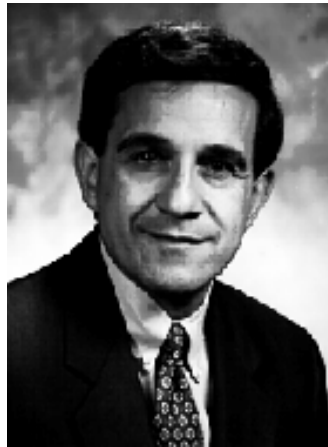


**Commissioner's Update Archive****Commissioner's Update**

June 4, 1997

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

Congratulations to all of you. We are nearing the end of the school year, and I know it has been a year of significant hard work on many fronts. We will look back on this as a year of accomplishments as we moved forward, particularly in the crucial area of assessment. Thank you for your cooperation in the many matters we worked on together.

Under separate cover, you will have already received a copy of the [June draft of the History and Social Science curriculum framework](#). We will have the adoption of a framework in History and Social Science on the agenda for the June 16 Board meeting, and have distributed this draft and the earlier [April draft](#) to all school superintendents and principals. These documents are also on the Internet on our site (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>) for the public to review. I would appreciate your comments as we move forward.

Also under separate cover, you will receive in the next week to ten days the FY 1998 coordinated grant package for competitive grants and for continuation grants that were not in the continuation/entitlement package distributed last month. Please be on the lookout for this package, which contains significant funding opportunities for you to consider pursuing. Finally, you will also receive a coordinated packet for you to complete containing the district-level forms for the information we need to collect to meet various federal and state requirements.

I want to bring to your attention as well the fact that about 80 districts and half of the charter schools have not yet applied for funds to continue the successful study groups which have been funded in prior years to focus on the learning standards in the English Language Arts and/or History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. To apply for these funds, districts and charter schools simply need to file an amendment. For the very few districts and charter schools without such grants, a grant application is needed. Since the duration of the grant is through August 31, 1997, it is my hope that study groups would use the summer weeks to work collaboratively to develop programs to meet the goals of early literacy, to develop models based on the learning standards of the English Language Arts and/or History and Social Science frameworks, and to continue to align district curriculum with these frameworks. I encourage you to file the amendment to obtain these funds.

In this mailing, I have included the following items:

1. [Schedule for End-of-Year Report workshops](#)
2. [Report on bilingual education issues by READ Institute](#)
3. Parents' Guide to Special Education Appeals matters
[No longer available]
4. [Transportation cost reimbursement information and pro rata calculations, by district](#)
5. [Federal survey required for recipients of Dwight D. Eisenhower professional development funds](#)

6. [Department memorandum on out-of-state special education programs](#)

As always, I very much appreciate your making copies of the documents which would be valuable to members of your staff and community. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you or speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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1996- 1997 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report Workshops

TO: Superintendents of Schools, Municipal Officials

FROM: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

DATE: June 2, 1997

This year we have scheduled five workshops to distribute and discuss the 1996-1997 End of Year Pupil Financial Reports. We are encouraging school as well as municipal officials to attend one of these workshops at a location convenient to your district. We plan to distribute each district's report at the workshop and will discuss and answer questions concerning each schedule of the report. In the event you are unable to attend any session we will be mailing the materials to you. **We request that you fax the attached reservation form ([download WordPerfect 5.1 file](#)) 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 24 Assabet Valley High School](#)

[June 25 Minuteman Technical High School](#)

[June 26 Plymouth South High School](#)

[June 30 Reed Institute, Westfield](#)

[July 15 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. Your cooperation will be appreciated. The Department staff is committed to providing quality service to local school districts. By working together we are sure to improve our results. Thank you.

DIRECTIONS FOR END OF YEAR REPORT MEETINGS

June 24, 1997 - 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 25, 1997 - 9:00 AM
Minuteman

Route 128 to exit 30B (Route 2A, Hanscom Base). Minuteman Technical School on left side, less than one mile after exit.

June 26, 1997 - 9:00 AM
Plymouth South High School, Plymouth

South on Route 3 to exit 3, bear right off ramp. North on Route 3 bear left off ramp. At the end of the ramp turn right onto Long Pond Road. Proceed one mile to school on right.

June 30, 1997 - 9:00 AM
Reed Center, Westfield

Massachusetts Turnpike to exit 3. At the end of the ramp turn right onto Route 202 and 10 South. Travel 3/4 of a mile and turn right onto Notre Dame Street. The Mestek/Reed Center is on the left. Enter parking lot at first gate on left.

July 15, 1997 - 9:00 AM
Assabet Valley Regional Vocational Technical, Marlboro

See directions for June 24, 1997.

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READ Institute Report on Findings of Bilingual Education Study

June 2, 1997

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders and Principals:

As you know, the Board of Education recently repealed a number of regulations concerning transitional bilingual education. Also, the Governor has proposed legislation which would substantially reform the statute governing these programs for children with limited English language skills. The Board has given its general endorsement to the Governor's bill. It is important for us to be guided by solid academic research on this issue. Bilingual education involves teaching English-speaking children and foreign-speaking children both English and a foreign language. But transitional bilingual programs all too often teach a foreign language with inadequate attention to English. We fail children when we delay their access to English and mainstream courses.

The [READ Institute \(Research in English Acquisition and Development\)](#) has published a research report that [reviews the findings of a National Research Council study on bilingual education](#). This research will shape the making of public policy as well as the development of local programs for years to come. The full study is 400 pages in length, while the READ analysis offers a cogent summary which we are providing with this letter. The summary is timely and presents these major conclusions:

- We do not know whether native language teaching is helping or hurting limited-English language students;
- Teaching children to read in English first, and not in the native language, does not have negative consequences;
- Emphasizing ethnic differences in the classroom is counterproductive. It does not lead to better self-esteem for language minority children, and;
- Teachers who are members of minority groups are no more effective than non-minority teachers at educating minority children.

We urge you to share the summary of the study with your staff, or obtain the full National Research Council report. Additional copies and further information may be obtained directly from the READ Institute, PO Box 24287, Amherst, MA 01004-2428 (#413-256-0034).

Thank you for your consideration of this report, and for your ongoing work to provide serious academic study for all of the students in our public schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

Dr. John R. Silber
Chairman, Board of Education

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1997 State Aid for Transportation

TO: School Superintendents, Mayors, Boards of Selectmen, Municipal Accountants

FROM: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

DATE: June 2, 1997

After receiving and reviewing the FY 96 End-of-Year Reports and based on the level of state aid appropriated this fiscal year, we have certified the local aid entitlements for pupil transportation. All six of these transportation entitlements will be pro-rated at 32.98% and you will shortly receive payment for:

1. Pupil Transportation, Chapter 71, Section 7A.
2. School Transportation, Chapter 71, Section 7B.
3. Racial Imbalance Transportation, Chapter 71, Section 37D.
4. Bilingual Transportation, Chapter 71A, Section 8.
5. Special Needs Transportation, Chapter 71B, Section 14.
6. Outside Vocational Transportation, Chapter 74, Section 8A.

In addition the following transportation entitlement will be pro-rated at 72.66% and will be included with items (1) through (6) in a total payment.

7. Non-Public School Transportation, Chapter 71, Sections 7A and 7B for cities and towns.

Finally this entitlement will be paid separately and pro-rated at 66.58%:

8. Regional School Transportation, Chapter 71, Section 16C.

Enclosed with this memorandum, you will find summary schedules of each district's entitlement, prior year adjustment, pro-rated entitlement and net payment. You will also find detailed calculations of your district's entitlements with an explanation of the different formulas ([Download as Lotus file](#)).

I hope this information is clear, and helpful to you. Please call (781) 338-3000 if you have any questions. Thank you for your understanding.

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Dwight D. Eisenhower Grant Program

The Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Program was originally authorized in Title II of the Education Development Security Act of 1984. Concerned with the economic competitiveness and national security of the nation, Congress reauthorized the Eisenhower Program in 1988 to improve the skills of teachers and the quality of instruction in mathematics and science in the nation's public and private elementary and secondary schools. The authorizing statute was renamed the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act when it was included as part of the Augustine F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. This statute reauthorized the Eisenhower Program for the 1989-90 through 1994-95 program years.

The purpose of the Eisenhower Program is to provide professional development to teachers and other school staff. Under the 1988 legislation, these professional development activities may take the form of mathematics and/or science workshops, seminars, summer institutions, and college or university course work, as well as other forms of teacher development. The Eisenhower Program was reauthorized as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program in 1994 for program years 1995-96 through 1999-2000. The program emphasis is now on sustained and intensive, high-quality professional development tied to challenging State standards with an expanded subject area emphasis that includes not only mathematics and science, but all core subject areas. Each State is also required to develop and report on performance indicators for professional development every three years and also include professional development as a part of a comprehensive plan for educational reform.

ALLOCATION OF PROGRAM FUNDS

Under the Eisenhower Program, funds flow from the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) to each SEA, SAHE and LEA, based on statutory formulas. The amount of funds to be distributed to each State is based upon two equal factors: the relative populations of children aged five through 17, and the relative amount of each State's Title I, Part A, allocation for the preceding fiscal year. The amount of funds that the SEA distributes to each LEA is also based upon two factors: the relative enrollment of students in public and private nonprofit elementary and secondary schools within the LEAs' boundaries, and the relative amount of each LEAs' Title I, Part A, allocation for the preceding fiscal year. If a State chooses not to participate in the Eisenhower Program, funds that it would be eligible to receive will be reallocated to participating States in accordance with the original formula.

The SEA receives 84 percent of the State's allocation for elementary and secondary education programs and State-level activities. Of this amount, the SEA distributes at least 90 percent by formula to LEAs in the State; it may retain up to five percent for State-level activities and an additional five percent for administrative costs. The SAHE receives the remaining 16 percent of the State's allocation. Of this amount, the SAHE distributes at least 95 percent through competitive subgrants to IHEs and NPOs, and the SAHE may retain up to five percent for administrative costs.

If all LEAs in a State do not apply for program funds, the SEA may reallocate these funds to other LEAs in any reasonable fashion. However, funds must be reallocated to LEAs; the SEA may not expend the funds for its own purposes.

SUPPORTING A READING PRIORITY

- Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program
(ESEA, TITLE II--PART B)
U.S. Department of Education
February, 1998

I. Background

In support of President Clinton's "Call to Action," Secretary Riley has focused significant attention on reading as a key to the success of America's students and has made it one of his top seven priorities in improving education for the Nation. Ensuring that "all students can read well and independently by the end of the 3rd grade" requires a multidimensional strategy to improve teaching and learning opportunities in school and communities throughout the country. The America Reads Challenge Initiative reflects this kind of strategy to increase reading proficiency, is

providing high-quality professional development opportunities that give teachers and other educators the knowledge and skills they need to effectively teach reading skills.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 appropriation for Title II, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)--the Eisenhower Professional Development Program--is \$335 million, of which \$25 million is specifically earmarked for professional development in reading. By law the first \$250 million of this \$335 million must support professional development in mathematics and science. Still, the \$25 million and other available FY 1998 Eisenhower funds serve as an important catalyst that helps support the kind of high-quality professional development that can best promote reading proficiency.

Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

If you have any questions, please contact Neil Davidson at (781) 338-3000 extension 243.

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Out-of-State Special Education Programs

Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE) Policy Regarding the Approval of Private Out-of-State Programs Providing Special Education Services to Massachusetts Students, Including Requests for Out-of State Sole Source of Care Approval

In effect: May 1, 1997

A. Background

Local school districts, through the Chapter 766 TEAM process, have full responsibility to determine what services are necessary for a student with special education needs. Placement decisions are made at the local level. If the local school district TEAM determines that necessary services cannot be provided in state, then local school districts may identify appropriate out-of-state special education programs.

Currently, all New England states have approval requirements for private special education schools located in their state. According to federal special education law, all state education agencies have oversight responsibilities for programs serving students with disabilities.

B. Regulatory and Authorizing Environment

The Massachusetts legislature has consistently appropriated funds for the specific purpose of paying up to 50% of the costs of special education services in 24 hour residential schools (called the "50/50 program"). The MDOE is the state agency responsible for the administration of this program.

The Office of the Comptroller, by policy and historical procedure, requires documentation from the Massachusetts Division of Purchased Services (MDPS) of rate approval prior to authorizing release of state funds. MDOE approves out-of-state programs primarily to enable MDPS to set rates, and only then for the purposes of disbursing funds directly from accounts managed by MDOE (such as the "50/50" account).

C. School District Responsibility

The Chapter 766 Regulations are clear that primary responsibility to ensure appropriateness of placement for students with disabilities rests with the local school district. A school district (LEA) may place a student in an out-of-state program if it believes that such program is the most appropriate for the student. In the case of an out-of-state program that has been approved by the host state, the school district must request and maintain in the student's file current documentation of the host state's approval. Further, the school district must ensure that the tuition charged for out-of-state programs is either approved by the host state, or is the lowest rate charged to students with similar presenting needs.

D. State Funding and State Approval

Subject to legislative appropriation of funds available to the MDOE, LEAs may initiate activities with MDOE to obtain program approval for out-of-state special education programs. Once approval is obtained from the MDOE, out-of-state programs are eligible for rate approval through MDPS. Program approval from MDOE and rate approval from MDPS are only necessary for programs when the school district is seeking funding from the state (using, for instance, the "50/50" program).

Program Approval: At the request of the Massachusetts LEA, and in coordination with the out-of state program, the MDOE may "approve" out-of-state programs upon receipt of documentation showing (a) the intent of a Massachusetts school district to place a student in the out-of-state program, and (b) approval from the host state to operate as a private special education school. MDOE may issue a three (3) year "approval" to the out-of-state

program and will forward such approval to the MDPS for pricing. MDOE may, at its discretion, deny or revoke any approval if it deems that circumstances warrant such action. MDOE program approval will remain current for either three (3) years from the date of the initial approval or until the end of the program session (if placement is made mid-session), whichever is longer. . Out-of-state programs may accept other Massachusetts students without additional documentation during the three (3) year period of approval. Out-of-state programs with current approval as of 5/1/97 will retain MDOE approval status through the 1997-98 school year only, and must reapply if a three (3) year approval is requested. If the out-of-state program is not approved by the host state, the approval process becomes subject to sole source-of care requirements outlined below.

Once Massachusetts "approval" status for a program is no longer current, the MDPS will no longer be obligated to set annual rates until documentation is updated showing (a) presence of Massachusetts enrolled students and (b) approval from the host state. It is the responsibility of the Massachusetts LEA or the out-of-state program to initiate or reinstate this three (3) year approval.

Tuition Rate Approval: Rate approval from MDPS will be contingent on current MDOE approval and submission of annual pricing documentation. The MDPS will issue annual rate approval letters that will be used in state purchasing activity in relation to tuition payments to out-of-state programs (e.g. for the "50/50" program).

(a) For out-of-state programs existing in states with a state agency rate setting procedure, the MDPS will require documentation showing the rate set by the host state and will approve such rate for Massachusetts students.

(b) If the host state has no rate setting procedures, the MDPS will generally accept a tuition rate consistent with the tuition that would be paid for students enrolled in the program by the host state and will require documentation demonstrating that the rate is the lowest rate charged for the service. MDPS will exercise judgment as to whether additional documentation may be required for programs operating in states with no rate approval procedures.

E. Program Responsibility & Monitoring:

Program responsibility: The Massachusetts school district placing a student in an out-of-state special education program remains responsible to ensure that the program and services are appropriate. The school district is responsible to arrange for services, conduct TEAM meetings and annual review procedures, and make whatever site visits it deems necessary to ensure appropriate services for the student, including verification of the use of qualified personnel.

Monitoring: The MDOE will monitor out-of-state programs in the following manner: MDOE will accept evidence of approval status from the host state as sufficient evidence of active state oversight. However, If a problem is identified, the MDOE has duties to conduct investigations and ensure that Massachusetts students receive a free appropriate public education. In such cases, the MDOE may request the Massachusetts school district to conduct an investigation, may contact the Department of Education in the host state, or may, if it deems such action necessary, conduct an onsite investigation. Massachusetts program approval status may be withdrawn by MDOE at its discretion.

As part of MDOE's oversight responsibilities, MDOE will conduct targeted reviews of Massachusetts LEA documentation, LEA monitoring of out-of-state programs, and other procedures ensuring appropriate services for students placed in out-of-state special education programs.

F. Sole Source of Care Requests:

For out-of-state programs that are not approved to provide special education services by their host state, the LEA must submit the following documentation to MDOE if state funding is requested: (a) a letter documenting the intent to place a student in the out-of-state program, and (b) An assurance statement signed by both the Administrator of Special Education and the Superintendent that states that the out-of-state program has appropriately credentialed staff to provide the unique services needed by the student , and that the LEA has gone or will go on-site to ensure that the school is able to provide a safe and appropriate education according to the student's IEP. In such circumstances, MDOE will grant approval for a single year for the specific student and will request the MDPS to price the sole source of care placement. Such sole source of care approvals must be renewed each year.