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Commissioner's Update

September 1, 1998

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

I have included just a few items in this coordinated mailing for your use:

1. Foundation Reserve Application. Some superintendents have told me that they did not notice the application on our website. I have enclosed a copy for you.
[\[No Longer Available\]](#)
2. Notification of competitive grant awards. Instead of sending out 1400 individual letters, we are posting the awards on the website. This will allow you and the public to see which grants you have received.
[\[No longer available \]](#)
3. Horace Mann Charter School Application. Eight charters are available. Initial applications are due in October.
[\[No longer available \]](#)
4. School Building Profiles.
As I mentioned in my last mailing, the Governor has asked me to request that you provide these school building profiles directly to parents. All of the data was collected by the Department from information provided by principals or by superintendents. I agree that it would be very useful to have these profiles distributed locally. We also will soon be advertising the fact that we have profiles available in hard copy and on our website.
[\[No Longer Available\]](#)
5. [FY 98 Reimbursement for the Tuition of State Wards, by district.](#)

On two other matters, I want to remind you to remind your staff who hold Standard Certificates issued September 30, 1994 or earlier that the first cycle for recertification ends in June, 1999. Recertification applications need to be received well before that time to allow the Department to process the applications, conduct random audits, and issue the recertifications. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact our office at extension 665.

Also, in the last mailing, I included a memorandum and flyer about the state student testing program schedule. There was no mention of foreign language assessment. I want to be clear that we are moving forward in a serious manner to comply with the state law requiring that foreign languages be part of the future state competency determination. The Department is currently researching what other states are doing in the area of state testing of foreign language competence. Also, we are working on revisions to the curriculum framework in this area. When that work is done, we will be in a better position to know when the state testing program can begin with pilot and trial testing.

I want to wish you and your families a terrific Labor Day holiday.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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School Finance: State Wards

Memorandum

TO: School Superintendents and Charter School Leaders

FROM: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education (Interim)

DATE: August 28, 1998

Subj: **FY98 Reimbursement for the Tuition of State Wards**

We have certified the attached schedule of state aid entitlements and pro-rated payments for the tuition of state wards under the provisions of sections seven and nine of Chapter 76. The pupils reported last fall on the FY97 State Ward Claim Form were matched against Department of Social Services records to determine eligibility. Each district's average per pupil rate in twelve different program categories was then applied to the number of full-time equivalent state wards in those programs in order to determine the amount of the entitlement.

I am grateful to the Legislature and Administration for their significant commitment to funding this program. They raised the appropriation level of this account significantly in FY97 and again in FY98, so that the pro-ration percentage now stands at 97.78 percent, compared to the 52.88 percent that was funded in FY97 and the 29.92 percent in FY96. The total entitlement rose from \$15,662,859 in FY97 to \$16,961,440 in FY98. Reimbursements in FY98 total \$16,585,420.

All superintendents and charter school leaders will receive the enclosed **FY 98 State Wards Payments** printout showing full-time equivalent state wards, entitlements and pro-rated reimbursements for all districts. In addition, each district that submitted a state ward claim form will receive the following two reports:

1. a **State Ward FY97 Pupil Eligibility Status Report** that indicates what action was taken on each claim for tuition reimbursement. The "Match to DSS" and "Reimbursement Status" columns identify one of four possible outcomes:

"Match, reimburse" means that the pupil has been identified by both the district and the Department of Social Services as a state ward, and that he or she is eligible for reimbursement.

"Match, delete, placement not in lea" indicates that the pupil was identified as a state ward, but his or her placement was not in the district and therefore the district cannot be reimbursed.

"Match, delete, parents address in lea" means that the pupil's current foster home and former home are in the same school district, making that child

ineligible for reimbursement.

"No match, delete, not state ward" occurs when the DSS file contained no record matching the pupil's identifying fields submitted on the claim form. No reimbursement is made.

2. a **1997-98 State Wards Entitlement** report showing a district's rate calculation, the number of eligible state ward fte's, and the entitlement in each program.

Accounting For State Wards Payments

The State Treasurer's Office will have made these payments by the end of August. The Department of Revenue's Bureau of Accounts advises that cities and towns that have not voted to set up a revolving account for state ward payments in accordance with Chapter 71, s.71F may choose to accrue this revenue as of June 30, 1998. Otherwise, they may request the Bureau to include the payment in their July 1, 1998 free cash certification. In either case, cities and towns without the revolving account should be aware that school finance regulations require that this payment is to be treated as local school department revenue for the purpose of determining FY99 net school spending compliance.

FY99 State Wards Issues

Over the past year this Department has been working closely with the Department of Social Services to review the current process of calculating entitlements. In FY99 we are seriously considering making a change to the way in which state wards are identified and claimed by school districts. At our End of Year Pupil and Financial Report workshops this summer we asked that districts should **not** submit claim forms unless we notify them to do so during the FY98-99 school year.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in making the state wards reimbursement program a success.

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