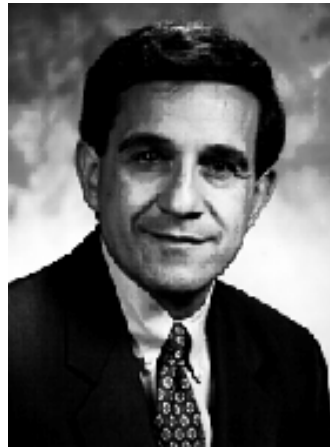


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Commissioner's Update

February 1, 1996

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

These are indeed interesting times. There are issues about which you have heard and read, including funding for education at the state and federal levels and proposed governance changes. I want you to know that these issues will be resolved one way or another, I hope sooner rather than later. In some sense, they are distractions from what we are all trying to do, which is to improve results for students and enhance standards and accountability for all educators and schools in the Commonwealth. We all will keep working as hard as we can, and we will move ahead aggressively, because what we are doing is important.

In this first mailing of February, I have enclosed the following items for you:

1. [Curriculum frameworks](#)

The Board of Education has accepted and endorsed five of the seven content-area frameworks, but not English Language Arts or Social Studies. These two will be revised in the next two months. In the meantime, I want you to have a set of the five endorsed content-area frameworks and the common chapters. Please copy these documents and circulate them widely, as you begin to develop your local curriculum. I have enclosed cover sheets for the frameworks so that copies made will be clear.

2. Teacher of the Year 1996-1997 -- call for nominations

It is time for nominations for this highly successful annual program which recognizes our teachers for the extraordinary work they do. Again, please help by disseminating the memo and flyer widely so we can have a record pool of nominees this year.

[No longer available]

3. Education Surrogate Parent program -- call for volunteers

[No longer available]

In addition to these documents, please consult the Department's world wide web site frequently (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>). We are posting other documents there which you may find useful. In particular, there are new items on a [recognition program for](#)

[exemplary vocational-technical activities](#), important [school to employment issues](#) and documents of particular interest on special needs matters.

In the very near future, I will be sending each district the preliminary figures for Chapter 70 aid for FY 97. Please be on the lookout for these preliminary figures as you plan your budgets for next year. Also, please be aware that federal budget cuts may begin to affect Massachusetts, especially in the area of Title I funding, starting in the next school year. I will have more specific information for you as it becomes available.

Last week, we convened the advisory committees to start work on the state assessment. We had 180 teachers, parents, administrators and others come together to begin to shape the framework for the new assessment. This initiative will be hugely important, and I will be communicating much more information to you in the near future through the Department newsletter, "Education Today," and through other means as well.

Thank you for your continuing work on behalf of Education Reform. I am looking forward to moving ahead on all of these issues together with you, on behalf of the students we serve.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Since the enactment of the [Education Reform Act of 1993](#), a great deal of work has gone into developing the Curriculum Frameworks.

What has made the process so effective is the grassroots involvement of thousands of people statewide. The task could not have been accomplished without the commitment, energy, and dedication of teachers, administrators, associations, parents, business, students, higher education faculty, Department of Education staff, the [Board of Education](#), and the public.

As a result of this process, the Curriculum Frameworks are of high quality, results driven, and focus on world class standards. What is important to remember is that each of the curriculum frameworks will always be considered as works in progress, and we will continue to refine them to strengthen them and to keep them current. Local communities will use the frameworks to develop more specific curriculum. The Department of Education will base the new student assessment program on the frameworks.

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