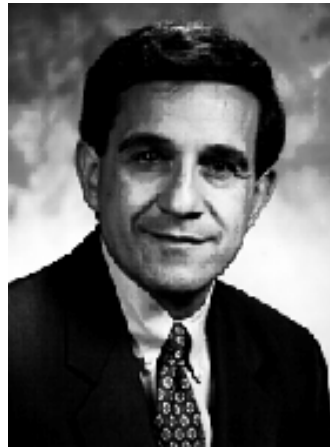


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Commissioner's Update

April 3, 1996

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

It is state budget season, and this week the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) released its budget proposal for the coming fiscal year 1997. This is of course just the first in the series of half a dozen legislative and executive branch steps before the state budget will be agreed upon before the end of June, but I am encouraged by what the House Ways and Means Committee leadership has put on the table for public education.

For example, foundation aid is fully funded in both the committee proposal and in the Governor's proposed budget. A number of key accounts are funded at the level requested by the [State Board of Education](#), including assessment, frameworks and the health protection grant fund. Also of interest, the committee recommends an increase in the state funds for special education residential schooling and state wards, and an increase in the foundation reserve account which was so helpful this year. We will all be watching the upcoming legislative process closely, and I will keep you informed as best as possible.

In this first coordinated mailing of April, I have enclosed the following items for you in hard copy. These are all available on the Internet (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>) for wider viewing, but as always, I encourage you to copy the materials and distribute them to your staff and community where appropriate.

1. [Advisory on comprehensive health education](#)
2. [Memorandum on the DSS "Commonworks" program](#)
3. [Advice on the learning time implementation plan](#) (due by June 30)
4. Reimbursements available to districts for transportation costs
[No longer available]
5. [Statewide science coordinator position available at the DOE](#)
6. [Brochure on four upcoming conferences on education reform for parents](#)

In addition, please note that the Board of Education approved amendments to the state certification regulations, on my recommendation at the March meeting, establishing two new certificates in the areas of instructional technology and school social worker/school adjustment counselor. The text of the new standards for certification is

on our [Internet site](#). Adding these certificates is an interim step in our larger plan to move ahead and revise and streamline the certification rules in their entirety.

Also, the Board approved to release for public comment new [standards concerning school building assistance](#). Please look these over on our website, and let us know if you have comments on them.

Finally, under separate cover, I want you to know that your district's health coordinators, special education administrators and transitional bilingual education administrators will receive a brief survey on health education as part of the state's national leadership initiative with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As always, thank you for your leadership, your assistance, and your hard work on behalf of children. Let's all keep our eye on the prize, and I am confident that we will have success.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Advisory on Health Protection Grants and Comprehensive Health Assessment

Memorandum

To: Superintendents of Schools
From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education
Date: April 1, 1996

Budget time is here, and all of us at both the state and local levels are preparing plans for the 1996-1997 school year (fiscal year 1997). The purpose of this advisory is to clarify issues of funding related to the Health Protection Grants and to highlight grant requirements for the coming year.

We are in the third year of a statewide effort to fund comprehensive health education programs through a 1993 increase in the excise tax on tobacco products. The Health Protection Grants Program has provided funding for the implementation of health education curricula and services in every Massachusetts school district. While we will not know the levels of funding for the 1996-1997 school year until there is an approved state budget, it is possible to begin planning by anticipating level funding for next year.

Use of Health Protection Grant Funds

The referendum (Question One in 1992) and subsequent legislation that established the Health Protection Fund direct the Department of Education to establish a comprehensive health education program. Because of the relationship between the source of revenues and their use, there has been a special requirement from the beginning of the program that the funds support the implementation of a *PreK-12 tobacco prevention and cessation program*.

Activities eligible for funding under this program include those which contribute to a district's implementation of the seven components of effective comprehensive health education programs. In addition, as in the past, districts need to designate a Health Coordinator who is responsible for administering the grant. This does not require a full time position. The health coordinator could be a teacher who is working with the program, an administrator, or another model the district chooses.

Districts may not use these funds to supplant existing funding for positions, program activities or materials, nor use funds to support activities that do not relate to the implementation of one of the seven components. Top priority is to fund direct services to students; administrative costs should be very limited.

Program Development for 1996-1997

Changes in the requirements of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Health Protection Grant next year will be detailed in the Unified Grant Application issued later this spring. In anticipation of that publication, this advisory outlines the nature of the required changes. In order for a district to receive its allocated portion of the Health Protection Grant funds, beginning in 1996 the school district will ensure that:

- A. It has implemented a tobacco-free schools policy and has a process in place to enforce the policy;
- B. In its application, it will indicate how it intends to provide effective PreK-12 tobacco prevention education and student and staff cessation services;
- C. It is moving towards implementing the [Health Curriculum Framework](#);
- D. It is participating in local assessment activities for health. In the 1996-1997 school year this will include participation in Department sponsored field testing of assessment instruments created as part of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; and
- E. Its grant activities are within the priority components as defined by the

Priorities

I. Implementing a curriculum

- Implement a PreK-12 comprehensive health education curriculum **with a focus on tobacco prevention** for all students;

I. Working with the community

- Ensure coordination of community resources for comprehensive health education and family support, especially those working with underserved student groups;
- Coordinate health and mental health services;

I. Improving the school

- Ensure guidance and counseling services meet the social and emotional needs of students;
- Create opportunities for all students to develop positive relationships with peers, older students and adults;
- Provide opportunities that reinforce responsible student decision-making and positive behavior change;
- Create and maintain a healthy school with a special emphasis on enforcement of a Tobacco Free Schools policy.

Assessment of Health

The Department is moving forward to implement the next critical phase of Education Reform, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Two purposes of the assessment system are (1) to conduct a competency determination of tenth graders as a condition for graduation, and (2) to evaluate school and district performance.

As part of the comprehensive assessment system, a state test will be developed for students in grades 4, 8, and 10 in the areas of English, mathematics, social studies, science and technology and world languages. These are mandated by state law to be included in the tenth grade competency determination.

Since health is not a mandated area for the competency determination, it will not be included on the state test. However, districts will be asked to assess fourth, eighth and tenth graders in health beginning in the 1997-1998 school year if they apply for and receive Health Protection Funds. Local assessments could be used by local districts and by the state to measure student performance in health.

In order to promote high standards in health assessments across districts, guidelines, model instruments and performance standards will be developed by the Department in collaboration with the Health Assessment Development Committee and Advanced Systems, the testing contractor for MCAS. The Department will field test model health assessment exercises and test questions during the 1996-1997 school year. All schools will participate in the field testing process.

Technical Assistance and Support Available to Meet New Requirements

The Health Curriculum Framework is designed to assist schools in reviewing and restructuring a comprehensive health education at all grade levels. Comprehensive health education is supported by three instructional disciplines (health, physical education and family and consumer sciences). Therefore, interdisciplinary and non-traditional routes of program implementation are encouraged. The Health Protection Grant may be used to support the implementation of the Health Curriculum Framework.

The Learning Support Services Cluster of the Department of Education will continue to provide ongoing technical assistance. However, we strongly encourage local decision making and accountability. The responsibility of ensuring that local plans meet the goals of the program remains at the local level.

Promising Practices

As we near the end of the third year of the Health Protection Grants, schools have developed a wide range of successful program elements. These contribute to the increase in students' academic achievement, health knowledge, skills and behaviors. The Department will highlight some of these promising practices for dissemination statewide. You are invited to submit descriptions of your best programs to:

**Learning Support Services Cluster
Mass. Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148**

We look forward to working with you to ensure your continued success.

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DSS Commonworks

Memorandum

To: Superintendents
From: Robert V. Antonucci
Date: April 1, 1996

The Department of Social Services recently released a new RFP for the Commonworks program. Since then, the Department of Education has received a number of questions and letters concerned about the impact of the program. Since the Commonworks program is a DSS program, we for the most part refer questions and concerns to DSS. However, I believe the attached "[fact sheet](#)" could be helpful to provide perspective on Commonworks for school leaders.

Fact Sheet on DSS Commonworks Programs

1. **History:** The Department of Social Services (DSS) began Commonworks in 1989 especially to respond to the needs of hard-to-reach adolescents with multiple problems. Five regional networks were formed to add flexibility and ensure a continuum of services available in each region. Currently about 400 young people are served in Commonworks.

DOE and DSS signed an interagency agreement in 1991 regarding education for students in the Commonworks program and agreed that Commonworks would ensure appropriate educational programs for all students enrolled in Commonworks programs, consistent with all applicable statutes, regulations and interagency agreements with regard to fiscal and programmatic responsibility for students' education.

2. **Current Expansion of Commonworks:** DSS has recently released an RFP seeking applications for Commonworks Lead Agencies for each of its six regions. These Lead Agencies will in turn be responsible for assembling a network of direct service providers (subject to DSS approval) to deliver a continuum of services in each region. It is expected that approximately 800 adolescents will be served in this system by June, 1998.

- A key feature of the new structure is that it uses a managed care model for funding providers, based on DSS-established capitated rates for each adolescent served, regardless of the actual services delivered.
- Other features include: single points of entry into the system, common clinical protocols and treatment planning, flexibility in movement between services, and time-

limited treatment.

3. Selected Components of the RFP that Affect Education: The RFP released by DSS is over 100 pages with 3 appendices of equal length. Excerpts from the RFP of particular interest to Educators are:

- **Recognizes complexity of coordinating with schools;** - DSS has responsibility for out-of-home care while school districts have the responsibility for education and, if appropriate, special education...doing it right requires coordination;
- **Anticipates significant number of students with special education needs** - "Due to the nature and intensity of many of the youths' presenting problems which led to their placement in out-of-home care, it is anticipated that a significant number of prospective Commonworks youth may require specially designed instruction to meet their unique needs;" and further anticipates many children may need substantially separate special education schools or programs at the beginning of placement;
- **Requires coordination with school system** - "Prior to any changes in placement setting, a review of the youth's educational needs must be conducted with the responsible LEA...."
- **Provides fiscal incentives to Lead Agencies maximizing communication with school districts regarding their educational responsibilities** - "Bidders are advised that it is the Department's [of Social Services] expectation that contractors maximize their efforts to increase communication with local public schools. It is the Department's [of Social Services] intention to promote increased communication between Lead Agencies, network providers and schools by offering fiscal incentives to contractors who demonstrate effective communication as evidenced by cost sharing agreements with LEAs."
- **Includes opportunity for school personnel to participate in the Clinical Review Team meetings of Regional Commonworks network as appropriate**
- **Expectation that educational costs will be part of the capitated rate** - "[A] subsidy for educational costs was calculated that the Department [of Social Services] incorporated within the payment rate. These educational subsidies are predicated upon Lead Agencies significantly improving the proportion of youth that are cost-shared and, also, increasing the ratio of youth attending local public schools. Accordingly, the Department [of Social Services] is providing a full educational subsidy - at historical payment levels - for twenty percent (20%) of the youth enrolled in Commoworks."

Recommendations/Implications:

- A. DOE recommends that school district administrative personnel familiarize themselves with the recently published Operational Protocols and seek to increase communication and information flow between DSS (and their Lead Agencies) and school districts.
- B. DOE recommends, in concert with DSS, that school districts and DSS personnel continue (or start) to maintain good working relationships with DSS (and their providers); keeping communication open and assuring that each agency understands the rules and regulations under which the other operates.
- C. DSS foster care review and treatment planning meetings, and conversely that school districts invite key DSS personnel to participate in key school activities (such as IEP TEAM meetings for those students with special education needs).
- D. DOE notes that the intended expansion of the Commonworks program does not

represent new funding available to DSS. Nor do schools anticipate new funding dedicated to this population. Both education and social services are operating with limited funds and different missions, while continuing to serve the same children. Given these variables, the alliance may be uneasy at times, but must occur on behalf of these children.

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District Learning Time Plans

Memorandum

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders
From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education
Date: April 1, 1996

The [student learning time standards](#), adopted in December 1994, are intended to stimulate changes in the use of school time to improve the quality of student learning by providing more time for academics. Your commitment and local creativity in applying these standards to your needs is what makes them effective.

The standards call for every school and school district to work with parents, teachers, and community members to prepare a district learning time implementation plan to submit to the Department by June 30, 1996. This plan can take shape in many forms, but clearly it needs to show, for the kindergarten, elementary, middle and secondary grade levels:

- a description of the review and planning process undertaken by each school community, to develop the student learning time plan for each grade level;
- recognizing that changes may occur, a description of the district's current plan to ensure that every student will be scheduled to receive the minimum hours and school days of structured learning time in subjects, programs and activities that are integrated with the Common Core of Learning and the state curriculum frameworks; and,
- a description of any changes that have been or will be made to the school organization, schedule, services or structure in order to meet the student learning time requirements.

Schools are encouraged to consider innovative teaching and scheduling approaches as part of their plan, and to restructure school schedules as needed to improve the quality of student learning experiences for all students.

In response to requests for assistance in preparing the implementation plan, I am providing a [technical assistance packet](#). Included in the packet is a clarification on structured learning time; a synopsis of the intent and requirements of the learning time standards; one example of good practice for planning and developing a district plan; and descriptions of promising practices. These materials are for those of you who are looking for additional guidance; they are not required elements of your plan.

In preparation for June 30, 1996, I would like to outline the simple process we will use.

- Districts submit the district Learning Time Implementation Plan to the Department's office of Instruction and Curriculum Services by June 30, 1996.

- District plans will be reviewed to ensure they meet or exceed the requirements of the Student Learning Time Regulations.
- A letter will be sent indicating whether or not the district's plan meets or exceeds the requirements of the student learning time standards.

If you need further technical assistance, please call Jennifer Tessier (ext.440) or Deborah Walker (ext.457) in Instruction and Curriculum Services. Thank you for your continued efforts to implement Education Reform.

Go to [Student Learning Time pamphlet](#)

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Science Position

Memorandum

To: School Superintendents

From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

Date: April 1, 1996

The Department of Education through the Office for Mathematics and Science is seeking a qualified individual to serve a two-year sabbatical (based on funding) as the statewide coordinator for science. This position is a full-time, 11-month per year employment commencing September 1, 1996. School districts will be fully compensated for this individual (wages and benefits) while on leave.

Our present science coordinator will be completing his term and returning to the education field. This model of granting sabbaticals to talented individuals from school districts to work at the Department has been most successful and is an exciting opportunity for all of us.

Attached you will find a [job description](#) for the above-mentioned position. Resumes should be forwarded by Friday, May 3, 1996, to:

**Mr. Thomas Noonan, Administrator
Office for Mathematics and Science
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Noonan directly at 781-338-3000.

Two-Year Leadership/Sabbatical Opportunity Massachusetts Department of Education

Statewide Coordinator for Science

The Statewide Coordinator for Science is responsible for directing the development and implementation of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in science and assuring that a variety of stakeholders have ownership over its process, content and implementation. This person is responsible for linking all federal and state-related science programs administered by the Massachusetts Department of Education and

ensuring the successful implementation of the PALMS Initiative as outlined in the Department of Education's 5-year master plan. The statewide coordinator for science will work collaboratively with the statewide coordinator for mathematics.

Job Description

The Statewide Coordinator for Science will:

- Provide leadership for systemic improvement of science and technology education in school districts in Massachusetts.
- Provide leadership for the implementation of the Science and Technology Curriculum Frameworks and strategies for integrating the other disciplines.
- To develop documents and materials to assist school districts with the process of review and revision of local curricula.
- Work with Massachusetts educators to develop and disseminate innovative instructional models and vignettes on project-based mathematics and science instruction.
- Coordinate PALMS activities with the other science-related Department programs: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Carl Perkins, Chapter I, Chapter II, bilingual, equity, special education, early childhood, community service learning, and the new statewide assessment program.
- Coordinate the development of resources and programs to promote equity in science and engineering education for females and under-represented groups.
- Evaluate nationally validated science programs and develop mechanisms and resources to disseminate them to school districts.
- Develop and provide high quality professional development opportunities to support quality mathematics/science pedagogy and content as defined in the Curriculum Frameworks.
- Assure appropriate indicators are collected and reported so that national and international comparisons can be made.
- Work with community outreach specialist to promote mathematics and science reform with key stakeholders, including:
parent and community training, media relations and cultural and business partnerships.

Qualifications

- Strong knowledge and experience in Massachusetts' Education Reform initiatives, systemic change, the PALMS model and philosophy, and quality professional development.
- Strong knowledge and experience in current research, content, exemplary curriculum programs and practices, curriculum development and assessment in science, the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, the Curriculum Frameworks:
Common Chapters and the Science and Technology Content Chapter.
- Familiarity and experience with international, national educational standards and assessments.
- Master's Degree; five plus years in teaching, leadership and supervisory experience in schools, and/or partner institutions.
- Familiarity and experience collecting and analyzing data and program evaluation to ensure appropriate data gathering and reporting of the progress and accomplishments of the overall goals of the project.
- Project management experience in complex curriculum, assessment or technology development programs.

Salary Range: Based on Current Local Contract

Please forward resume to:

**Thomas Noonan, Administrator
Office for Mathematics and Science
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148**

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Education Reform Conferences for Parents

Attention:

Parents, Family Members & Other Caregivers!

New Ways For Families & Schools to Work Together

Springfield

Saturday, May 4, 1996
(8:00-3:00)

Bolton

Tuesday, May 14, 1996
(5:30-9:00)

Boston

Saturday, May 18, 1996
(8:00-3:00)

Fall River

Thursday, May 30, 1996
(5:30-9:00)

Please join us for one of these conferences on Education Reform in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

Conference Focus:

Education Reform

How might the curriculum frameworks look in the classroom?

(practical, interactive examples for families illustrating the principles of the curriculum frameworks)

**Where the Rubber Meets the Road:
Bringing It Back Home!**

(interactive workshops/presentations highlighting the many ways families are involved in their homes, schools and communities.)

4 Dates & Locations to Choose!

- Saturday, May 4* (8:00-3:00)
American International College, Springfield
- Tuesday, May 14 (5:30-9:00)
Nashoba Regional High School, Bolton

- Saturday, May 18* (8:00-3:00)
University of Massachusetts, Boston
- Thursday, May 30 (5:30-9:00)
Durfee High School, Fall River

Limited childcare available for saturday sessions only. Pre-Registration Required

Agenda - Day Sessions

8:00-9:00

Registration/Coffee/Exhibits

9:00-9:50

GeneralSession:

Education Reform and Family Involvement

9:50-10:05

Break

10:05-11:45

Howmight the curriculum frameworks
lookin the classroom?
(7Concurrent Sessions)

11:45-1:00

Networking lunch with open microphones

1:00-2:30

Where the Rubber Meets the Road:
Bringing it Back Home!
(7 Concurrent Sessions)

2:30-3:00

Where do we go from here?

Agenda - Evening Sessions

5:30-6:00

Registration & Supper

6:00-9:00

Conference content will be a modified version of the full-day session above

Tentative Topics for the Afternoon Workshops

- Family Friendly Schools
- Making the Most of Parent-School Communication
- Understanding the Younger Child (PreK-4)
- Advocacy
- School Councils
- The Many Ways Parents Can be Involved

No Cost to Attend!

Free Lunch or Supper

Reservations required/space is limited

Don't Delay! [Pre-Registration](#) is required by April 15th!!>

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