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## Commissioner's Update

September 22, 1998

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

I am pleased to provide this mid-month coordinated mailing with the following items for your review and distribution:

1. Department of Education 1998-1999 Professional Development Calendar  
This document contains all of the DOE-sponsored professional development activities for this school year. Please note the MCAS test schedule and school/district workshop schedule on page one, reflecting its priority this year.  
[\[No Longer Available\]](#)
2. [Teacher Quality Enhancement Legislation materials](#)  
As you may know, on July 27 Governor Cellucci, Senate President Birmingham, House Speaker Finneran and I met to publicly introduce our "12 to 62" framework to enhance the quality of our future teaching force in Massachusetts. Subsequently, the [proposal was introduced in the form of legislation, and it was passed and enacted into law](#) in August. It provides a \$60 million endowment to support our efforts to attract, train, retain and mentor our teachers. I have enclosed a copy of a memorandum I presented to the State Board of Education outlining my proposals to implement the law, and a copy of the law and the original "12 to 62" plan for your review and comments.
3. [School building assistance policy updates](#)
4. ["Board-in-Brief" summary of September 14-15 State Board of Education meetings](#)
5. [Materials from US Department of Education offering federal assistance for new state Children's Health Insurance Program](#)
6. Massachusetts Family Literacy month (November) promotional materials  
[\[No Longer Available\]](#)
7. DOE Fall Technology Presentations invitation (October 28-29)  
[\[No Longer Available\]](#)
8. [Governor's Fitness Awards invitation](#)
9. [Community service learning seminar notice \(November 20\)](#)

As always, I would appreciate your copying materials and distributing them to your staff or community as you see fit.

Thank you again for your continuing leadership on behalf of our students statewide.

All the best, and

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

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## 12 to 62 Teacher Enhancement Legislation: Timeline for Proposed Roll Out

**To:** Members of the Board of Education and Interested Parties  
**From:** David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education  
**Date:** September 15, 1998  
**Re:** 12 to 62 Teacher Enhancement Legislation: Timeline for Proposed Roll Out

**Introduction:** On July 27, Governor Cellucci, Senate President Birmingham, House Speaker Finneran, and I met to publicly introduce our framework to improve teacher quality in the Commonwealth. Legislation was subsequently filed by President Birmingham and three weeks later, on August 20, the Governor signed the legislation into law.

Attached you will find a copy of the legislation, a copy of the initial 12 to 62 proposal, and several editorials commenting on various aspects of the legislation. Since its enactment, I have communicated with several Board members, received many letters and have given 12 to 62 a lot of thought. The following is an outline describing my current thoughts about rolling out the elements of the legislation. This is a framework and there is much room for elaboration and discussion of the details with all of you.

**Future Educators of America Clubs** (programs for developing interest in the teaching profession at the Middle and High School level)

- 78 schools have requested information and an advisor's handbook in the past few years. Some of these have programs currently in place.
- This month, superintendents, principals, and teachers will receive Requests for Responses (RFR's), encouraging them to initiate a chapter of the FEA in their school. \$2000 grants will be available to 50 schools, who will use the money for advisor stipends and start-up treasuries. Funds will be distributed in December from Federal school-to-career grant support.
- Advisors will be encouraged to recruit members this fall and begin training.
- Recruitment efforts will focus on attracting diverse populations of students and developing student interest in areas of current teacher shortage.
- A full schedule of activities will be completed by each participating school during the spring semester. A summary of activities will be required by the Department and used to evaluate whether funding of individual schools should be continued. Activities will include high school students tutoring middle school students in MCAS test content areas.
- Recruitment of many more schools will continue in the spring and again in the late summer.
- Students in clubs will be encouraged to maintain a superior academic record, fully aware of the existence of the Teach for Tomorrow Scholarship Program. FEA members should be motivated by the existence of such a scholarship.

**Teach for Massachusetts** (program for attracting competent and capable, bright college graduates or mid-career professionals to teach in Massachusetts)

- We are currently in the process of reviewing the proposals of various educational consulting groups, who have already established models of recruitment, selection, and training of top students into the teaching profession. Beginning October 1, a consultant will work with the DOE to determine the details of the Massachusetts model and, subsequently, put the plan into action.
- Developing specific recruitment and training models for Teach for Massachusetts will take place in the months of October, November, and December.
- A comprehensive recruitment of college seniors and a call for mid-career professionals will begin in January and extend through the early spring.
- A group of up to 50 teachers will be identified by May 1999.
- This group will undergo an extensive training process during the summer months. They will be charged with responsibility for their own classroom at an academic summer institute for urban youth. They will deliver instruction to middle and high school students between the hours of 8 AM and noon. During the afternoon and evening hours, they will resume the role of student in classes focused on the pedagogical

elements of teaching. In addition, they will participate in discussion groups with other corps members and reflect on their own teaching. Lawrence is one of the sites where this training will take place.

- All who succeed in the summer training program will be placed in Massachusetts schools and continue their training through mentorship programs.
- Teachers will earn a \$20,000 salary bonus, distributed over the first four years of their career. They will receive \$8,000 the first year and \$4,000 in each of the three subsequent years. They must retain the status of full-time public school teacher in the state of Massachusetts to receive the bonus.

#### **Attracting Excellence to Teaching** (program of loan reimbursement for high achieving college graduates)

- The program has been in existence since the 1995-96 school year, but has been expanded in several significant ways as a component of the 12 to 62 legislation.
- We have modified the qualifications for the program in order to encompass a larger group of high achievers. Rather than limiting the pool to only those students who graduated in the top 15% of their undergraduate class, eligibility has been extended to those who earned an honors designation with either their graduate or undergraduate degree in either their major or overall.
- Teachers may now receive up to \$150 per month of loan reimbursement twelve months of the year. In the past, reimbursement had been limited to the ten months of the year that the recipient was actually teaching.
- The total amount of funding for the program has been increased from \$600,000 for the 1997-98 school year to \$850,000 for the 1998-99 school year.
- We have initiated an aggressive campaign to advertise the availability of this resource. The outreach program includes, but is not limited to, sending a detailed notice to 20,000 teachers via the mass.ed.net e-mail service and elaborating on its details in both a press conference with Governor Cellucci and a press release to 500 state reporters and editors on August 28.
- Applications have been sent to every superintendent, principal and public library.

#### **Teachers for Tomorrow Scholarship Program** (program offering tuition remission at a Massachusetts public undergraduate program for high school seniors who graduate in the top 25% of their class and agree to teach for a minimum of four years after graduation)

- Officials from the D.O.E., Board of Higher Education, and Office of Student Financial Assistance are collaborating to make this project a reality.
- At present, we are designing and securing funds for an aggressive marketing campaign to be brought to local high schools later this fall.
- Candidates will be required to submit application materials by a late winter 1999 deadline. They will be notified of Scholarship awards by late spring 1999.
- The first group of Scholarship recipients will be entering their first year of college in the fall of 1999.

#### **Master Teachers/National Board Certification**

- The stated goal in the legislation is to have a corps of 1000 master teachers by 2003; master teachers will need to complete the most rigorous national assessment of teacher competence - the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- Currently there are 7 Board Certified Master Teachers in the Commonwealth.
- Approximately 30 teachers applied for certification during the 1997-98 school year and are awaiting notification of their results.
- As the legislation states, master teachers will be awarded \$5,000/year for 10 years upon completion of their certification for a total of \$50,000.
- Alternative paths to Master Teacher status are currently under investigation.

#### **Apprentice Teachers and Alternative Certification**

- Possibilities for alternative certification paths, both for those entering the profession for the first time and those seeking a standard certificate, are currently being investigated and evaluated. A variety of possible models exists around the U.S. as well as in our state. We must be careful to adopt a program or programs that have the potential to create a lasting impact.
- Apprentice teachers have been loosely defined as strong teaching candidates, possessing only a bachelor's degree who do not meet the rigid criteria for the Teach for Massachusetts program.

#### **Job Flexibility**

- This fall we will initiate discussions with individuals in Massachusetts who have already participated in job sharing programs and will establish concrete, realistic goals for Massachusetts.

- We will simultaneously look at possible ways to attract professionals with significant work experience into teaching.

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## Education Laws and Regulations

### Chapter 260 of the Acts of 1998

#### SECTION 3.

Chapter 10 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1996 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 35R the following section:-

Section 35S. There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund, to be administered by the commissioner of education, which shall be known as the Teacher Quality Endowment Fund. Said fund shall consist of all revenues from public and private sources as appropriations, gifts, grants, donations and from the federal government as reimbursements, grants-in-aid or other receipts to further the purposes of said fund in accordance with the provisions of sections 19B and 19C of chapter 15A. All revenues credited to said fund under this section shall remain in said fund and shall be expended without further appropriation for applications pursuant to said sections 19B and 19C of said chapter 15A. The state treasurer shall deposit and invest monies in said fund in accordance with the provisions of sections 34, 34A and 38 of chapter 29 in such a manner as to secure the highest rate of return available consistent with the safety of the fund. Said fund shall be expended only for the purposes stated in said sections 19B and 19C of said chapter 15A at the direction of the commissioner of education. The state treasurer shall structure expenditures from said fund to ensure that not less than \$60,000,000 or the total dollar value of funds appropriated or transferred into said fund by the general court, whichever is greater, remains in said fund at all times. On February 1 of each year, the state treasurer shall notify the commissioner of education of the projected investment earnings available for expenditure from said fund for the upcoming fiscal year. Not more than 50 per cent of the projected investment earnings of said fund shall be expended for the purposes stated in said section 19C of said chapter 15A in each fiscal year.

#### SECTION 4.

Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after section 19A the following three sections:-

Section 19B. There shall be an incoming teacher signing bonus program to be administered by the department of education for the purpose of encouraging the best and brightest candidates to teach in the public schools. The goal of such program shall be to encourage high achieving candidates to enter the profession who would otherwise not consider a career in teaching. Funding for such program shall be subject to the provisions of section 35S of chapter 10.

The board of education shall promulgate regulations, where necessary, for the effective implementation of such program. Such regulations shall include the following provisions:

1. On an annual basis, the department of education shall select the best and brightest teaching prospects based on objective measures such as test scores, grade point average or class rank and such other criteria as the department may determine. The department shall establish a system for receiving a limited number of recommendations for outstanding candidates for such bonuses from institutions of higher education across the nation. In selecting bonus recipients, the department shall consider such recommendations.
2. In a given year, the department may target awards to attract teachers for those subject matter areas most needed in the commonwealth; provided, however, that such subject matter areas shall be included in the core subjects as described in section 1D of chapter 69.
3. In a given year, the department shall award bonuses only to those deserving candidates rather than providing a set number of bonuses.
4. Recipients shall receive a \$20,000 signing bonus over at least three years with at least \$8,000 distributed

- in the first year of the bonus.
5. Such recipients shall be eligible for each year's bonus payment only if they are certified to teach in the commonwealth and are employed as a teacher by a public school in the commonwealth.
  6. The department shall select and notify bonus recipients by April 1 of each year. Eligible recipients shall receive their annual bonus payments by the subsequent October 1 of each year.
  7. The name of an individual recipient of such bonus shall remain confidential unless recipient waives such confidentiality in writing.
  8. The department shall aggressively market the existence of the program to encourage the best and brightest candidates in the nation to come to the commonwealth to teach. Such marketing shall focus on candidates who would otherwise not consider a career in teaching.
  9. The program shall set forth an outreach plan to attract underrepresented populations to the teaching profession.

Section 19C. There shall be Massachusetts master teacher corps program for the purpose of building a group of recognized teachers of high achievement in the profession who shall serve to mentor incoming apprentice teachers and further the goals of the education reform act, so-called. The department of education shall administer this program. Funding for said program shall be subject to the provisions of section 35S of chapter 10.

The board of education shall promulgate regulations, where necessary, for the effective implementation of such program. Such regulations shall include the following provisions:

1. The department may select master teachers who achieve master teacher status through certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, pass a challenging content test, and agree to mentor apprentice teachers. The department may develop and include alternatives to the NBPTS program provided such alternatives maintain equivalent or higher standards of excellence in teaching.
2. The department may provide master teachers with partial or full reimbursement for the assessment costs of said NBPTS certification. The department shall provide master teachers with ongoing salary bonuses for such master teachers. Such ongoing salary bonuses shall be limited to \$5,000 per year. Within said \$5,000 limit, the department may authorize a nominal payment to the school district of such master teachers to facilitate time for the master teacher to engage in mentoring activity.
3. Teachers with master teacher status shall have full parity in certification and compensation with teachers who earn a master's degrees from approved higher education institutions, notwithstanding the provisions of section 38G of chapter 71, or chapter 150E.
4. The program shall set forth an outreach plan to attract underrepresented populations to the teaching profession.

Section 19D. There shall be a scholarship program to be administered by the board of higher education, which shall be known as the tomorrow's teachers program, for the purpose of encouraging outstanding high school students to teach in the public schools by providing qualified high school students with scholarships for tuition and fees for a four-year bachelor's degree program at a public college or university in the commonwealth. The program shall be subject to appropriation.

The board of higher education shall promulgate guidelines governing the tomorrow's teachers program. The guidelines shall include the following provisions:

1. Eligibility for the program shall be limited to students who graduated in the top quarter of their high school classes, who agree to complete a four-year bachelor's degree program in a public college or university in the commonwealth and who commit to and actually teach for four years in a public school in the commonwealth upon successful completion of a bachelor's degree from the college or university and the appropriate certification in accordance with said section 38G of said chapter 71.
2. The program shall set forth an outreach plan to attract underrepresented populations to the teaching profession.
3. Persons who participate in the program but do not complete their college education within six years of entering college or who fail to complete their four-year teaching commitment within six years following graduation from college shall be obligated to repay the commonwealth the tuition and fees advanced to them, with interest, as determined by the board of higher education.

## **SECTION 5.**

The department of education shall develop and submit to the joint committee on education not later than December 31, 1998, the so-called "12-62 Plan for Strengthening Massachusetts Future Teaching Force." Such plan may include such legislative, regulatory, financial and other policy initiatives necessary as to attract, train, retain, mentor and develop out top teachers into masters of their profession; provided, that a schedule of projected costs and funding sources therefor shall accompany each such initiative that said department proposes in such plan.

One goal of the plan shall be to attract the best and brightest individuals in the nation to teach in the commonwealth's public schools. Elements of the plan may include: (1) establishing so-called "Future Teachers of America Clubs" in every middle and high school to excite students of diverse backgrounds about the nobility of the teaching profession; (2) implementing the program of signing bonuses for the best and brightest new teachers established by section 19B of chapter 15A of the General Laws; (3) enhancing the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program to increase the loan forgiveness packages to the best and brightest college graduates; (4) implementing the program funded in item 7077-1000 of this act which provides scholarships at state colleges and universities to top performing high school students who commit to a career in teaching; and (5) taking such actions as may be necessary to remove costly and time-consuming barriers and create greater flexibility to entry into teaching and to full certification.

A further goal of the plan shall be to establish a professional life cycle for teachers. Elements of the plan may include: (1) implementing the Massachusetts master teacher corps program established by section 19C of chapter 15A of the General Laws; (2) establishing a low cost district based certification path for apprentice teachers who are mentored by master teachers; (3) amending the recertification regulations to ensure that all educators retain mastery of their subject matter and are held accountable to the highest standards of professional performance; and (4) making such changes as may be necessary to the statutes, regulations and operations of the teachers' retirement board to encourage school districts to provide teachers who are entering the profession, re-entering the profession, or scaling back their time commitment to the profession with opportunities for part-time and job-sharing arrangements.

## **SECTION 6.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the state treasurer shall credit and transfer \$60,000,000 from the general fund to the Teacher Quality Endowment Fund established pursuant to the provisions of section 35S of chapter 10 of the General Laws as of June 30, 1998; provided, however, that the general court may make supplemental transfers, appropriations or deposits into said Teacher Quality Endowment Fund in future fiscal years; provided, further, that no funds shall be expended from the teacher quality endowment fund until the board of education promulgates regulations pursuant to sections 19B and 19C of chapter 15A.

**N.B. — This section has been vetoed by the Lieutenant-Governor, Acting Governor**

## **SECTION 6A.**

Except for emergency regulations adopted pursuant to section 2 of chapter 30A, any regulation as defined in section 1 of said chapter 30A or any amendment or repeal of any such regulation adopted by the board of education pursuant to this act, shall, after compliance with all applicable provisions of said chapter 30A, except section 5, be submitted to the general court. Said board shall file the proposed regulation, amendment or repeal with the clerk of the house of representatives, together with a statement that the pertinent provisions of said chapter 30A, except section 5, have been complied with. The clerk of the house of representatives, with the approval of the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, shall refer such regulations to the joint committee on education, arts and humanities. Within 30 days after such referral, said committee may hold a public hearing on the regulations and shall issue a report to said board. Said report shall contain any proposed changes to the regulations voted upon by the committee. The board shall review said report and shall adopt final regulations as deemed appropriate in view of said report and shall file with the chairmen of said education, arts and humanities committee its final regulations. If the final regulations do not contain the changes proposed by the committee, the board shall send a letter to the committee accompanying the final regulations stating the reasons why such proposed changes were not adopted. Not earlier than 45 days after the filing of such letter and final regulations with the said committee, said board shall file the final regulations with the state secretary as provided in section 5 of said chapter 30A and said regulations shall thereupon take effect.

If no such proposed changes to the regulations are made to the board within 60 days of the initial filing of the proposed regulation or any amendment or a repeal of such regulation with the clerk of the house of representatives, the board may file the final regulations with the state secretary as provided in section 5 of said chapter 30A and said regulations shall thereupon take effect.

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## School Building Assistance Program FY'99

1. Extension of SBA: The School Building Assistance Act, Chapter 645 as amended, has been extended to the end of fiscal year 2003 or June 30, 2003.
2. **SBA program procedure changes** for projects being submitted by June 1, 1999:
  - a. School districts planning on submitting an SBA application for capital construction projects on or before June 1, 1999, must meet the following requirements:
    1. Must have a building needs conference prior to January 1, 1999.
    2. Must submit educational specifications and preliminary designs approved by school committee by March 1, 1999.
    3. Must submit all local sign off documents with the final application, i.e. Conservation and Historical Commission approvals etc..
  1. All school districts with projects listed on the FY'98 and FY'99 SBA priority list and which have gone to bid since January 1, 1998 or will go to bid prior to March 31, 1999 must complete the attached forms (*Request for Project Number* and *Form F Actual Project Cost*) to the Department of Education once bids have been finalized.
  2. A significant number of communities and school districts will soon receive notification that **audits** are due for approved and funded projects. All audit materials must be submitted to the Department of Education on or before January 1, 1999 or state assistance for these projects will be suspended beginning July 1, 1999.
  3. **New requirement for adequate maintenance.** The Legislature recently enacted an important change in the SBA program. Beginning in FY99, districts must meet annual spending requirements for building maintenance in order to be eligible for future SBA project approvals and payments. The minimum spending requirement for each year is equal to 50% of the sum of the district's foundation budget allotments for the ordinary maintenance and extraordinary maintenance categories. Amendments to the SBA regulations to implement this new requirement will be issued later this year by the Board of Education. In the meantime, districts should review their FY99 budget to ensure that adequate funds have been earmarked for building maintenance. (Chapter 194 of the Acts of 1998, section 241.)
  4. **Project cost limits.** Please be advised that the Board's school building regulations establish strict limits on project costs eligible for reimbursement. Before going out for a bid, make sure that the architect's current project cost estimate does not exceed the approved project cost limit.

The regulations do allow the Board to waive the cost limits, but approval of such waivers will only be recommended in truly rare and exceptional circumstances. If the project cost estimate exceeds the approved cost limit and district believe a waiver is warranted, the waiver request should be submitted **before** soliciting a bid. Waiver requests submitted **after** the general contract has been bid and let should be limited to extraordinary situations which arise during construction and which could not have been reasonably anticipated during the design process.

In particular, the School Building Assistance Unit will not recommend waiving a project's approved cost limit simply because bids came in higher than estimated. In such instances, the district can choose to re-bid the project as designed; initiate a re-design to reduce the project's costs; or choose to absorb the higher costs with local funds.

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## Board in Brief

### Thursday, September 17, 1998

This is "[Board in Brief](#)," issued at the request of David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education (interim) to bring you up to date on Massachusetts Board of Education matters. This is a summary of the special meeting held on Monday, September 14, in Boston, and the regular meeting held on Tuesday, September 15, in Malden.

#### Special Meeting

At the special meeting, the Board discussed the proposed "threshold scores (or cut scores)" for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). These are the numeric scores that differentiate the four performance levels set by the Board: advanced, proficient, needs improvement and failing. (The "pass level" - the performance required on the grade 10 MCAS in order for a student to be eligible to graduate from high school, starting with the class of 2003 - will be determined by the Board at a later date.) Over the past several months over 200 educators, business and community leaders, including Board member James Peyser, worked with the Department and Advanced Systems, the testing contractor, to determine the MCAS cut scores.

State Testing Director Jeff Nellhaus and Neal Kingston of Advanced Systems provided an overview of the scoring and standard-setting process. Nearly 210,000 students took the first MCAS test last spring. Six million open-response questions needed to be scored. 1400 people, including 700 Massachusetts teachers, were involved in the scoring. Board member Roberta Schaefer attended one of the scoring sessions this summer and said, "I was very impressed with the level of hard work and collaboration by the teachers."

The Board discussed the process by which the panels reviewed and assigned student work to one of the four performance levels previously established by the Board. Chairman John Silber expressed the view that when panel members disagreed as to where to draw the line between two performance categories, the lower category should be chosen (e.g., "failing" rather than "needs improvement,") to put students, teachers and families on notice of deficient performance. Board member Ed Delattre added that he thought the Board did not yet have enough information to make a decision about the cut scores. No action was taken at the special meeting.

#### Regular Meeting

Educator Quality Enhancement: The "12-62 Plan" (now state law as Ch. 260 of the Acts of 1998) Commissioner Driscoll presented to the Board his Future Educator Quality Enhancement, or "12 - 62" Plan. A \$60 million endowment has been established by the Legislature and the Governor to support this initiative. Commissioner Driscoll highlighted for the Board the features of this plan, which he outlined on July 27 with the Governor, the Senate President and the House Speaker. The plan includes: Future Educators of America Clubs, to develop interest in the teaching profession for middle and high school students; Teach for Massachusetts, a program for attracting and providing signing bonuses to highly qualified college graduates and mid-career professionals to teach in our public schools; Attracting Excellence to Teaching, a loan reimbursement program for high-achieving college graduates entering teaching; and the Master Teacher Corps, a cadre of master teachers who will serve as mentors to newer teachers.

Commissioner Driscoll said teacher quality is the key to education reform, because it is the key to better student achievement. He added that teacher supply and demand will be a critical issue over the next decade. The "12-62" plan is now state law as Chapter 260 of the Acts of 1998. The Commissioner said that at a future meeting he will present to the Board proposed regulations for the signing bonus program for new teachers and the master teacher corps program, and will roll out activities and initiatives in the other areas over the next several months.

#### Educator Certification Test

The Board discussed Governor Cellucci's request that the Board consider teacher test results when approving educator preparation programs. Specifically, the Governor asked the Board to consider establishing a program approval standard that includes a passing rate of 80% of the program's prospective teachers. The Board voted unanimously to ask Commissioner Driscoll to review the current standards in the certification program approval regulations and to prepare draft revisions that would incorporate the Governor's proposal. The Commissioner will present options to the Board in October for further discussion.

In other matters relating to certification, Chancellor Stanley Koplik reported on the August 24 conference of higher education officials involved with teacher preparation, and on next steps that he and the Board of Higher Education are considering. Board member Jim Peyser offered a proposal for the Board to consider with respect to alternatives to the master's degree for standard certification. The Board will consider the issue further in October.

### **Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System**

After summarizing the presentation and discussion from the Board's September 14th special meeting, Commissioner Driscoll recommended that the Board endorse the MCAS threshold scores (the numeric scores that differentiate the four performance levels set by the Board), as recommended by the panels. Chairman Silber offered a 2-part motion:

1. that the Board accept the Commissioner's recommendation for this year; and
2. that parents, students and teachers be informed that students whose performance is categorized as "Needs Improvement" have no assurance of having met standards appropriate for high school graduation, and need to take corrective action. The Board voted 8-1 to approve the motion. At a future meeting, the Board will consider the "passing standard," the performance required on the grade 10 MCAS in order for a student to be eligible for high school graduation, starting with the class of 2003.

### **Recertification of Educators**

Commissioner Driscoll presented six recommendations to the Board for their initial review in preparation for changes to the current recertification requirements. The first recertification cycle will come to an end in 9 months. The Commissioner is proposing to increase, from 120 to 250, the number of professional development points an educator must acquire over a period of five years in order to renew a certificate. His recommendations also include proposals for better aligning individual educators' professional development plans with school improvement plans, and for increasing accountability. Review and further discussion on the recertification proposals will continue at a future Board meeting.

### **Charter Schools Regulation Amendment**

The Board voted to adopt an amendment to two sections of the Charter School Regulations dealing with calculation of the charter tuition amount, based on the average cost per student in the district in which a charter school student resides. Public comments on the proposed amendments were received both in writing and at two public hearings in July. In other charter school matters, Associate Commissioner Scott Hamilton briefed the Board on the review of management contracts for some of the charter schools and on the application process for FY 1999.

### **Academic Support Services Program**

The FY 99 state budget establishes a new appropriation of \$20 million for academic support services for students scoring in level 1 or 2 on the MCAS or who, in FY 99, have been identified as needing improvement based on other standardized assessment measures at any grade level. Member Jim Peyser presented a proposal to the Board for possible use of some of the appropriated funds to pay for reading tutors for certain students. The Board will discuss the program in greater detail at the October meeting.

### **School Building Assistance**

The FY 99 state budget authorized sufficient funding for 58 new school building assistance projects from the previously established priority list. The Board voted unanimously to approve the grants. The Board ratified two waivers of the regulations establishing cost standards for school building projects to Fall River and Worcester. Commissioner Driscoll informed the Board that he approved emergency grants to Marblehead, Revere and Narragansett under the Emergency School Building Assistance program. On a related note, the Legislature has asked the Department, in consultation with the Department of Public Health, to conduct a study of asbestos hazards in all of the Commonwealth's older school buildings.

## Other Matters

Commissioner Driscoll reported on recent developments in the Lawrence Public Schools, and reported that in Lawrence and generally across the state the new school year has opened smoothly. He informed the Board that the Department of Education has been awarded a \$2.8 million federal grant for the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. It will make \$50,000 grants available to school districts to support research-based school-wide change models in individual schools. Massachusetts is also one of three states to be awarded a \$10,000 competitive grant from the Milken Family Foundation to support the eight 1998 Massachusetts Milken Educators in using technology to enhance student learning. The Commissioner also reported that a new law on teaching about genocide and human rights has been enacted. The Department will prepare an advisory for schools on how these issues are incorporated into the History/Social Science curriculum framework.

Chairman Silber noted the need to develop and implement statewide student assessments in the area of foreign languages. A panel of educators is currently reviewing the Foreign Languages curriculum framework, and the Commissioner expects to present their recommended revisions to the Board in November. Planning for the assessment will follow.

The September meeting of the Board is the annual meeting at which a Vice-Chair is elected. The Board elected Roberta Schaefer as Vice-Chair. Additionally, the Board welcomed new student member Becca Urbach, a senior at Falmouth High School. She will serve as a full voting member this year by virtue of having been elected Chair of the State Student Advisory Council.

## Next Meeting of the Board of Education

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13 in Malden.

"Board in Brief" and other MA DOE documents are available for review at the Department of Education's web site: [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

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## State Children's Health Insurance Program

*The following is a letter from the office of U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Education:*

September 9, 1998

Dr. David P. Driscoll  
Interim Commissioner of Education  
State Department of Education  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Dr. Driscoll:

As students in your State return to school, we are focusing our attention on providing greater opportunities for all students to learn. Thus, the Department is conducting an outreach initiative to get information out to the education community and parents about the new State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides funding throughout the country for health insurance for children under age 19. The President has asked the Department and other Federal agencies to collaborate on a national outreach effort so that families are aware that a new source of health insurance is available. I hope that you will join me in this very exciting effort to improve the health and education of our nation's children and teenagers, by working with your State's health department and the regional offices of the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that these funds have the greatest possible impact.

Eleven million children in this country are without health insurance. Of those, 4.7 million children are eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled. Several million more children are in families with incomes above Medicaid levels, but unable to afford private health insurance. CHIP provides \$24 billion over five years to cover these children, building on the Medicaid program. Simply allocating the funding is not enough. Providing health insurance to uninsured children will require a comprehensive outreach effort to ensure that the families who need insurance are aware of these programs and can easily apply.

Schools and educators can play a crucial role in this effort because nearly all children are enrolled in school or have siblings who are, and because schools are a major source of information for children and families. Many families are unaware of this new source of free and reduced-cost insurance in their States. Other families do not apply for benefits because of the stigma attached to "welfare" programs. Information received through schools may lessen this stigma because schools are trusted public entities that serve all students, regardless of income. Also, most schools already provide some kinds of health services, either through school-based clinics or visiting or in-school nurses.

We know that health affects students' ability to learn. Healthy students miss fewer days of school, are more attentive, and are better able to take advantage of educational opportunities. Children who are insured are more likely to receive regular care, reducing the likelihood of serious or recurring illnesses.

For these reasons, the U. S. Department of Education is playing a major role in this outreach effort. Our mission is twofold: first, through the education community to get this information into the hands of families; and second, to facilitate enrollment wherever possible. In a recent survey of parents with uninsured children, 74 percent were unaware of this new program. To encourage the education community to get involved, the Department has produced a flyer to send out to all schools and education organizations. However, we are limited in our efforts by the fact that the CHIP program is different in every State, in terms of who is eligible, what services are covered, and even what the program is called. It is vital that families receive information that is directly relevant to their needs. You can help by working with the agency administering the Medicaid and CHIP program in your State and finding

ways to transmit appropriate information to the families that need it.

In Michigan, for example, the Departments of Education and Community Health are collaborating to send brochures home with every student at the beginning of the school year; full applications will be sent home in Title I schools. The Governor has sent a letter to more than 130 organizations, associations, and interest groups, asking for cooperation and assistance in reaching children who are eligible for the program. A direct mailing is going to homes with children under age 19 in families with incomes below 200 percent of poverty as well as to all homes of WIC recipients that are not enrolled in Medicaid. And \$1.3 million in grants were offered for the development of local outreach plans involving community organizations. Michigan provides an excellent example of how CHIP can be implemented.

The beginning of the school year is a critical time to get involved. In addition to providing information to families, you can help to facilitate efforts to make the enrollment process easier for families, by working with health officials and encouraging districts to provide information as well as enrollment assistance at school events and through school health services. Examples include tables at school health fairs, outstations for enrollment during the hours immediately after school or work, and targeted assistance for families with low literacy levels. Your agency can have a significant impact by facilitating partnerships between school districts, community organizations, and local health agencies.

The U.S. Department of Education has worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use the National School Lunch Program's free and reduced price meal application process to inform families about CHIP. As part of our cooperative effort, USDA has created several model forms that school districts can use or adapt, which provide a place for parents to sign up to either receive information about CHIP or have their income information released to State health insurance agency. On August 5, the Department of Agriculture sent these forms to every Regional Director of Special Nutrition Programs. These forms will be distributed to State agency that administers the School Nutrition Programs. This is an exciting development because many of the children eligible for CHIP and Medicaid are also eligible for free and reduced price school lunches. I realize that in most cases it will be too late for school districts to adopt these forms, but I hope that they will consider the forms for next year and use alternative strategies for informing families in the meantime. I urge you to encourage the districts in your State to do so.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the flyer developed by the Department to inform the education community about CHIP. For more information about the U.S. Department of Education's CHIP efforts, please contact Carol Cichowski at (202) 401-3939, Libby Doggett at (202) 205-9068, or Deborah Spitz at (202) 401-7320. For information about the CHIP program, call the Health Care Financing Administration at (410) 786-8705 or Health Resources Services Administration at (301) 443-4619, or visit their web sit at [www.hcfa.gov/init/children.htm](http://www.hcfa.gov/init/children.htm).

I hope that you will join us in this very important effort to strengthen the health and education of the nation's children.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

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## 1998 Governor's Fitness Awards

September, 1998

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders and School Principals:

The Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports (MGCPF&S) and the Department of Education invite your schools to participate once again this year in the Governor's Fitness Awards, which are determined by the Exercise Across Massachusetts Fitness Program.

Last year more than 10,000 students statewide participated in the fitness program, which was won by the Lynch Elementary School of Winchester. Recognized by Governor Cellucci at the Great Massachusetts Workout in May on the Boston Common for their outstanding effort, they were joined by the next best finishers, including Salisbury Memorial School of Salisbury, Warren Community School of West Warren, Page Hilltop School of Ayer, and Huckleberry Hill Elementary School of Lynnfield.

The purpose of this exciting program is to provide a no cost, flexible recognition opportunity for schools which promotes physical fitness and sports participation for young people, and helps foster healthy life-long habits. The research is clear and convincing:

Students are more likely to develop life-long physical fitness habits if they set goals, measure their progress, get recognition and have fun. *American Running and Fitness Association*

A lack of physical activity is detrimental to health. *Surgeon General's Report, 1996*

Half of today's youth do not engage in physical activity appropriate to long-term health promotion. *Donna E. Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services*

Approximately one quarter of the children in the United States are obese. *John P. Foreyt, Ph.D., Scientific Roundtable, July, 1996, American College of Sports Medicine*

The contest will be judged on total mileage and the percent of total school population participating in the contest. Gold medals will be awarded to schools which average 120 miles, silver medals to schools averaging 100 miles, and bronze medals to schools averaging 80 miles. These schools will be honored at an awards ceremony in May by the Youth Fitness Subcommittee of the MGCPF'S. Participating schools will be leading the parade at the Great Massachusetts Workout celebration in May. This will be a great opportunity for the students to enjoy the day as an educational opportunity and to view the historical sites of Boston.

I am enclosing [forms](#) for all school principals. Principals whose schools wish to participate should please return these forms no later than **October 15**.

Thank you for your interest and best wishes.

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education (Interim)

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## Community Service Learning Supports Educational Reform Efforts

**Save the Date - November 20, 1998**

American Association for School Administrators  
Compact for Learning and Citizenship  
Learn & Serve Program Officers from New England  
State Departments of Education  
Community Service Learning Center  
National Service Learning Cooperative

invite

New England Superintendents to An Exciting Day-Long Seminar  
"Community Service Learning Supports Educational Reform Efforts"

The seminar will emphasize service learning as a school reform methodology which supports the reform agenda, IASA, and school districts' consolidated plans and most importantly, student learning and citizenship development.

Presenters will include national figures involved in community service learning, plus New England superintendents who integrate service learning into their school districts' education plans.

### **LOCATION:**

The Best Western Hotel  
Marlborough, Massachusetts  
9:00a.m. to 3:00

### **Registration:**

Members of AASA will receive free registration. Non-members \$50

For information call Mark Sandt or Jessica Donner, Learn & Serve Program Officers, (781)338 - 3000.

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