



Education Fact Sheets

AUGUST 1997

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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

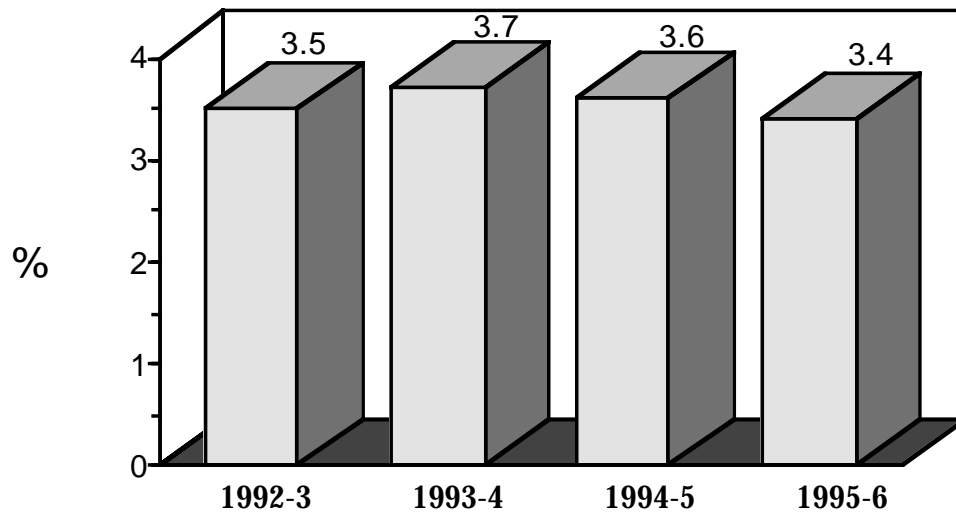
Test scores will be reported to individuals, teacher preparation institutions, and the Department of Education. Colleges and universities will receive scores for their individual students/graduates, and will as well receive aggregate scores for each certificate program. Aggregate scores will be made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

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.

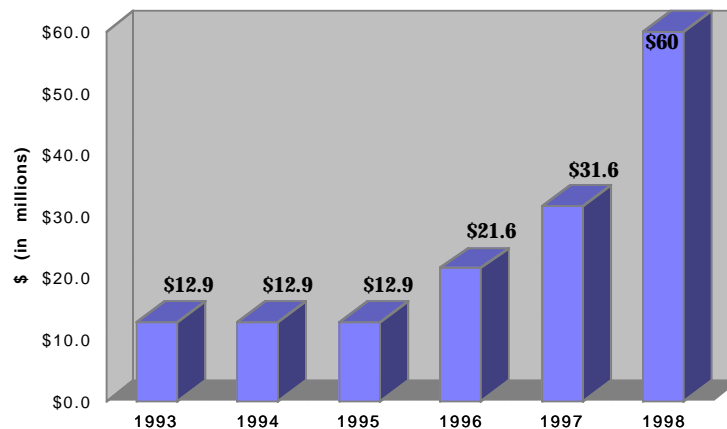
The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993

- 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.

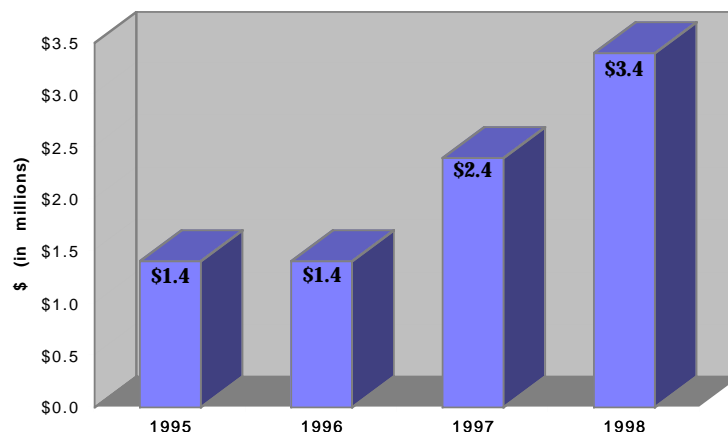
State Funding for Community Partnerships for Children (in Millions of Dollars)



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.



Professional Development/Recertification

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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

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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



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, <i>Student Testing Programs: Spring 1997 and Beyond</i>
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

