the State Board of Education:

Boston	Malden
Brockton	Medford
Cambridge	Methuen
Chelsea	New Bedford
Fall River	Northampton
Framingham	Revere
Holyoke	Salem
Lawrence	Somerville
Lowell	Springfield
Lynn	Worcester



Regulatory Relief

The Board of Education began its comprehensive regulatory reform initiative in March 1995 in an effort to ensure that every Massachusetts education regulation is necessary, clear, current, and advances Education Reform for the benefit of students while minimizing administrative burdens on schools. The decision of the U.S. Department of Education in September 1995 to grant "Ed-Flex" status to Massachusetts, enabling the Department to waive certain federal education requirements, complemented the Board's initiative. Governor Weld's Executive Order 384, issued early in 1996, required all Executive Branch agencies to review all regulations with the goal of simplification, and accelerated the Board's schedule.

Since March 1995 the Board has repealed fourteen sets of regulations that had become obsolete, and has streamlined and consolidated many others. Some of the Board's actions received considerable public attention, such as the repeal of the regulations on physical education (so that now school districts are responsible to determine instructional hours for physical education, as they do for other subjects), and the amendments to the regulations on transitional bilingual education, which give school districts more flexibility while retaining important protections for students. In addition, the Board has adopted new regulations as required by state statutes, including the regulations on under-performing school and school districts, adopted by the Board in June 1997.

With the repeals and consolidations accomplished since 1995, with the addition of two new sets of regulations required by law, and with the 1996 transfer of charter school regulations to the Board of Education, the Board now has 22 sets of regulations (down from 44), on important educational issues such as school finance, special education, certification and recertification, evaluation of school personnel, vocational education, student learning time, and under-performing schools and school districts. The Board anticipates that it will continue its regulatory reform initiative in FY 1998 by reviewing the regulations on charter schools, special education and vocational education.

Current Board of Education Regulations

- 603 CMR 3.00: Private Occupational Schools
- 603 CMR 4.00: Vocational Education
- 603 CMR 7.00: Certification of Educational Personnel
- 603 CMR 8.00: Kindergartens: Minimum School Age
- 603 CMR 10.00: School Finance: Student and Financial Accounting, Reporting and Documentation
- 603 CMR 13.00: Certification of Supervisors of Attendance
- 603 CMR 14.00: Transitional Bilingual Education
- 603 CMR 17.00: Racial Imbalance and Magnet School Programs
- 603 CMR 18.00: Approval of Private Special Education Schools that Serve Publicly-Funded Students
- 603 CMR 22.00:* Payment of Special Education Costs for Metco Students
- 603 CMR 23.00: Student Records
- 603 CMR 26.00: Access to Equal Educational Opportunity
- 603 CMR 27.00: Student Learning Time
- 603 CMR 28.00: Chapter 766 - Comprehensive Special Education
- 603 CMR 30.00: Massachusetts Testing Program
- 603 CMR 33.00: Anti-Hazing Reporting
- 603 CMR 35.00: Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators
- 603 CMR 38.00: School Construction
- 603 CMR 41.00: Regional School Districts
- 603 CMR 43.00:* School Choice Transportation Reimbursement
- 603 CMR 44.00: Recertification of Educational Personnel

NOTES:

1. CMR = Code of Massachusetts Regulations
2. The Board currently has 21 sets of regulations. Missing numbers in the list above reflect regulations the Board has repealed.

* will be repealed when the new 603 CMR 10.00, School Finance and Accounting regulations, go into effect.



School Choice

School choice allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the town or city in which they reside.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 12B, the initial school choice law, was enacted in 1991, and required a community to decide whether its would be included as a receiving district in the school choice program. Additionally, sending districts were required to pay the full tuition charged by the receiving districts. This created a situation in which poorer sending districts were losing money to more affluent neighboring districts.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 expanded inter-district school choice in two important ways. The Education Reform Act places a cap on the amount of tuition that a receiving district can charge; it provides reimbursement to sending school districts that spend below their foundation budgets. It also requires districts to annually vote NOT to participate as a receiving district. Otherwise, they will automatically become receiving school districts for that school year.

Transportation

In 1994, the Board approved regulations governing a reimbursement program which allows for the reimbursement of transportation costs to low income parents whose children are participating in school choice.

Important School Choice Statistics

	Year	No. of Districts Receiving Students	No. of Students	FTE*	Tuition (Paid by Sending District to Receiving District)
Before the Education Reform Act	91-92	32	1122	920	\$4,852,296
	92-93	63	3715	3208	\$12,087,120
After the Education Reform Act	93-94	73	5111	4402	\$17,209,559
	94-95	85	6219	5431	\$22,424,440
	95-96	87	6793	6039	\$26,089,544
	96-97	95	7101	6500	\$28,553,808
	97-98	106	N/A	N/A	N/A

*FTE = Full time equivalent, which is the average enrollment during the entire school year.

1998 School Choice Receiving Districts

ACTON	HANCOCK	MILFORD	WAREHAM	*HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL
AGAWAM	HARVARD	MILLIS	WEST BOYLSTON	MENDON-UPTON
AMESBURY	HARWICH	NEWBURYPORT	WESTFIELD	MOUNT GREYLOCK
ASHLAND	HAVERHILL	*NORTHAMPTON	WESTFORD	*MOHAWK TRAIL REG
AVON	HOLLISTON	NORTHBRIDGE	WILLIAMSBURG	NASHOBA
AYER	HOPEDALE	NORTH BROOKFIELD	WILLIAMSTOWN	NORTH MIDDLESEX
*BARNSTABLE	HOPKINTON	PETERSHAM	WINCHENDON	PENTUCKET
BERLIN	HUDSON	PITTSFIELD	ACTON-BOXBOROUGH	QUABBIN
BEVERLY	IPSWICH	PROVINCETOWN	ADAMS-CHESHIRE	SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE
*BROOKFIELD	LANESBOROUGH	ROCKPORT	ASHBURNHAM-WESTM	SOUTHWICK-TOLLAND
CHATHAM	LEE	ROWE	BERKSHIRE HILLS	TRITON
CLINTON	LENOX	*SAVOY	BERLIN-BOYLSTON	UP-ISLAND
DOUGLAS	LEOMINSTER	SHIRLEY	*CHESTERFIELD-GOSH	*QUABOAG
DRACUT	LITTLETON	SPRINGFIELD	CENTRAL BERKSHIRE	GREATER LAWRENCE
*E LONGMEADOW	LONGMEADOW	*SUNDERLAND	DENNIS-YARMOUTH	GREATER LOWELL
ESSEX	*LUDLOW	SUTTON	NAUSET	MINUTE MAN
FITCHBURG	LUNENBURG	TAUNTON	FARMINGTON RIVER	MONTACHUSETT
GARDNER	MANCHESTER	TYNGSBOROUGH	GATEWAY	NASHOBA VALLEY
GEORGETOWN	MAYNARD	UXBRIDGE	GROTON-DUNSTABLE	NORTHEAST METRO
GLOUCESTER	MEDWAY	WALES	HAMILTON-WENHAM	NORTH SHORE
GRANBY	MIDDLEBOROUGH	WARE	*HAMPDEN-WILBRAHAM	PATHFINDER
				WHITTIER

*New system for 1997-98 school year



School-to-Work Education

AUGUST
1997

The purpose of the School-to-Work initiative is to develop and implement a system which will provide all students in the Commonwealth with programs to connect school-based and work-based learning.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act, Section 98 specifies that the planning and developing of school to work transition programs is a local responsibility. "Each regional employment board (REB) . . . shall work with comprehensive high schools and regional vocational technical schools in its region to develop a plan to provide transition for students into the work force. Such plan shall be incorporated into an annual report from the school district to the regional employment board. Each regional employment board shall submit a work force development strategic plan annually to the MassJobs Council. This plan shall include a comprehensive school-to-work transition policy for its region."

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 1F is the state statute governing the Commonwealth's role in relationship to P.L. 103-239, the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, which was created to develop a national framework for school-to-work opportunities systems in the country. It reads, "The board shall set standards for vocational-technical education and programs for school-to-work transition."

Funding

Massachusetts was one of only 8 states to receive a 5-year implementation grant from the federal government. Massachusetts was awarded \$33.5 million from FY95-FY99 for implementation of school-to-work activities. Forty-two partnerships have been identified, and all school districts belong to a partnership. The awards have been as follows:

Round #1: (FY96-98) 11 partnerships were awarded implementation grants.

Round #1: (FY96) 21 partnerships were awarded \$50,000 planning grants.

Round #2: (FY97-99) 11 additional partnerships are awarded implementation grants.

All implementation grants are for 3 years. The first year grants ranged from \$475,000 to \$1.2 million. The second year grants ranged from \$150,000 to \$850,000.

Massachusetts Department Of Education Involvement

As of July 1, 1996 the Department of Education became the fiscal agent for the School-to-Work state grant. Using the goals and objectives of the Education Reform Act, the Massachusetts Department of Education, encourages the establishment of a comprehensive career development system within local school districts. Furthermore, the Department provides technical assistance to school districts in integrating school-to-work initiatives with education reform including: the Common Core, student learning time, curriculum frameworks, elimination of the general track, competency determination, and advanced Certificates of Occupational Proficiency and Mastery.

School-to-Work Executive Committee:

A statewide school-to-work committee was established by executive order. This committee oversees school-to-work policy and implementation at the state level.

Additional Information

Currently, 25% of all secondary school students are enrolled in career development programs, such as vocational/technical, tech prep, or local school district initiatives.

School-to-Work funding helps existing programs, promotes extra services to include more students in traditional academic high schools, and provides programs for youth who have left school prematurely.

By the year 2000, no less than 50% of all secondary students will have participated in a career development program.

Nearly 7,000 students participate in paid or unpaid workplace internships that are related to educational goals within classrooms. It is projected that in 1998, 8,900 students will participate.

More than 2,500 employers are providing work-based learning opportunities for students, 50 high schools offer paid or unpaid school-year jobs and paid summer jobs in activities related to educational goals and career pathways, and more than one-third of all secondary schools in the Commonwealth are beginning to offer "career pathways" to students.



Special Education

The Board of Education's Chapter 766 regulations govern special education in Massachusetts. Additionally, special education is reflected throughout the Education Reform Act of 1993 in requirements to improve teaching and learning for all students.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in June 1997. Changes include:

- Strong language has been added about the rights of students with disabilities to participate and make progress in the general curriculum. Massachusetts has a good start on these activities with the development of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and the new statewide assessment for all students;
- Clarifying language limits the awards of attorney's fees for parents in accordance with a supreme court decision that stated that attorney's fees would be awarded for those elements of the case where parents prevailed and fees would not be awarded to those where the parents did not prevail;
- Parents are now required to notify school districts in writing and in advance of parents' decision to unilaterally place the child in a private school. If prior notification is not provided, then school districts may be protected from liability for the costs of the private school program if the school district had offered an appropriate program.
- The federal law now codifies the rights of students with disabilities to be included in statewide or district assessments;
- Discipline policies and procedures have changed. The law now includes language making absolutely clear that schools may not cease educational services to students with disabilities involved in discipline proceedings even when their disability did not affect their ability to understand or follow a discipline code.

Additional Information

The Legislature convened a special education study commission in January of 1997 to review issues such as spending and enrollment, and a report was released this summer. The Legislature is expected to review special education in the 1997-98 legislative year. The Department anticipates a full review and revision process of the state special education regulations to be completed during the 1997-98 school year.

To promote higher standards and opportunities for special needs students to be served full-time in regular education classrooms, the Department has supported nine districts as "inclusion mentors." Inclusion mentors are: Abington, Barnstable, Danvers, Holliston, Northboro-Southboro, Scituate, Union #28, Wayland, and West Springfield.

School Year	Public School Enrollment ¹	Special Ed. Enrollment ²	% in Special Ed.	Special Needs Students Fully Included in Regular Classes (prototype 502.1)
1990-91	844,848	143,685	17%	14,688 (10.2%)
1991-92	853,942	147,732	17.3%	15,720 (10.6%)
1992-93	861,983	147,727	17.1%	17,280 (11.6%)
1993-94	879,663	149,431	16.9%	19,007 (12.7%)
1994-95	895,772	151,843	16.9%	20,878 (13.7%)
1995-96	916,927	153,912	16.8%	23,186 (15.1%)
1996-97	935,623	155,128	16.6%	24,699 (15.9%)

1 = ages 5-18
2 = ages 3-22



State Testing Program

State Assessment: Accountability and Evaluation

The Education Reform Act of 1993 requires a new statewide testing system be developed to measure individual student, school and district academic achievement of the standards in the new statewide curriculum frameworks. This new test, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), will replace the Massachusetts Education Assessment Program (MEAP), which was administered to public school students in grades 4, 8 and 12 every other year from 1988 to 1992. In 1994 and 1996, 10th-graders joined 4th- and 8th-graders in taking the final two MEAP test administrations.

Differences Between the MEAP and the new MCAS

	MEAP	MCAS
<i>Standards</i>	no statewide academic standards	statewide curriculum frameworks
<i>Results</i>	school and district results only	student, school and district results
<i>Consequences</i>	low stakes, no statewide use of results	high stakes, statewide comparison of school and district performance, high school graduation will depend on passing the 10th-grade test

Chronology in the Development of the MCAS

- October 1994 Issued Request for Proposals
- September 1995 Selected Test Contractor (Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation, Inc.)
- January 1996 Began test development
- February 1997 Set policies for Spring 1997 testing, including participation guidelines for special needs and limited English proficient (LEP) students, and issued related publication, *Student Testing Programs: Spring 1997 and Beyond*
- March 1997 Completed production of over 1000 test questions in mathematics and science/technology, and distributed pre-test administration survey to all Massachusetts schools
- April 1997 Administered tryout of test items in mathematics and science/technology, grades 4, 8, and 10 in all Massachusetts public schools

Other Assessment Activities

- November 1996 The Board of Education voted to administer an annual test of reading achievement to all third-graders beginning in the spring of 1997, and a one time achievement test of tenth-graders in the spring of 1997
- December 1996 Commissioner issued Request for Proposals for nationally norm-referenced test, grades 3 & 10
- February 1997 Commissioner selected contractor (Riverside Publishing)
- April 1997 Administered Iowa Test of Basic Skills (TBS) in reading to grade 3 students, and the Iowa Test of Educational Development to grade 10 students
- August 1997 Commissioner releases statewide and district Iowa test results. The results of the third grade Iowa test showed that statewide, of all third-graders in Massachusetts, 69% met or exceeded the standard for "Proficient Reader." The results of the tenth grade Iowa Test of Educational Development showed that between 79% and 86% of school districts scored above the median of the national norm group.

Test Schedule for 1997-98

- November 1997 Tryout English Language Arts questions in grades 5, 9 and 11
- April 1998 Administer Iowa Test of Basic Skills in reading for grade 3 in all schools
- May 1998 Administer first full MCAS in mathematics, science/technology, and English language arts, grades 4, 8 and 10; tryout history/social science questions and report grade 3 Iowa TBS reading scores
- November 1998 Report first round of MCAS results: individual, school and district scores

Time & Learning

Section 80 of the Education Reform Act of 1993 directs the Board of Education to prepare a plan to extend the time during which students attend school, exclusive of extracurricular activities, to reflect prevailing norms in advanced industrial countries.

G.L. c. 69, section 1G requires the Board to establish the minimum length for a school day and the minimum number of days in a school year for Massachusetts public schools. The Student Learning Time regulations were adopted by the Board on December 20, 1994, and reaffirmed by the Board in December 1996, and include these requirements:

- Every school committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days at each public school, and shall operate the schools at least 180 school days;
- Elementary Schools will provide at least 900 hours annually of structured learning time in core academic subjects, and secondary schools will provide at least 990 annual hours;
- A school committee may establish a separate school year and school day schedule for kindergarten programs, so long as it provides a minimum of 425 annual hours of student learning time;
- No later than the 1997-98 school year, schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per year of structured learning time, and every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time;
- **No later than the 1997-98 school year**, the time a student spends at school breakfast, lunch and recess, passing between classes, in homeroom and non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs **shall not count** toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirements for that student.

Board of Education Policy

- Every student will have learning opportunities designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to meet Massachusetts graduation requirements.
- Time in school is to be treated as a valuable resource for student learning, and there will be equity of structured learning time within and among schools.
- The Board encourages school districts to schedule high school graduation as close as possible to the scheduled closing date of the high school to maximize the learning time offered to graduating seniors and to minimize the disruption of instruction provided to other students.

Examples of School Districts' Changes in Structured Learning Times

- Gateway Regional High School in Huntington will soon move to block scheduling, and will provide a new schedule that extends structured learning time to 1,008 hours;
- Southwick-Tolland Regional High School will continue its restructuring process with a plan to offer semester-long classes with block schedules;
- Harwich Middle School science program now accommodates its dissection classes by scheduling full-day labs, and Harwich's kindergartners now attend school full-time;
- Hatfield's Smith Academy Middle/Senior High School is implementing long-block schedules, and the high school has instituted a one-year required course in technology for all students in the new state-of-the-art lab;
- Leicester Primary School staff have shortened the students' lunch and recess schedules to 20 minutes each, after concluding that the 30-minute periods were unnecessarily long. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of behavior problems and accidents on the playground, as well as the addition of twenty minutes to the daily instructional time;
- Oxford Public Schools plans to increase the structured learning time to 1,010 hours in grades 1-3 at the A. M. Chaffee Elementary School;
- Rockport Middle School plans to increase the minimum number of student attendance days from 180 to 185;
- Waltham Public Schools revised student learning time schedules two years ahead of the deadline, and students at all levels -- kindergarten through high school -- now receive more structured learning hours annually than the required minimum. Kindergartners receive 435 hours, elementary students have 915 hours, and middle- and high-schoolers have 1005 hours of structured learning time (up from 426 at K, 849 at elementary, 810 at middle, 890 at vocational and 782 at high school, before the new regulations were adopted).



Underperforming Schools & Districts

AUGUST
1997

In keeping with the goal of helping all students to achieve high standards, the Education Reform Act directs the Board and the Commissioner to take additional steps on behalf of students in those schools or districts that have consistently failed to improve their educational programs and the academic performance of their students.

General Laws Chapter 69, Section IJ on underperforming schools

Directs the Board to establish the process and standards for declaring a school or school district to be "underperforming" or "chronically underperforming," directs the Commissioner to appoint an independent fact-finding team to assess the reasons for underperformance and the prospects for improvement, declares that districts in which an underperforming school is located must present to the Board a remedial plan with specific goals for improvement and a timetable for attaining such goals, not to exceed 24 months.

It directs the Commissioner to provide technical assistance to such schools during their implementation period, states that the Board may declare a school to be chronically under-performing if the school fails to demonstrate significant improvement within 24 months after approval of its remedial plan, states that the Board may remove the principal of a chronically underperforming school, and the superintendent may designate a new principal who has "extraordinary powers," and states that a district shall provide additional funding to the school if the school does not receive funding at least equal to the average per-pupil funding for students of the same classification and grade level in the district.

General Laws Chapter 69, Section IK on underperforming districts

Directs the Commissioner to appoint an independent fact-finding team to assess the reasons for any district determined to be "underperforming," and any prospects for improvement, directs the Board to designate a receiver for any chronically under-performing district. The receiver shall have all the powers of the superintendent and school committee, and will report directly to the Commissioner, and directs the Commissioner to recommend a district as chronically under-performing if the municipality fails to fulfill its fiscal responsibilities to education under Chapter 70. A vote by the Board that a district is chronically underperforming authorizes the Commissioner to petition the Commissioner of Revenue to require an increase in funds for the district.

At any time after a school or district is determined to be chronically under-performing, the school committee may petition the Commissioner to determine whether the school or school district is no longer chronically under-performing. Any adverse determination may be appealed to the Board.

Regulations on Under-Performing Schools and School Districts Adopted

In March 1997, the Board discussed and authorized a period of public comment on proposed Regulations on Under-Performing Schools and Districts, which set out the indicators and procedures for a declaration of "underperformance" and "chronic underperformance," as authorized by the Education Reform Act. Based on the public comments received, a revised proposal was put before the Board.

In June 1997, The Board unanimously adopted the revised regulation, which will include the following indicators of underperformance in a school: (a) student performance results on assessments required by the state or district; (b) student dropout rates (three-year average); (c) student attendance rates (three-year average); (d) NEASC (New England Association Of Schools and Colleges) accreditation status, for high schools only; (e) facility, program or operational deficiencies identified by the Department of Education.

Three additional indicators for school districts will include: (a) failure to remedy non compliance with state and federal laws; (b) non-compliance with school appropriation and spending requirements; and (c) misreporting, misspending, or mismanagement of school district funds. These regulations were effective as of July 25, 1997.



Vocational-Technical Education

AUGUST
1997

Massachusetts is recognized throughout the country as a leader in providing quality vocational-technical education to interested high school students. The success of the vocational-technical education system can be measured by the large number of students served, the low number of dropouts, and the high rate of placement of its graduates.

The Education Reform Act calls for increased integration of academic and vocational-technical education, and emphasizes the importance of career preparation for students. Every student is expected to graduate with adequate preparation to enter postsecondary education or the world of work.

Vocational-technical education in Massachusetts is governed by Chapter 74 and its regulations. The regulations are currently under review and will be updated by early 1997 to incorporate Education Reform and related initiatives in the Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

The Perkins Act was scheduled for reauthorization in FY 1996 as part of a Workforce Development block grant which has not been passed by Congress. A number of priorities, however, which were common to the Perkins Act, including Tech Prep, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, the block-grant legislation, and Massachusetts' Education Reform Law are expected to be contained in any replacement law. These priorities include integration of academic and vocational education, instruction in all aspects of a chosen industry, performance standards and measures to determine the quality of programs, and services which assure that all students have access to and support to achieve in quality vocational-technical education.

Voc-Tech Sections in Education Reform Act

Section 29, section 1D iii: "The certificate of occupational proficiency shall be awarded to students who successfully complete a comprehensive education and training program in a particular trade or professional skill area and shall reflect a determination that the recipient has demonstrated mastery of a core of skills, competencies and knowledge comparable to that possessed by students of equivalent age entering the particular trade or profession from the most educationally advanced education systems in the world. No student shall receive said certificate of occupational proficiency without also having acquired a competency determination."

Status: Standards for the certificate will be developed after the Competency Determination standards are set by the Board.

Section 29, section 1F: "The board shall set standards for vocational-technical education and programs for school-to-work transition. The board shall give particular emphasis for setting standards for the integration of academic and vocational education and to the progress in educating students for all aspects of a chosen industry."

Status: Standards will be developed in conjunction with the certificate of occupational proficiency and with indicators for successful schools. The ten approval factors contained in Chapter 74 (the state law governing vocational-technical education) and the system of performance standards and measures developed under the federal Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act will continue to be used. Eighty districts have submitted their Plans for integration of academic and vocational education have been received from 80 school districts.

Section 56 adds the following definition: "Vocational-technical education shall mean organized education programs offering sequences of courses designed to educate and prepare students for both employment and continuing academic and occupational preparation. Such programs shall integrate academic and vocational education and shall include competency based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher order reasoning, and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. Vocational technical education also includes applied technology education to be taught by personnel certified in technology education."

Section 57: "The commissioner, under the direction of the state board, shall approve or disapprove vocational-technical programs in accordance with regulations published by the board; provided, however, that said regulations shall more heavily favor an outcome-oriented approach for approval of such programs over a quantitative approach which solely measures time spent on lab instruction; provided, further, that said regulations shall consider a program's intention to integrate vocational and academic instruction and to train students in all aspects of a chosen industry."

Section 98: "Each regional employment board shall work with comprehensive high schools and regional vocational technical schools in its region to develop a plan to transition students into the workforce. Such plan shall be incorporated into an annual report from the school district to the regional employment board. Each regional employment board shall submit a workforce development strategic plan annually to the MassJobs Council. This plan shall include a comprehensive school-to-work transition plan for its region."

secondary & adult vocational-technical students	(FY 95)	80,005
positive placement rate*		74%
postsecondary vocational-technical students	(FY 95)	31,911
positive placement rate*		81%

* The positive placement rate is the percent of students having pursued higher education, gone into the military or become employed in a related field within one year of graduation