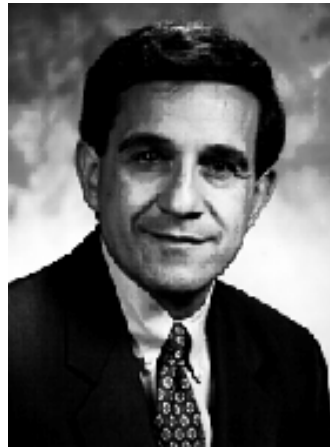


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Commissioner's Update

May 30, 1996

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

I have included the following four items in this coordinated mailing:

1. [Regulatory reform](#) -- written comments requested

As you know, the Board of Education and I are in the process of reviewing all regulations for public education. At its May 15 meeting, the Board voted to put out for public comment for 60 days the repeal of several sets of regulations, including physical education, and the amendment and consolidation of others. We are requesting written comments so copies can be made and efficiently distributed to the Board. Even in cases where the regulations may ultimately be repealed, the underlying statute remains in place - so, for example, if the very prescriptive physical education regulations are eliminated, the statute that requires physical education to be offered in every school in every grade would remain.

2. [End-of-Year Pupil and Financial Workshops Schedule](#) The workshops begin June 18. Please choose a date that is best for you.

3. [Memorandum on new state law concerning Student Activity Accounts](#)

4. End-of-Year Surveys

Since certain of the items in the surveys are pre-printed with information specific to your district, you will find this set of surveys packaged separately from this letter. Please coordinate your reply to the surveys so that ultimately you collect and sign off on the survey information, which is required by various federal or state rules and is in all cases important for informing public policy decisions.

[No longer available]

In addition, I hope that sometime next week I will be able to send you a special supplementary coordinated mailing with a set of financial numbers important to your planning. These will include the Title I and Special Education allocations, which we are awaiting from the federal government. Also, your federally-supported entitlements for the Education Reform Study Groups, under Code 504 in the unified grant package, will be provided, as will the indirect cost rate for federal grants and contracts and the Chapter 74 nonresidential tuition rates for FY 97.

I know that there is a lot to do in this last month of the school year. My advice to you is keep moving forward and focus on what you know is best for your students, and with that always in mind you will continue to have success.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Regulatory Reform

Memorandum

To: Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders, Other interested Parties

From: Robert V. Antonucci

Date: June 1, 1996

The Board of Education and I are continuing the review of education regulations that began two years ago. The Board and I support the recent efforts of the Governor, as demonstrated by the publication of Executive Order 384, to require each Executive Branch agency to review its regulations and eliminate those that are unnecessary and simplify those that remain. In accordance with General Laws Chapter 69, section 1B and the Administrative Procedures Act, G.L., Chapter 30A, and Executive Order 384, the Massachusetts Board of Education voted at the May 15, 1996 meeting to solicit public comment on the proposed repeal, amendment and consolidation of the following Board of Education regulations:

1. The **repeal** of the following regulations because they impose unnecessary restrictions:
 - [603 CMR 9.00, Physical Education](#);
 - [603 CMR 25.00, Tractor Trailer Schools](#);
 - [603 CMR 29.00, Nutrition Education and School Food Service](#); and
 - [603 CMR 32.00, Fiscal Accountability for Grants Programs](#)
2. The **amendment** of [603 CMR 8.00, Kindergartens](#), in order to eliminate unnecessary and obsolete requirements, including references to actions which were taken more than twenty years ago. A copy of the [proposed amended regulation](#) is enclosed.
3. The **amendment and consolidation** of [603 CMR 41.00, School District Reorganization](#) and [603 CMR 42.00, School Employees Collective Bargaining](#) (selection of municipal representative in regional school districts), in order to eliminate unnecessary requirement and clarify the selection and participation of the municipal representative in regional school district collective bargaining. Enclosed is a copy of the [proposed amended and consolidated regulations](#).

Written comments on the repeal or amendment of the above regulations are strongly encouraged and they will be made available to each member of the [Board of Education](#). Written comments may be submitted to the Department of Education, Attn: Legal Office, through **August 15, 1996**

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1995-1996 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report Workshops

Memorandum

To: Superintendents of Schools, Municipal Officials, School Business Officials

From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

Date: May 16, 1996

This year we have scheduled five voluntary spring workshops to distribute and discuss the 1995-1996 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report. We are encouraging school as well as municipal officials to attend one of these workshops at a location convenient to your district. In the event you are unable to attend any session we will be mailing the materials to you. Several additional changes have been made this year to streamline the report and insure that the data required is comparable with the data required under Education Reform. We plan to distribute each district's report at the workshop and will discuss and answer questions concerning each schedule of the report. **We request that you fax the [attached reservation form](#) to 781-338-6530 or contact School Finance Services at 781-338-3000 to reserve your place at one of the following scheduled workshops.**

The directions to each workshop are attached:

June 18 Assabet Valley High School
June 19 Easthampton Whitebrook Middle School
June 25 Reading High School
June 26 Plymouth South High School
July 16 Assabet Valley High School

Each workshop will start at 9:00 a.m. and will end at 12:00 noon. Staff will be available to discuss individual questions after each workshop. Municipal officials are invited to attend the complete session but we will plan to focus on Schedule 19, the education budget and the implications of this schedule to the state aid formula between 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon each day.

I realize the work and time involved in completing the reports. The Department is committed to providing quality service to local school districts and I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Directions for End of Year Report Meetings

June 18, 1996 - 9:00 AM

Assabet Valley Regional Vocational Technical, Marlboro

Interstate 495 to exit 25A to set of lights (about one mile from 495). Turn right at lights onto Fitchburg Street. School is first building on left.

**June 19, 1996 - 9:00 AM
Easthampton Whitebrook Middle School**

Massachusetts Turnpike to exit 4, Route 91 North to exit 17B - follow signs for route 141 into Easthampton. At the set of lights (Nashawannuck Pond on left), go straight onto Payson Avenue. Continue to a stop sign and turn left onto Park St. Whitebrook Middle School is approximately one mile on the left.

**June 25, 1996 - 9:00 AM
Reading High School, Reading**

Route 128 (I-95) to exit 38B. Go north on Main Street (Route 28), through Reading Square. Continuing North on Route 28 take a left at the first set of stop lights onto Buck Meadow Drive. The high school is on Oakland Road, first left off Buck Meadow Drive (Auditorium).

**June 26, 1996 - 9:00 AM
Plymouth South High School, Plymouth**

South on Route 3 to exit 3 bear right off ramp. North on Route 3 to exit 3 bear left off ramp. Go to the end and turn right onto Long Pond Road. Go one mile to school on right.

**July 16, 1996 - 9:00 AM
Assabet Valley Regional Vocational Technical, Marlboro**

See directions for June 18, 1996

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Student Activity Accounts

Memorandum

To: Superintendents
From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner
Date: May 31, 1996

Legislation has recently been enacted to allow school districts to set up checking accounts for use by school principals in spending monies collected through various student activities. A copy of this statute (Chapter 66 of the Acts of 1996) is enclosed.

I encourage you to use this new authority to replace any unofficial and unauthorized bank accounts which may have been established in your district to handle student activity receipts. In the aggregate, many thousands of dollars in receipts and expenditures are generated as a result of school sponsored student activities. Chapter 66 provides a way for school managers to handle these financial transactions quickly and efficiently, with reasonable safeguards.

Procedures to govern the use of these new student activity accounts should be adopted by the school committee, after consultation with your business manager, municipal or district treasurer, and municipal finance director, as appropriate. As a guide, the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) has two publications, "Guidelines for Student Activity Fund Accounting" and "Internal Audit Guide for Student Activity Funds", that will assist in establishing procedures.

The procedures should include a requirement for an annual audit of these accounts, as required by the statute. At a minimum such audits should include:

- a. a reconciliation of the cash balances as shown in the checkbook and bank statements;
- b. a review of compliance with the school committee's adopted procedures; and
- c. a review of the supporting documentation for a randomly selected sample of payments.

These annual audits can be conducted by personnel in the school business office or the municipal finance office. For accounts with authorized limits exceeding \$25,000, districts should consider having the audit conducted by an outside accounting firm at least every two or three years.

Please share this information with your business manager. If you need any additional information, please contact Jay Sullivan at (781) 338-3000. Thank you.