



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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Commissioner's Updates

July 6, 2001

Dear Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives, Principals and Interested Parties:

In this letter, I have 3 announcements and 2 items recently posted on our website at www.doe.mass.edu.

Preliminary Grade 10 MCAS Multiple-Choice Test Item Analysis Report

I am pleased to announce that I will be sending you a copy of the *Preliminary Multiple-Choice Test Item Analysis Report* in English Language Arts and Mathematics for each school in your district that participated in the grade 10 MCAS tests this spring. The reports are intended to provide you with a first look at the performance of your grade 10 students on the spring 2001 MCAS tests. They contain student level data and may be reviewed only by authorized school personnel. Although the reports do not contain information on student performance on the open-response questions or composition, you may use the information contained in them to:

1. Identify areas of need to provide immediate assistance to students currently enrolled in summer academic programs.
2. Plan appropriate fall activities for students with low multiple-choice raw score totals.
3. Identify and report discrepancies in these preliminary reports.

I plan on sending you the reports early in the week of July 9. Please ensure that the reports are distributed to each high school principal in your district as soon as possible, since discrepancies must be reported by July 20.

Important Changes in the Educational Technology Integration Services (ETIS) Statewide Procurement Contract

Several important changes in the Educational Technology Integration Services (ETIS) statewide procurement contract are taking place.

In 1997, the Department of Education developed the ETIS program to provide public schools and libraries with easy access to the offerings of a select group of vendors that specialize in meeting the technology needs of schools and libraries. ETIS has evolved into an extensive procurement operation that entails regulation on pricing, rates, and services for K-12 schools.

Over the years, we have worked closely with ETIS purchasers and vendors to refine and improve the program, and we are delighted with the results. Not only has ETIS saved its users millions of dollars, it has saved countless hours of staff time for schools and libraries by freeing them from duplicative procurement processes. Nearly 300 school districts have taken advantage of ETIS, and more than \$100,000,000 in technology projects have been processed.

After careful consideration, we have concluded that the most efficient way for ETIS to continue working for schools and libraries is to transfer the administration of the program to Mass Interaction, a quasi-public authority of the Commonwealth. This transfer took place on July 1. Mass Interaction has worked carefully with us on a transition plan, and I am confident that ETIS will provide even greater value for schools and libraries in the years to come.

Given a nominal ETIS vendor service fee, Mass Interaction will have the ability to expand the level of services that ETIS provides to school districts. For instance, technical assistance will be expanded and a web-enabled database will provide a wealth of data on technology vendors.

We will continue our involvement with ETIS and we look forward to even greater success. Your continued participation in this worthwhile program is welcome, and we expect to make ETIS an even better resource for the public schools and libraries in Massachusetts.

Notice of Confirmation of Receipt of FY 2002 Entitlement/Allocation Grant Proposals

As another service to grant applicants, confirmation of receipt by the Department of Education of your FY2002 federal and state grant proposals found within RFP #1 - Entitlement/Allocation Grants has been posted on our Grants Management website. This service should help in providing you with timely confirmation of your grant proposal submissions. Further, we hope it will reduce paperwork. You can access the information at: http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/gts_status/entitlement.html.

Confirmation of receipt of FY2002 Entitlement/Allocation Proposals Standard Applications for Program Grants is indicated on the individual school district pages listed in the menu above. The dates on which we received your proposals are listed under the appropriate fund codes. Please review your school district page to assure that it is complete and accurate. If you have a question about a submission date, please contact the program unit. Confirmation of receipt of proposals will be updated several times weekly.

Funding is subject to state appropriation and the receipt of federal awards. Upon our review and approval of every grant, a Payment Notification will be mailed to each applicant. Our receipt of proposals for which your school district is not eligible to apply does not in any way imply that the proposal(s) will be approved for funding.

Confirmation of receipt of continuation grant applications will be mailed to Superintendents. This information will not be posted on the web site.

Here are 2 items recently posted on our website at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. FY01 Tuition For State Wards
[[HTML](#)]
2. Board in Brief, Summary of the June Meeting of the Board of Education
[[HTML](#)]

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
DATE: July 5, 2001
RE: **FY01 Tuition For State Wards**

The Department has certified the attached schedule of state aid entitlements and 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 1999-2000 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.

This year's entitlements total \$16,443,063. Adjustments to last year's payments add an additional \$134,042 for a combined statewide payment of \$16,577,105. Entitlements are fully funded at 100 percent.

All superintendents and charter school leaders will receive the enclosed [FY01 Tuition for State Wards](#) printout showing each district's eligible state wards, FY01 entitlement, FY00 adjustment, and net payment in FY01.

Each district that submitted a state ward claim form will receive a **FY01 Reimbursement Status For State Wards Claimed in FY00** listing. This report indicates what action was taken on each claim for tuition reimbursement. The fifth column ("Confirmed Against DSS Data As State Ward") indicates whether the pupil appeared on the DSS data base during the 1999-2000 school year. The "Reimbursement Status" column indicates one of five possible eligibility outcomes:

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

"Placement outside district, no payment" indicates that the pupil was identified as a state ward, but his or her DSS placement was not located in the school district and therefore the district cannot be reimbursed.

"Parents reside in district, no reimbursement" means that the pupil's last home prior to current DSS intervention was located in the school district, making that child ineligible for reimbursement.

"No reimbursement" occurs when the DSS file contains no record matching the pupil's identifying fields submitted on the claim form.

"Paid by other district or other state program" identifies a few pupils whose tuition was paid by other districts, or through the abandoned children program.

Accounting For State Wards Payments

The Department of Revenue's Bureau of Accounts advises that cities and towns that have voted to set up a revolving account for state ward payments in accordance with Chapter 71, s.71F should place their payment in that account for expenditure by the school committee without further appropriation. For those that have not voted to set up such a revolving account, the payment should be treated as general fund revenue. In the latter case, cities and towns 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 FY01 net school spending compliance.

Questions

If you have questions concerning these calculations, please contact Roger Hatch in the School Finance office at 781-338-6527.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in making this program work for both the pupils and the districts involved.

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Board in Brief

June 20, 2001

This is "Board in Brief," issued at the request of Commissioner David Driscoll to bring you up to date on Board of Education matters. This is a report on the regular meeting on Wednesday, June 20, 2001 at the Boston School Department in Boston.

Commissioner Driscoll opened the meeting by congratulating Jay Sullivan, the Department's Administrator for School Business Services, who received the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials' President's Award.

Jody Kelman, the outgoing student Board member, reported on the work of the State Student Advisory Council and introduced her successor, James Madden. James is a senior at Randolph High School, and will serve as a member of the Board for the next year by virtue of his position as Chair of the State Student Advisory Council.

High School History and Social Science Curriculum Framework and Assessment

The Board received a report on the results of a high school history survey the Department conducted this spring. Nearly 1000 teachers responded to the survey, which was designed to solicit teachers' feedback on core knowledge topics and subtopics in United States and world history, years of study in each area, and assessment options and formats. After discussion by Board members, Chairman James Peyser said there appears to be consensus to move towards developing an end-of-course statewide high school assessment in United States history, leaving districts flexibility on whether to administer it at the end of grade 10 or grade 11. The history test is not yet part of the competency determination relating to eligibility for high school graduation. Chairman Peyser said the Board will rely on the framework revision panel to advise on the scope, breadth and sequence of history curriculum at the high school level. Guided by the survey results and the Board's discussion, the revision panel will continue its work on the History/Social Science framework. The Commissioner will bring a revised framework to the Board in the fall.

Certificate of Occupational Proficiency: Standards for Four Occupational Clusters

The Board voted unanimously to approve the standards for the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in four areas: automotive service technology, cosmetology, culinary arts, and horticulture. By statute, the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency is to be awarded to students who have acquired a competency determination (that is, who have met the state standards in English Language Arts and mathematics on the grade 10 MCAS) and who "successfully complete a comprehensive education and training program in a particular trade or professional skill area." The standards, which were developed by educators and partners from business and industry, will form the basis for developing assessments for the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency. The Commissioner plans to offer the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency to qualified students in these four areas starting with the Class of 2003. The Commissioner will bring proposed standards for three additional occupational clusters to the Board in the fall.

School Improvement Plan for Kuss School, Fall River

The Board had an initial discussion on the proposed school improvement plan for the Kuss School in Fall River, which was declared under-performing. The Commissioner will bring the plan back to the Board in

July for approval. By statute, the school will have 24 months to implement the approved plan and demonstrate improvement in student performance.

Amendment to School Finance Regulations (603 CMR 10.00)

The Board voted to amend the School Finance and Accountability Regulations to clarify that school districts are required to arrange for an annual audit that meets standards set forth in a Compliance Supplement for School Districts published by the Department. The amendment allows the Department to waive the requirement for an elementary school district that consists of only one elementary school. Such a district would have to arrange for the audit at least every two or three years.

Draft Standards for Early Childhood Education

The Board voted to solicit public comment on the proposed Standards for Center-Based Programs for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children. State law authorizes the Board to establish standards for pre-kindergarten programs, which shall meet or exceed the existing standards of the Office of Child Care Services. The Board's Early Childhood Advisory Council, which includes representatives from child care organizations, public schools, state agencies and higher education as well as parents and teachers, helped to develop the draft standards. After the public comment period, the Commissioner will bring the proposed standards back to the Board for a final vote in the fall.

Approval of Grants and Other Matters

The Board voted to approve \$3,343,989 in grants for the Teacher Career Advancement Program, restraint training, and comprehensive school reform programs. The Board approved requests from 21 small towns that will tuition their students to public schools in other towns rather than operating their own public schools. The Board also approved an emergency School Building Assistance grant, and approved waivers of the School Building Assistance cost standards for four school construction projects.

NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, July 24, 2001 at the Department of Education in Malden.

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