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## Commissioner's Update

March 12, 1998

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

I am very pleased to provide this first coordinated mailing of my tenure as Commissioner of Education. The coordination of Department mailings to school leaders was begun by Bob Antonucci three years ago, and I look forward to continuing this tradition emphasizing the customer service functions of the Agency. David Driscoll, the Deputy Commissioner, serves in effect as the Chief Operating Officer. Like Bob Antonucci, we are committed to making every decision in the context of what is best for students. That means I will be listening to all of you, as the education professionals, for advice and information as we move ahead.

In this first coordinated mailing, I have enclosed the following six items for your use. They are also on the Department website ([www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)) and I would very much appreciate your distributing the documents to your staff and community wherever it would be useful to do so.

1. [Board-in-Brief summary of March 10 State Board meeting](#)
2. Op-ed from Boston Globe, March 9, 1998  
[ No longer available ]
3. [Request for public comment on school building reimbursement regulations](#)
4. Invitation to May 17-20 Title I Conference  
[ No longer available ]
5. Lighthouse Workshops for May  
[ No longer available ]
6. [Violence prevention month materials](#)

Separately, I am sending school principals "[The Founding Documents: A Manual for Teachers and Study Guide for Students](#)." This book was written by Professor Steven S. Tigner under the auspices of Boston University's National Center for America's Founding Documents. In hopes of assisting teachers and students, Chairman of the Board John Silber has arranged for each public school to receive a complimentary copy.

In closing, I want to thank you for your ongoing leadership on behalf of students. As I said to the Board this week, we all need to keep our eye on doing what's best for students. On that high ground, we will be successful; off that ground, we will fail in our efforts. I look forward to working closely with you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Frank W. Haydu III  
Commissioner of Education (Ad Interim)



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## Board in Brief

### Wednesday, March 11, 1998

This is "[Board in Brief](#)," issued at the request of Interim Commissioner Frank W. Haydu III, to bring you up to date on [Massachusetts Board of Education](#) matters. The following is a report on the meeting held Tuesday, March 10, 1998, at the Massachusetts Department of Education in Malden.

#### Comments from the Chairman

Chairman of the Board John Silber welcomed Frank Haydu to his first Board meeting as Interim Commissioner of Education. He noted that the Department and the Board of Education would be served well by Mr. Haydu, who, as a former member of the Board of Education, has a long and distinguished history of public service.

Chairman Silber reported that the search process for a permanent Commissioner is continuing. On the Chairman's recommendation, the Board agreed to extend the deadline for submission of applications to April 15.

Chairman Silber reported that he and former Commissioner Antonucci testified before the House Ways and Means Committee on the proposed FY 99 budget for education. He emphasized the importance of funding early childhood education programs, and requested that \$169 million be added to the budget to fund more early education programs. Additionally, Chairman Silber urged the Legislature to pass a special education reform bill that would incorporate the federal standard, and to increase the number of charter schools to at least 5% of the total number of public schools in the state.

#### Comments from the Interim Commissioner

This was the first Board meeting for Interim Commissioner Frank W. Haydu III. Mr. Haydu stated his pleasure at the warm welcome he received from the staff of the Department of Education. He said he has already begun meeting with individual members of the Board, education leaders, the Legislature and the press. He stated, "I am committed to listening very closely to everyone who has an interest in public education policy. I believe that we all have a lot to learn from the Department's senior staff, who have strong backgrounds on the important issues, and whose advice we should enlist."

Noting the need for fuller discussion by the Board and Department staff on key policy issues, Interim Commissioner Haydu and the Board agreed to hold a series of special meetings to be held on the evening prior to each regular monthly Board meeting. The first special meeting will focus on student assessment, and will take place on Wednesday evening, April 8. Subsequent evening meetings will be held in May (teacher testing) and June (school and district performance standards).

Interim Commissioner Haydu presented to the Board his priorities for the next three to six months, which include: recruiting a top-flight Commissioner; implementing the new teacher certification exam and addressing other issues related to teacher quality; completing revisions on the foreign languages, health and arts curriculum frameworks, and planning the revision process for the math and science frameworks; conducting the grade 3 reading test and the MCAS tests in grades 4, 8 and 10, and addressing related issues such as public outreach and standard setting; and developing and implementing an audit and accountability system to analyze the impact of education reform in classrooms, schools and districts. Haydu stated he believes Education Reform will move forward effectively if these priorities are the focus during this interim period. In that context, the Board agreed to postpone its consideration of proposed legislation to amend the Racial Imbalance Law. That discussion,

originally scheduled for April, will be deferred until sometime in the next school year.

Mr. Haydu notified the Board that Associate Commissioner Nick Fischer will be leaving the Department at the end of the month to become Superintendent of Schools in Christina, Delaware. He served in the Department since September 1993, as Associate Commissioner for Finance and Accountability.

### **State Plan for Professional Development Discussed**

Deputy Commissioner David Driscoll presented to the Board the draft State Plan for Professional Development. The Education Reform Act requires the Commissioner to develop an annual state plan for professional development. Deputy Commissioner Driscoll noted that the Board of Higher Education will review this draft, and the final document will be revised based on their suggestions.

Board member Stanley Koplik stated that the final document should include more emphasis on the content knowledge and learning standards of the curriculum frameworks. Board member Jim Peyser agreed, noting that the final draft should also have a greater emphasis on the role of the principal in guiding staff development.

Chairman Silber said that he has asked Board members Ed Delattre and Roberta Schaefer to serve as the subcommittee to work with the Deputy Commissioner to revise the draft. The revised plan will be presented to the Board for approval later this spring, after which it will be filed with the Legislature and distributed to schools.

### **Update on the Lawrence Public Schools**

Deputy Commissioner David Driscoll, who is leading the state's efforts in Lawrence under the nine-point state agreement with the Lawrence School Committee, reported on recent developments in the school system. He said that great strides have been made in analyzing student attendance and suspension data and in gaining a clearer understanding of the district's budget and personnel matters, including certification.

He reported on three issues of high priority: (1) the search for a new superintendent is continuing, and the deadline will likely be extended to encourage more interest; (2) several other key leadership positions will become vacant in June; and (3) the district needs to address the condition of school building facilities, which he described as "intolerable." Driscoll said, "The district is over capacity by 1300 students at the elementary level, and many of the schools are over 100 years old. A building plan needs to be developed as soon as possible."

### **Grants for Educational Technology Approved**

The Board awarded a total of \$584,000 in grants under the federal Technology Literacy Challenge program to five school districts: Boston, Douglas, Hudson, Springfield and Watertown.

### **Next Meeting**

Each spring, it is traditional for the student member of the Board to host a Board meeting at the student's high school. Student member Micah Silver will host the next regular meeting of the Board of Education at his high school, the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School, 507 Main Street, in Orange, on Thursday, April 9, at 9:00 a.m.

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## School Construction Regulations

**TO:** Superintendents of Schools and Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** Frank W. Haydu III, Interim Commissioner

**DATE:** March 6, 1998

The Board of Education is soliciting public comment on proposed amendments to 603 CMR 38.00, School Construction Regulations. The amendments under consideration include a 3.5% increase in the square foot cost allowances for capital construction in recognition of market increases in the costs of materials, labor and technology involved in school construction projects. (603 CMR 38.06).

The proposed square foot cost allowance schedule for fiscal year 1999 is as follows:

	FY 1998 Cost Standards	FY 1999 Proposed Cost Standards
Elementary	\$153.00	\$158.00
Middle/Jr. High	\$ 163.00	\$169.00
High Schools	\$174.00	\$180.00
Vocational	\$ 185.00	\$ 191.00

Two additional amendments to the School Construction regulations are proposed. The first is to clarify 603 CMR 38.03 (2), concerning design requirements for proposed school construction projects involving the expansion and/or renovation of existing buildings. The current wording of the regulation has led to confusion about which provision of the State Building Code applies to expansion and renovation of existing buildings. Currently §38.02 (2) says: "The design specifications for all projects, including those for the expansion and renovation of an existing building, shall meet all current building code requirements for new construction." The proposed amendment would revise this section to read:

603 CMR 38.03 (2): The design specifications for all projects, including those for the expansion and renovation of an existing building, shall meet the applicable building code requirements established by the Executive Office of Public Safety.

An amendment to 603 CMR 38.03 (8), concerning instructional and administrative technology is also proposed. Currently §38.03 (8) says: "The plans for all projects shall reflect to the best of the applicant's ability attention to the 21st century technological needs of students, faculty, and school staff." The proposed amendment to this section reads:

603 CMR 38.03 (8): All projects shall include voice, data and video infrastructure capable of delivering industry-accepted bandwidth into every classroom and administrative office in the facility. Facilities shall be designed with [a] sufficient electrical service to support the equivalent of at least five computers per average instructional room; [b] adequate and appropriate utility space to host servers, routers, hubs, WAN head ends, and other local telecommunications equipment; and [c] adequate heating, ventilation and air conditioning to support the technology that will be installed in the school.

We are soliciting public comment on the proposed amendments to the School Construction regulations in accordance with G.L. Chapter 30A, the Administrative Procedure Act. Please forward your comments by mail to James Anderson, Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148; by fax to 781-338-3390; or by email at [janderson@doe.mass.edu](mailto:janderson@doe.mass.edu). The deadline for submission of public comment on the proposed amendments to 603 CMR 38.00 is **Friday, April 3, 1998**.

The Board is expected to vote on the proposed amendments to the School Construction regulations at its regular meeting on May 15, 1998. If the regulations are amended, we anticipate that the effective date for the new regulations will be on or about July 1, 1998.

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## Violence Prevention Month, May 1998

Dear Superintendent:

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Injury Prevention and Control Program requests the participation of your schools in **Violence Prevention Month, May 1998**. The theme of Violence Prevention Month, 1998 is "Massachusetts: Pathways of Peace."

Violence prevention can be achieved through the combined efforts of many individuals and state or community-based agencies, such as schools. Although violence may seem overwhelming, our efforts will make the difference. Every school is encouraged to conduct activities appropriate for their needs and setting. We have enclosed a list of suggestions that can be easily adapted to a variety of school based activities, "**Things Your School Can Do For Violence Prevention Month.**"

Enclosed you will also find an **Event Description Form** to help us publicize events that are occurring around the state. We encourage you to duplicate and distribute the enclosed materials to principals, guidance counselors, nurses and other members of the school community who could contribute making **Violence Prevention Month** a success. Once schools have planned activities, we ask that they complete and return the form to:

**Prevention Support Services  
The Medical Foundation  
95 Berkeley Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
or Fax to: (617) 451-0062**

Please return the form by **April 2, 1998** so that the information about your activity can be included in the statewide calendar.

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Ellen Connorton, Violence Prevention / Intentional Injury Coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, (617) 624-5433.

Sincerely,

Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH  
Commissioner  
Department of Public Health

Sincerely,

Frank Haydu III  
Interim Commissioner  
Department of Education

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## Ten Things Your School Can Do for Violence Prevention Month

1. **Develop a Violence Awareness Campaign**--Have students create posters, buttons or bumper stickers to promote non-violence and educate on the dangers of violence.
2. **Bring in Guest Speakers**--Every community has a range of expertise on violence and how to prevent it. Invite representatives from law enforcement, domestic violence, conflict resolution or counseling programs who can speak to students and staff.
3. **Monitor TV Violence**--Television programming is a teacher. Have students keep TV logs in which they record programs which contain violence, and acts of violence in those programs. Which shows are the most violent? Which stations air the most violent programming? Write letters congratulating those that don't.
4. **Implement a Conflict Resolution program**--How are conflicts resolved in your school? Do the adults need more conflict resolution skills? Do the students? Explore establishing new conflict resolution procedures, implementing a conflict resolution curriculum, or getting training for students and staff.
5. **Hold a Non-Violence Bookfair**--Ask the librarian to collect and display books and other print and non-print materials related to violence and non-violence. These can include novels, picture books, recordings, videos, non-fiction books and periodicals. This can be tied into a "Heroes and Heroines of non-violence" theme.
6. **Increase Cross-Cultural Understanding**--Divisions between people based on cultural differences can contribute to violence. But differences can also be valuable and enriching. Give students an opportunity to learn about the contributions of various groups, and a chance to discuss the challenges and rewards of diversity.
7. **Write Letters**--Let elected officials, news media, community leaders and other decision makers know how you feel about preventing violence. Have students and staff write letters urging support of violence prevention efforts.
8. **Support Anger Awareness**--Everyone gets angry, but it needn't lead to violence. Help students identify and practice constructive ways to express anger. Ask mental health professionals for help in locating resources such as discussion tips, role-plays, and curriculum activities.
9. **Develop a Violence Prevention Plan for Your School**--Have staff and students develop a plan for dealing with school violence. Decide procedures for intervening in violent situations, and plan for ways to prevent violence from occurring by implementing conflict resolution, anger awareness, and diversity programs.
10. **Create and Award a Peace Prize**--Recognize contributions to violence prevention. Form a committee to establish criteria and award certificates of merit to students, staff and community members whose efforts make for a more peaceful and constructive

organization and / or community.

*Adapted from William J. Kreidler, Educators for Social Responsibility,  
1992 Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility.*

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#### Previous Violence Prevention Month Activities

- The J.F.K. School in Northampton sponsored a month-long **Violence Awareness Poster Contest**.
- Project Teamwork at Northeastern University hosted a **Human Rights Squad Forum** for high school students to discuss ways to end discrimination against the gay and lesbian community.
- The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council held a **Kid's Peace Party** with a non-violence book-fair, violent toy turn-in, face painting, magician and resources on alternatives to aggressive / abusive behavior.
- Members of the Boston Association for the Education of Young Children received training in **Conflict Resolution for Pre-Schoolers**.
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health hosted a **Sexual Assault Prevention Conference for Youth Workers**.
- **The Clothesline Project** was displayed by Independence House in Hyannis.
- Westboro Youth and Family Services held a **Walk Against Violence**, with proceeds benefiting WAVES (Westboro Abuse, Violence, Education and Support).
- The Greater Holyoke Violence Prevention Task Force hosted a **Conference on Case Studies in Elder Abuse**.
- **Training on Children Who Witness Domestic Violence** was provided by The Milford Police Department.
- At the State House, the Massachusetts Violence Prevention Task Force hosted a **Statewide Networking Meeting**.
- The Samaritans of Merrimack Valley sponsored the "Reaching Out and Saving Lives" **Suicide Prevention Conference**.
- The Henry Lee Willis Community Center in Worcester sponsored an **Evening of Violence Prevention Through The performing Arts**.
- In Springfield, the Children's Trust Fund promoted a **3K Walk to Benefit Child Abuse Prevention**.
- Students at The Rice Square School in Worcester used data charts to **Monitor TV Viewing and Rate TV Violence**, with results published in the school newsletter.
- The YWCA of Boston promoted a **Day of Commitment to Eliminate Racism**, with guest speakers and small discussion groups.
- Peace Day in Boston sponsored a **Celebration of Non Violence** to commemorate the death of a local youth.
- Leominster High School sponsored the play "**The Yellow Dress**" with a **discussion on teen dating violence**.
- A **Candlelight Vigil for Family Peace** was coordinated by The Greater Taunton CHNA.
- The Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications

hosted a **Satellite Teleconference on Strategies for Violence Prevention**, featuring Dr. Deborah Protherow-Stith.

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**Massachusetts: Pathways of Peace**

**Violence Prevention Month, May 1998**

If you would like your event included in the statewide Violence Prevention Month Calendar of events for May 1998, please contact Ellen Connorton at (617) 624-5433 or Shuna Keenan at (617) 451-0049 with any questions

**Deadline for submitting events: April 2, 1998**

Coordinated by: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention and Control Program and Prevention Support Services, The Medical Foundation.

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