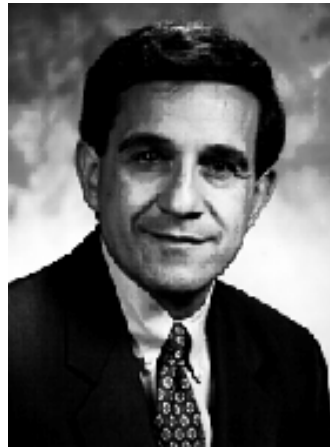


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Commissioner's Update

November 20, 1996

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

As you know, for more than the past year I have been coordinating bimonthly mailings to you. I believe this was an improvement on the prior practice of sending information sporadically. In recent months, I have been trying to streamline the mailings further and have eliminated one of the two bimonthly mailings on occasion, putting information that would have been sent to you on the Internet instead at <http://www.doe.mass.edu>. I hope this method has been useful to you.

Last week, we conducted a telephone survey of all the public school districts on the standardized testing they are planning to conduct this year. I have enclosed the results of the survey for your district, and hope that you could review the draft to see that it is accurate. I am preparing a report for the Board of Education's December 11 meeting and need to have the best data available before December 2. If you have any corrections, please mark them on the form and return by mail to the Department of Education, c/o Accountability and Evaluation.

In this mailing, I have these additional documents for your review and dissemination:

1. [Invitation to apply for foundation reserve funds](#)
2. [Additional grant opportunity for high schools in the safe schools program](#)
3. [1997 Teacher-of-the-Year available to schools for professional development](#)
4. [Survey on tobacco prevention programs from Department of Public Health](#)
5. [Survey on intergenerational program from Executive Office of Elder Affairs](#)
6. [Board-in-Brief summary of Board of Education November 18 meeting](#); note that [MCET](#) will broadcast the Board meetings in full from 4 pm to 8 pm on

the day of the meeting, except for December and January, when a broadcast date will be set for the week following the Board meeting, and will be announced by MCET.

Best wishes to you and your staff for a healthy and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Foundation Reserve Program

To: Superintendents, Mayors and Boards of Selectmen

From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

Date: November 21, 1996

Re: Foundation Reserve Program

The foundation reserve program was established last year to provide some relief to communities which, due to extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances, are having difficulty funding their public schools at the level required to provide high quality educational services to all of the district's students. This year the Legislature and Governor have made available \$2.5 million for distribution by the Department of Education. Awards made under this program are one-time, non-recurring awards, and will not be included in the calculation of base aid in subsequent fiscal years. It is not the intent of this program to relieve a community from its basic financial obligations under the Commonwealth's education reform law.

Municipalities and regional school districts are eligible for an award under this program if one or more of the following circumstances exists and creates an unreasonable financial hardship:

1. an extraordinarily large increase in the municipality's minimum local contribution from FY96 to FY97;
2. an extraordinarily large decrease in the municipality's cherry sheet aid from FY96 to FY97;
3. significant expenses associated with extraordinary increases in enrollment;
4. significant difficulties in reaching the foundation budget;
5. significant and unforeseeable changes in the municipality's financial situation subsequent to its adoption of a budget for the current fiscal year;
6. where a waiver of a municipality's minimum required contribution to a regional district has been approved by DOR but disapproved by a majority of the members of the district, where such approval is required;
7. where the use of excess debt credits results in a significant reduction in school operating funds;
8. where the calculation of a municipality's required contribution has been adversely affected by administrative errors; or
9. any other exceptional or unusual circumstance which, in the opinion of the Commissioner of Education, would impose an unreasonable hardship on a community in order to meet its educational obligations.

Here are the procedures to apply for an award under this program:

- Application letters should state the amount of funds requested and include all relevant supporting information. The application should also clearly indicate whether the requested funds will be used (a) to assist the municipality in meeting its mandated spending levels under the education reform law, or (b) to

support additional educational spending beyond the amounts already appropriated.

- Municipal applications must be signed by the town manager, town administrator, chairman of the board of selectmen, city manager (in a Plan E city), or mayor (in all other cities). Regional school district applications must be signed by the district superintendent.
- Send the application to:
Chief Financial Officer
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148-5023
- For municipal applications, please send a copy of the application letter to the superintendent of each school district of which the city or town is a member. For regional district applications, please send a copy of the application letter to the chief municipal officer of each member municipality in the district.

The Department of Education may request additional supporting information for any application. All applications will also be reviewed with the Department of Revenue to determine if they are eligible for relief under the "DOR waiver" program. The final decision on foundation reserve awards will be made by the Commissioner of Education, based on the criteria described above and the funds available.

Applications received on or before December 27, 1996, will receive equal consideration with all other timely filed applications. Applicants will be notified of the Commissioner's decision no later than January 24, 1997. We do not expect any funds to be available for late-filed applications.

For further information or assistance concerning the foundation reserve program, please contact Jeff Wulfson (tel. 781-338-3000; email jwulfson@doe.mass.edu).

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Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students Grant Opportunity

To: Superintendents and other interested parties
From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education
Date: November 15, 1996
Subject: Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students Grant Opportunity

Additional funds have been made available for the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students Grant Program, provided in partnership with the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth.

This grant program will provide funds to districts to start or enhance gay/straight alliances or conduct activities that lead to gay/straight alliances at the high school level. Gay/straight alliances are an important part of the Department's overall efforts to address school-based violence against gay and lesbian students and their family members.

Please be aware that free faculty trainings are available from the Department of Education or through a contract with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN). Therefore, please do not request funding for consultants to conduct on-site faculty training.

All grant applications are due in to the Department of Education no later than Friday, December 20, 1996. The original and **two copies** should be sent to the attention of Learning Support Services, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, (781)338-3000.

Thank you for your interest in this grant opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you.

Program Name: Safe Schools Program/Violence Prevention

FundCode: 378, 516

Purpose:

These grants are to assist schools in developing violence prevention programs aimed at enhancing safety for gay and lesbian students consistent with Goals 2000 and the Massachusetts [Education Reform Act](#) as well as implementing the Board of Education's recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students. These Recommendations include establishing local non discrimination policies, offering teacher training on violence and suicide prevention, forming gay/straight support groups, and extending school-based

counseling services to family members of gay and lesbian students. Particular emphasis is placed on Board of Education Recommendation #3 (starting gay/straight alliances). In addition, schools that wish to support existing alliances or conduct activities that lead to the development of gay/straight alliances will receive strong consideration.

Priorities:

- To develop and implement programs that start or enhance gay/straight alliances at the high school level.
- To develop and implement programs that include gay and lesbian students of color and ESL students.
- To assist schools that have not applied for funds previously.
- To support schools that show evidence of district-wide safe school policies.

Eligibility:

School districts may apply for funds for more than one school. Each school seeking funds needs to have an adult coordinator to work with students and other participants.

Funding:

School districts may apply for grants ranging from \$500 - \$2,000 per high school. A total of \$62,400 in funds will be available. Of this total, \$25,000 will be funded through federal sources and will be assigned fund code 516, the remaining will be assigned fund code 378.

Fund Use:

Funds are limited to grant activities that are consistent with the Board of Education's Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students and implementation of the amendment to Chapter 76 sec. 5. Funds are limited to line items 5, 6, 7 and 9 of the budget pages in the Standard Application for Program Grants.

Project Duration: 2/10/97 through 6/30/97

Contact: Learning Support Services

Phone Number: 781-338-3000

Grant Program: Safe Schools Program/Violence Prevention

FundCode: 378, 516

In no more than two pages of narrative:

1. Please describe your current level of implementation of the Board of Education's Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students. Include information on steps the school has taken to provide training to staff, a Gay/Straight Alliance or other form of support group, updated nondiscrimination policies, counseling services, and parent programs. Indicate when any of the above steps were initiated.

2. Describe the kinds of activities that will take place, particularly student activities, meetings, forums or other outreach. Who is the persons responsible for coordinating each activity? What are the expected results? Include a timeline for completion.
3. Please describe how your school will integrate programs for gay and lesbian students into programs promoting safe and violence free schools for all students.
4. Please describe how you are reaching out to gay and lesbian students from under represented groups, including language minority students and students of color.
5. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the program?

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- > [George Washington Scholars](#)

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The 1997 Massachusetts Teacher Of The Year

Dear Friends,

Teaching is both an art and science, the most difficult and most rewarding of careers. While all classroom teachers should be recognized on a daily basis, the **National Teacher of the Year Program** is the oldest and most prestigious awards program that focuses public attention annually on excellence in teaching. Since 1952, the program (*co-sponsored by the Council of ChiefState School Officers and Scholastic Inc.*) has recognized and honored the contributions of classroom teachers by granting one outstanding teacher a year's paid sabbatical. During that year, the teacher travels the nation and meets with a wide variety of audiences to address educational issues.

The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Each year (since 1960 when Massachusetts joined the program) the program honors a Massachusetts teacher who exemplifies fine teaching in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the program is to select a teacher who is worthy of speaking for and energizing the teaching profession, and representing the positive contributions of all teachers statewide. The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year automatically becomes the state's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Program.



The selection process for the **Massachusetts Teacher of the Year** begins early in the calendar year with a call for nominations - this year, 298 nominations were received. An independent panel of experts including past Teachers of the Year reviewed written applications, interviewed eight finalists, and made a recommendation to me for my consideration and endorsement.

The following corporations and organizations are supporting the 1997 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program: J.L. Hammett Company; Apple Computers; College Fund Division of UICI; Microsoft Corporation; UMASS/Boston Graduate College of Education; Massachusetts Teachers Association; and Harvard Graduate College of Education.

I am proud to present the 1997 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Leonard Swanton of Lexington, and wish him much energy and success in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

**1997 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Leonard Swanton
with his first two teachers -his parents Leonard H. and
Louise.**

Leonard Swanton is admired by the entire Estabrook School community in Lexington where he teaches fifth grade. A ten year veteran, Len inspires students, parents, colleagues and administrators with his wisdom, his warmth, and his passion for learning.



Len's classroom reflects his training in the British model of integrated learning. Students study topics from every conceivable direction to help them see how the concepts relate to their lives. An example of this is the interdisciplinary unit "Egypt and Zimbabwe: Two Dimensions of Africa," which he developed following a summer of intense research and study in the two countries as a Fulbright-Hays Scholar. Students' artwork, reading, math, social studies and writing all centered around ancient and contemporary Africa, with a focus on eliminating cultural stereotypes and misinformation about the African people. The unit, which included on-line communication with two men kayaking on the Nile, culminated with "Tales from Africa: Stories from Afar," four one-act plays from various African cultures followed by a banquet of foods indigenous to regions throughout Africa.

Leonard's outstanding abilities as a teacher were recognized early in his career. He was awarded the first Dorothea J. Kunde Award for Excellence in Teaching from Framingham State College where he received his undergraduate degree. In addition to his selection as a Fulbright-Hays Fellow, he is a current nominee for the 1996 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching.

As Teacher of the Year, Len is available during the 1996-1997 school year to present workshops, seminars, or keynote addresses. Please contact Len directly at 508-461-0844 to schedule a presentation.

Possible Workshops/Speaking Topics

- The Topic Approach to Learning
- Adapting Curriculum Goals to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners
- Egypt and Zimbabwe: Investigating Ancient and Contemporary African Cultures with Elementary and Middle School Students

- From Sophocles to Shakespeare: Exploring and Performing Classic Theater in the Elementary Grades

1997 Teacher of the Year

Leonard Swanton, Lexington

Finalists

Pamela Chomsky-Higgins, Reading
Stephanie Hamel, Needham
Elaine Jastrem, Mansfield
Eileen Madaus, Newton
Marcia McCarthy, Quincy
Maurice Perlman, Holliston
Gayle Winn, Sharon

Semi-Finalists

Wiet Bacheller, Vineyard Haven
Sharon Watson Beck, Boston
Corinne Collar, Revere
Mary Lou Costello, North Andover
Diane Diamond, Wellesley
Sandra Discepolo, Norwood
John Kent, Greater Lowell Voc.-Tech.
Richard Marchand, Shrewsbury
Joseph Nigro, Holliston
Marie Pratt, Longmeadow

Past Massachusetts Teachers of the Year

1996 Kathleen Sherman, Falmouth
1995 Jerry Howland, Boston
1994 Virginia Freyermuth, Duxbury
1993 Steven Levy, Lexington
1992 Ronald Adams, Quincy
1991 Charles Sposato, Framingham
1990 Molly Murphy, Brookline
1989 Marjorie Montgomery, Newton
1988 James McDermott, Worcester
1987 Margot Desjardins, Westport
1986 Donna Viveiros, Fall River
1985 Francis Smith, Wayland
1984 Cathleen Hughes, Scituate
1983 Donald Pottle, Shrewsbury
1982 Joseph Kelly, Lexington
1981 Margaret Campbell, Longmeadow
1980 Marta Valdes, Boston
1979 Rita Croteau, Worcester
1978 Olive Craigwell, Boston
1977 Martin Badoian, Canton
1976 Barbara Boschert, Worcester
1975 no selection
1974 Thais Waldron, Reading

1973 Marcia Hayes, Boston
1972 Marcia Fowler, Ipswich
1971 Robert Anastas, Framingham
1970 Lucille Thimblin, Tantasqua Reg.
1969 Ruth Doorly, Westwood
1968 Neil Fitzgerald, New Bedford
1967 John Moulton, Brookline
1966 Leah Benway, Southwick
1965 Vivian Little, Hampden-Wilbraham
1964 Edna Penwarden, Arlington
1963 no selection
1962 Lottie Perry, Norton

**For more information on the program,
please contact:**

Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main St.
Malden, MA 02148
781-338-3000

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Tobacco Control: An Education Resource Packet

To: Superintendents of Schools
From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education
David H. Mulligan, Commissioner of Public Health
Subject: Tobacco Control: An Education Resource Packet
Date: November 15, 1996

Tobacco prevention and cessation for young people remain important elements of our statewide tobacco control program. The Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Education have worked closely together over the past four years to coordinate resources and to support schools and community groups that are committed to decreasing the number of young people in Massachusetts who use tobacco. As a result of our ongoing collaboration, we are pleased to offer you this newly updated collection of materials on tobacco education.

In the fourth year of the Health Protection Grant Program, the Department of Education is distributing \$24 million in comprehensive health education grants to schools. As you know, tobacco prevention and cessation for students and staff are *required components* in these programs. We know from first hand experience that many of you have made great progress in this area. However, young people are continuing to smoke at unacceptable levels. It is important for us all to recommit our efforts. It is critical that we show that these grants are making a difference in creating school environments which keep students tobacco free. In addition to our state level efforts to demonstrate success, we encourage you to share what works in your districts with the Legislature.

Public health research indicates that the most effective school programs to prevent tobacco use by young people have the following elements:

- **enforcement of tobacco free schools policies with alternatives to suspension, high quality classroom instruction that provides accurate information, positively affects student attitudes towards tobacco prevention and reinforces skills necessary to avoid health risk behaviors,**
- **opportunities for tobacco cessation for students and staff,**
- **active parental involvement in school-based programs,**
- **school-wide reinforcement of health promotion and resilience building, including peer leadership activity and**
- **successful collaborations with community tobacco prevention groups such as Prevention Centers, Boards of Health and Tobacco Prevention Coalitions.**

The materials in this packet should be shared with appropriate school personnel,

including your health coordinator, school nurse and chair of the Comprehensive Health Advisory Council:

1. A self evaluation tool for school-based tobacco control programs. This document, developed by DPH, is being used by the Department of Education's Program Quality Assurance Team in their Coordinated Program Review visits to 50 districts this year. You are encouraged to use this in your own local assessment of the progress of your tobacco control efforts. We *do not* need this self-evaluation returned to the Department of Education or the Department of Public Health.
2. An Educational Materials Catalogue from the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse and a review of tobacco prevention curricula. Many of these curricula are available for review at the Comprehensive Health Education Resource Centers.
3. A list of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Education Resource Centers
4. [Information on Tobacco Education Groups \(TEG\) and Tobacco Awareness Programs \(TAP\) Resources](#). Trainers are available to help your district implement alternatives to suspension and tobacco cessation programs for students who use tobacco.
5. An opportunity to participate in a new tobacco prevention initiative. The Department of Public Health will conduct an exciting project with selected school districts which will coordinate media messages with an enhanced tobacco curriculum by Scholastic. You may indicate your interest in receiving more information about this special project by returning the enclosed form.
6. [Announcement of regional tobacco training events designed especially for school personnel](#). In response to requests from school districts, the Department of Public Health will host a set of professional development events across the state. These trainings will highlight your colleagues' successful activities in the areas of enforcement of tobacco free school policies, curriculum implementation, tobacco cessation programs and coordination with community-based programs.
7. [Promising Practices Information Sheet](#). As part of our statewide evaluation effort of the use of Health Protection Funds, the Department of Education will be collecting information about effective local programs. Please help us identify our successes by completing this sheet, which will be used as part of a Department of Education Promising Practices database.

Thank you for your continued commitment to healthy students and healthy schools.

Availability of Training for Youth Tobacco Education Groups (TEG) and Tobacco Awareness (Cessation) Programs (TAP)

As Massachusetts school districts implement their tobacco control programs, many staff are becoming group facilitators of the Tobacco Education Group (TEG) and the Tobacco Awareness or (cessation) Program (TAP). Keith Pendell, a consultant and tobacco program specialist for Community Interventions, Inc., developed these youth-oriented programs for the school setting. (Mr. Pendell is also the tobacco educator and cessation coordinator for several Orange County, California school districts.) The Department of Education and the Department of Public Health are now in the process of extending the training programs for group facilitators of TEG and TAP. This year local Prevention Centers will again offer the training programs for school personnel. School districts are encouraged to implement both the tobacco education groups and the tobacco cessation programs in as many middle and high schools as possible.

Tobacco Education Group (TEG): This program provides a positive alternative to

suspension, when a student is in violation of the school's tobacco-free policy. Through the training program for TEG, group facilitators learn to (a) successfully conduct a tobacco education group, (b) motivate adolescent tobacco users to adopt healthier lifestyles, and (c) move them toward the desire and action stages of quitting. The curriculum consists of eight sessions addressing smoking and smokeless tobacco, the pressures to use tobacco, its impact on health and student finances, etc. Upon completing the TEG, students should have the opportunity to **voluntarily** join a tobacco cessation program.

Tobacco Awareness Program (TAG): This is an eight-session tobacco cessation program for middle and high school students. Through the training program, group facilitators learn how to (a) implement a tobacco cessation program in the school setting, (b) advertise and promote the cessation program, (c) facilitate a TAP program, and (d) motivate youth to quit using tobacco. The program focuses on both smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco. (Please note: Some school systems use the TAP program instead of the TEG program for students who violate the tobacco-free school policy.)

Many Massachusetts schools have implemented these programs. Those which are most successful have a well defined and *consistently enforced* tobacco-free school policy, offer the programs to students in a supportive manner and conduct the sessions during the school day. (The Department of Education considers the TAP program to be "instructional time.")

Please call your Prevention Center for further information about these programs.

ANNOUNCEMENT

1996-1997 School-Based Tobacco Control Education Events Coming to a Site Near You

The Department of Public Health's Tobacco Control Program will invite you to attend a regional meeting for school personnel interested in improving tobacco prevention and cessation efforts in their schools.

What: A day of discussion designed specifically for school personnel.

Topics include: Enforcing Tobacco Free Schools Policies
Implementing Effective Curricula
What to Expect with a Student Tobacco Cessation Program
Working with Community Groups
Substantial Networking Time Built In to Agenda
Highlighting Best Practices
Mailing Resources Available

Where & When: Sites throughout the state will be announced in early 1997. Your regional Prevention Center will contact you.

Who: Participants are any interested teacher, school nurse, administrator or health coordinator

Cost: Free

Watch for more details soon!

**Massachusetts Department of Education
Health Protection Grant Program
Tobacco Education Promising Practices
Information Sheet**

School District:

Address:

Person Completing Form:

Phone:Date:

The Department of Education is interested in highlighting successful programs for any of the following components of school-based tobacco education programs. Please describe your program and what makes it successful and submit it by December 6, 1996 to:

**Promising Practices in Tobacco Education
Learning Support Services
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148**

Please answer questions A and B to any of the following topics you feel is handled in an exemplary manner in your district:

A = How does your program work? B = What is your evidence of success?

Tobacco Free Schools Policies Enforcement:

A.

B.

2. Classroom Tobacco Prevention Education

A.

B.

3. School-wide Tobacco Prevention Campaigns:

A.

B.

4. Tobacco Cessation for Students or Staff:

A.

B.

5. Parental Involvement in Tobacco Education:

A.

B.

6. Tobacco Related Peer Leadership/Education Programs:

A.

B.

7. Collaboration with Community Groups such as Tobacco Control Coalitions, Boards of Health or Prevention Centers:

A.

B.

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Informational Memorandum from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs

To: Councils on Aging
Home Care Corporations
Area Agencies on Aging
Schools
Massachusetts Intergenerational Network
Interested Parties

From: Franklin P. Ollivierre

Date: November 14, 1996

Re: Intergenerational Program Survey

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs with the support of the Department of Education and the Massachusetts Intergenerational Network is conducting a state-wide survey to update information on intergenerational programs. The information gathered will be useful in our efforts to develop a new directory and further our efforts in intergenerational program development. If your agency or school is sponsoring an intergenerational program, we would like to include it in the directory. In order to avoid duplication, please complete the survey with all collaborators and submit only one survey.

In 1992 we conducted a similar survey that identified 400 intergenerational programs. We are very interested in learning about program changes and new initiatives.

The following definition is given as a guideline for intergenerational programming:

"The purposeful bringing together of different generations in ongoing, mutually beneficial planned activities designed to achieve specific program goals. Through intergenerational programs young and old share their talents and resources, supporting each other in relationships that benefit both the individuals and the community."

Henkins and Goyer

Elder Affairs appreciates your assistance in completing and returning the survey by December 6, 1996, to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, One Ashburton Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02108, Attn: Intergenerational Survey. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call Sheila Donahue King or Betsy Burton Kelly at (617) 727-7750, or 1-800-882-2003.



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Board in Brief

Thursday, November 21, 1996

This is [Board in Brief](#), issued at the request of Commissioner Bob Antonucci, to bring you up to date on [Board of Education](#) developments of interest to the Department staff. The following is a report on the Board meeting held on Monday, November 18, 1996 at the Massachusetts Department of Education in Malden.

Budget

The Board had a lengthy discussion on its proposed \$3 billion FY98 budget for education. Following consideration of a number of amendments, the Board postponed a final vote until the December meeting. There was extensive discussion on Board member Jim Peyser's recommendation to block grant a number of program line-items, and on turning a number of entitlement grants, such as Chapter 636 desegregation funds into competitive grants. Several Board members expressed interest in having an outside evaluation of programs such as Chapter 636 and METCO. The Board expressed approval of Commissioner Antonucci's proposal to increase the level of regional school transportation reimbursement over a three-year period, and also discussed possible approaches to charter school reimbursement.

Early Childhood

Much of the Board's budget discussion concerned early childhood education. The Board voted to include in its budget request \$100 million in FY98 on early childhood education programs. That is an increase from the \$51 million recommended by the Commissioner, and would triple the \$34 million in the current state budget for early childhood education. Commissioner Antonucci also announced that he has issued contracts for expansion of Community Partnerships for children. Boston will receive \$1.8 million, Fall River \$346,500 and Self-Help programs in Abington, East Bridgewater and West Bridgewater a total of \$228,500, for example, under these new \$10 million contracts. An estimated 1,500 children will be served with these new funds, with about 40% of those served in full day/full year programs.

"If we want to get education reform off the dime then we have to spend our money this way," said Chairman Silber, who noted that France and Germany have achieved significant educational gains by devoting attention and resources to early childhood. Chairman Silber said the early years are a critical time in a child's development. The \$100 million allocation would enhance the likelihood that most children would arrive at school ready to learn. Commissioner Antonucci told the Board that \$100 million "could be absorbed easily across the state because the demand for early childhood education far exceeds the supply of state funds." Board member Jim Peyser said he was concerned by the magnitude of the request. Board members Abigail Thernstrom and Roberta Schaefer asked for data on the success of early childhood programs, and whether they

produce gains that last throughout a child's education.

Teacher Test

The Board voted to endorse a recommendation by Commissioner Antonucci to require all applicants for teacher certification as of January 1, 1998 to pass a standardized test in communication and literacy skills and in subject matter knowledge. The Department will select a vendor for the test before October 1, 1997.

Physical Education

The Board voted 5 to 2 to repeal regulations specifying the number of hours public schools have to provide physical education. Left in place was the state law requiring schools to provide all students with physical education. The vote came after six months of public comment and two hearings. Commissioner Antonucci had recommended repeal of the regulations as part of a continuing initiative to review all Board regulations to ensure they are clear, current and essential.

Board members supporting repeal noted their vote in no way disparages physical education or the need for students to be physically fit. Their concern was that districts need flexibility to determine instructional hours for physical education as for other required subjects, particularly once the curriculum frameworks and statewide assessment come on-line. "This is not a vote on whether there should be physical education or not," said student member Alexis Vagianos. "This is a vote on whether we have a time requirement that is not specified for any other subject. The districts know their needs and can make their own time decisions." Chairman Silber and member Edwin Delattre dissented. The Board also voted to repeal regulations on Tractor-Trailer Schools, Nutrition Education/School Food Service and Fiscal Requirements for Grants, and to adopt a streamlined set of regulations on Private Occupational Schools, replacing three current sets of regulations.

Curriculum Frameworks / Assessment

The Board agreed to establish a subcommittee to prepare a revised draft of the history/social science framework for a final vote before the end of the year. The subcommittee consists of Board members James Peyser, Abigail Thernstrom, and Roberta Schaefer. On English Language Arts, the Board agreed to continue discussion at the December 11 meeting. At the December meeting, the Commissioner will also present sample math and science questions from the statewide question tryout to be administered in these two areas in the spring. The Board voted to affirm that a reading test will be administered to all students in grade 3 this spring. The Board also asked the Commissioner to clarify whether, and how, the Board could require a 12th grade test for graduation in addition to the 10th grade assessment currently mandated in the [Education Reform Act](#).

GED

On the recommendation of Chairman Silber at the end of the meeting, the Board voted to administer the GED test to all high school seniors in March or April 1997. The test will be used to help identify academic deficiencies in the public schools, Chairman Silber said. Board member Abigail Thernstrom questioned using a test that may not meet high academic standards for high school curricula. But member Stanley Koplik said that in some cases the GED program is more academically rigorous. Commissioner Antonucci said the Department will research issues of cost, logistics, law and policy and

present this information to the Board next month.

Time and Learning

The Board voted to place on the December agenda consideration of whether to amend the [Student Learning Time regulations](#) to redefine "core subjects." Board member Edwin Delattre challenged the existing regulations that allow districts to count as core subjects any courses that accomplish the aims of the Common Core of Learning [[HTML](#) | [PDF](#)]. He said the Common Core is too vague, and student learning time should be focused on the core academic subjects specified in state law. Board member Thernstrom countered that school districts will soon be required to prepare students to pass a 10th grade assessment, and this will provide school districts with a powerful incentive to restructure the learning time they provide students.

The Next Board Meeting

The next Board of Education meeting will take place on December 11, 1996 in Worcester, at a location to be announced.

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