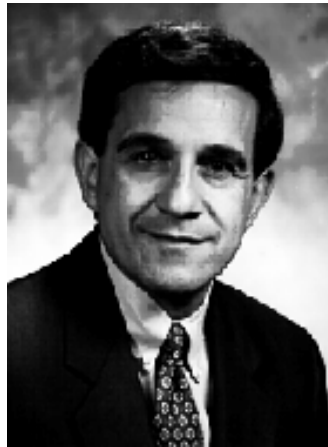


**> Commissioner's Update Archive****Commissioner's Update**

October 21, 1997

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

In a separate mailing, you will have already received notification of the [foundation reserve awards](#) being given for fiscal year 1998. The materials on that matter will answer your questions about how decisions were made. I appreciate your understanding on this issue, knowing that there were requests for more than three times the amount of funds that were available in the program this year.

I also want to let you know that we expect to be mailing the [history/social science curriculum framework](#) to each school by the end of next week. We will be providing substantial numbers of copies which should be sufficient to meet the needs of the administrators, teachers and staff in every school.

I want to alert you that the Board of Higher Education's second College-to-School Report is scheduled for release on November 13, 1997. I want to be sure that you receive it at the same time it is made public. Therefore, I plan to mail a copy of the report to you on November 13, the same day it will be mailed to members of the Board of Higher Education and to the press. The report will also be posted on our website. I will discuss the nature of the report and its intended purposes when I see many of you at the MASS/MASC conference on the Cape on November 5 and 6.

In this bi-monthly mailing, I have enclosed seven items for your use:

1. Recertification Guide for Massachusetts Educators. This is being mailed within the next two weeks to all teachers at their home addresses. We are providing this advance copy for all superintendents and principals. We are ready to recertify educators now.
[No longer available]
2. Fall, 1997 update on educational technology. This newsletter contains useful information about educational technology developments of considerable interest.
[No longer available]
3. Fall, 1997 edition of "The Connector," - newsletter describing statewide school to-work activities.
[No longer available]
4. ["Notice of agency interpretation of regulation," concerning school construction projects. Please read this notice in full, and I especially draw your attention to the final paragraph.](#)
5. [Board-in-Brief, summary of October 8 MA Board of Education meeting.](#)
6. [1998 Teacher of the Year. The 1998 Teacher of the Year is available to districts for professional development.](#)
7. Announcement of November professional development opportunities for food service directors (sent also to food service directors).
[No longer available]

These documents will be posted on our website at www.doe.mass.edu. As always, I appreciate your making copies available to your staff as needed.

With all best wishes, and

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Education Laws and Regulations

Notice Of Agency Interpretation Of Regulation

To: Superintendents, School Committees, Municipal Officials, Architects, Civil Engineers, General Contractors, Building Inspectors, and other interested parties

From: Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

Date: October 22, 1997

Re: Regulations On School Construction
603 CMR 38.03, Design Specifications, Renovation of Existing Buildings

This notice is intended to clarify the Department of Education's interpretation of its regulations governing design requirements for proposed school construction projects involving the expansion and/or renovation of existing buildings. Those regulations appear at 603 CMR 38.03.

It has come to our attention that the current wording of 603 CMR 38.03(2) has created confusion and may have been interpreted by some as imposing on school construction projects building code requirements other than those specified at 780 CMR 34, the section of the State Building Code entitled "Repair, Alteration, Addition and Change of Use of Existing Buildings." The Department and Board of Education did not intend this result, and the regulations will be amended in the near future to eliminate this confusion.

In the meantime, please be advised that the Department of Education interprets 603 CMR 38.03(2) to require that the design specifications for school construction projects for the expansion and renovation of existing buildings meet the current Building Code requirements established by the Executive Office of Public Safety for changes to existing buildings. These requirements are detailed in the current edition of the Building Code, codified at 780 CMR 34.

As long as design specifications for school construction projects for the expansion and renovation of existing buildings satisfy the requirements set forth at 780 CMR 34, they will be accepted by the Department and deemed to meet the requirements of 603 CMR 38.03(2).

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Board in Brief

This is "Board in Brief," issued at the request of Commissioner Bob Antonucci, to bring you up to date on Massachusetts Board of Education matters. The following is a report on the meeting held Wednesday, October 8, 1997 at the Massachusetts Department of Education in Malden.

October 8, 1997

State Budget Request for FY '99 - Initial Discussion

Commissioner Antonucci led members of the Board in an initial discussion of priorities for the FY '99 state budget for public education. Board member Bill Irwin urged the Board to consider requesting funding to develop standards and measures for vocational-technical education programs. Several Board members recommended an increase in state funding for Advanced Placement and other programs for gifted and talented students, as well as for the dual enrollment program that provides high school students with the opportunity to take college courses in addition to their high school classes. Board Chairman John Silber said he would like schools to devote a significant portion of their existing budgets to fund programs for gifted students. The Chairman also advocated increasing the state budget for early childhood education to at least \$200 million.

In preparation for further discussion on the proposed budget, Commissioner Antonucci asked Board members to consider levels of funding for other appropriation items such as adult education, alternative education programs and the Metco program, and also to consider whether various appropriation items should be consolidated into a block grant. The Commissioner will prepare a draft budget request for the Board's review at the November meeting. A final review of and vote on the FY '99 education budget will take place in December, and then the Board will submit the budget request to the Governor's Office and the Legislature.

Student Performance Standards for the Statewide Test

In May 1997, the Board discussed issues related to setting student performance standards for the state test, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). At that time, there was consensus on these general points: the student performance standards should be clear and understandable to parents and others and should avoid euphemisms; the performance levels should not exceed four; and the Board should include a strong public information component. Based on that direction, a set of preliminary draft standards for reporting student performance was presented to the Board.

Board member Edwin Delattre expressed concern that the draft performance levels need to be more clearly defined, and that more emphasis should be placed on students' knowledge of factual information. He suggested that the performance levels should be defined by specific content areas, and that the four standard levels should be identified "advanced," "proficient," "deficient" and "failing." Abigail Thernstrom agreed with Dr. Delattre that the standards should be rigorous and specific. Chairman Silber stated that more work needs to be done before the standards are approved.

Commissioner Antonucci said the Department will refine the proposed standards based on the Board's comments, and that the standards will probably be on the Board's agenda in December. When the Board adopts the student performance standards, they will be used to report MCAS test results for students at grades 4, 8 and 10, starting with the spring 1998 administration of the MCAS in mathematics, science and technology, and English language arts./P>

Amendments to Charter School Regulations

In July the Legislature and the Governor enacted a new charter school law, which required the Board to amend the Charter School Regulations accordingly. In August the Board voted to seek public comment on proposed amendments to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00. Based on the comments received, the proposed regulations were revised and presented to the Board. The Board discussed the proposed regulations and voted unanimously to adopt them as presented, with one additional change. The revised regulations, which are available at the Department of Education's web site, will take effect when published by the Secretary of State. They affect

current charter schools as well as applicants for new charters.

Other Matters

Chairman Silber reported on a September 28 and 30 New York Times series concerning the way in which the Educational Testing Service responded to irregularities in standardized test administration in certain states. Chairman Silber suggested that the Board write a letter to ETS expressing its disapproval of the manner in which ETS handled these issues. The Board will consider this over the next month.

Chairman Silber also asked that the Board discuss at its November 4 meeting whether to administer a statewide test to 12th graders, and whether to deny a high school diploma to students who do not pass the grade 12 state test. Expressing his personal support for this initiative, Chairman Silber recommended that the Board as a whole should decide how to proceed. He noted that the Governor is planning to file legislation on this issue.

Commissioner Antonucci provided the Board with a schedule of Board meetings through December 1998. The dates for the remainder of 1997 are: Tuesday, November 4 (in Worcester); and Monday, December 15.

The 1998 schedule is: Monday, January 12; Tuesday, February 10; Tuesday, March 10; Thursday, April 9 (Springfield area); Tuesday, May 12; Monday, June 15; Tuesday, July 14 (only if needed); Tuesday, August 18 (only if needed); Tuesday, September 22; Tuesday, October 13; Tuesday, November 10 (Worcester area); and Monday, December 14.

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings start at 9:00 a.m., and are held at the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street in Malden.

The Board approved two grants for community service learning programs, and 138 federal Goals 2000 grants to school districts to support teachers in implementing the learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, November 4, at Quinsigamond Middle School in Worcester.

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1998 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 Chief State 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, a record 418 nominations were received. An independent panel of experts including past Teachers of the Year reviewed written applications, interviewed eight finalists, and made recommendations of the top candidates for my consideration for this year's honor.

The following corporations and organizations are supporting the 1998 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program: J.L. Hammett Company; Apple Computers; College Fund Division of UICI; Microsoft Corporation; UMASS/Amherst Graduate College of Education; Massachusetts Teachers Association; Harvard Graduate College of Education; and Massachusetts Field Center for Teaching and Learning at UMASS/Boston Graduate College of Education.

I am proud to present the 1998 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Mary Ginley of Longmeadow, and wish her much energy and success in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education



1998 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year



Mary Ginley Grade 2 - Center School - Longmeadow

Mary Ginley is described by parents, colleagues and administrators as a teacher who makes "magic" happen in the classroom. Mixing creativity, compassion and her own thirst for knowledge, Mary creates a community of learners in which, in the words of a colleague, "students learn to be critical thinkers, confident writers, insatiable readers, creative problem solvers and avid listeners."

During her twenty-eight years of teaching - 5 in parochial school, 18 in Holyoke Public Schools and 5 in Longmeadow Public Schools - Mary has taught kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2. She has also served as an English as a Second Language Teacher and a Language Arts Resource Teacher. A key to her success in all of her varied experiences has been her efforts to find ways to involve the parents of her students. From personal letters and phone calls early in the school year to parent-led cooking projects and literature discussion groups, parents quickly learn that they are welcomed and even expected to be visitors and contributors to Mary's classroom.

Mary's ongoing efforts to improve her teaching have led her to study brain-based learning in recent years. Her classroom is a reflection of her research and course work, providing her students with complex experiences and opportunities to process their understanding in a variety of ways individually and cooperatively. The students also have a part in deciding how material will be covered and how learning will be assessed.

Mary has presented numerous workshops to parents and teachers in Western Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Recently, under the auspices of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, she has presented on topics including writing across the curriculum, assessing writing development, and managing a reading/writing classroom.

As Teacher of the Year, Mary is available during the 1997-1998 school year to present workshops, seminars, or keynote addresses. Please contact the Department of Education at 781-338-3000 to schedule a presentation.

Workshop Titles:

Children's Literature and the Curriculum Frameworks
Writing Across the Curriculum
Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural World
Creating a Classroom Environment for Optimum Learning
Establishing a Partnership with Parents - Communication and Collaboration

1998 Finalists

Donna Apple, Whitman-Hanson
Margaret Donohoe, Natick
Mary Kitagawa, Amherst
Melinda Learning, Rockland
Christopher Mainhart, Westwood
Suzanne Morin, Amesbury
Donna Pappalardo, Reading

1998 Semi-Finalists

Gail B. Anderson, Swampscott
Sylvia Bodmer, Holliston
Michelle Burpee-Robert, Lynnfield
Margaret Dempsey, Boston
Leanne Ganley, Framingham
John Hickey, Norton
Cassandra Morgan, New Bedford
Jane Politis, Newburyport
Melissa Scheve, Andover
Marion Sweeney, Boston
Anne Toole, Barnstable
Michael Welch, Belmont

Past Massachusetts Teachers of the Year

1997 Leonard Swanton, Lexington
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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