



Massachusetts Board of Education 2000 Annual Report

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Massachusetts Department of Education
address 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148
telephone 781-338-3000 **internet** www.doe.mass.edu



Massachusetts Department of Education

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education
Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

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and Secretary to the Board

Prepared by Melanie Winklosky, Special Assistant to the Board of Education

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In Memoriam



This Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of Jack Rennie, the father of education reform in Massachusetts.

Under Jack Rennie's leadership, the Massachusetts Business Alliance developed a comprehensive education reform proposal, which was supported by the governor, the legislative leadership, and school superintendents. The proposal, entitled "Every Child a Winner!" became the foundation for the Education Reform Act of 1993.

Jack Rennie's leadership, persistence, and goodwill made education reform possible in Massachusetts. His legacy to us all is his vision of public education which incorporates high standards, accountability, school-based management, and more equitable funding for schools. We dedicate this report to his memory on behalf of Massachusetts' 970,000 public school students.

"Jack has left us, or so it seems at first, when we feel the sadness, the painful loss, the gaping hole; but then comes the realization that Jack is still here, in that generous spirit, and he will live on forever with us as an inspired example of a private citizen/public servant and an extraordinary man. Jack is with us, and he's challenged us."

-- S. Paul Reville

Chairman's Statement

The year 2000 was an extraordinarily productive year for the Board of Education. We adopted revised regulations governing Special Education, clarifying eligibility criteria and introducing a modicum of local flexibility in the administration of the program. We put into place the Certificate of Mastery to recognize the achievements of the Commonwealth's highest performing students. We adopted district performance standards, which will serve as the basis for regular comprehensive district-level performance evaluations. We enacted regulations reforming the school building assistance program, rationalizing the reimbursement formula to provide incentives for sound facilities management and cost-effective construction plans. We worked with the City of Lawrence to hire a new superintendent, in order to bring stability and a renewed focus on academic achievement to that troubled district. We approved revisions to curriculum frameworks in math, English and science, which will help clarify expectations for student learning and support local curriculum development. And we adopted new regulations reforming the educator certification system, in order to place greater focus on subject mastery and reading instruction, and to create new alternative pathways into the profession for highly qualified individuals, including mid-career professionals.

In short, last year the Board put into place most of the remaining policy changes envisioned by the Education Reform Act. This is a great accomplishment, and Board members should take a measure of satisfaction in it. At the same time, we should recognize two things. First, we could not have achieved any of this without the dedicated and tireless support of the Commissioner and all his staff within the Department. Second, putting policies in place is the easy part. Seeing them through to success in the classroom is where the rubber meets the road.

For 2001 and beyond, our focus has to be on the blocking and tackling of implementation. While there will continue to be policy issues that come before the Board, our primary task must be to guide and support the Department in its efforts to make educational reform and improvement a reality. Of utmost importance, of course, is ensuring that we complete the roll out of our student assessment system in a way that ensures faithfulness to meaningful academic standards and fairness to all students. In doing so, the Commissioner and I will work together to reach out to educators in the field, to invite their participation, and to listen to their counsel.

2000 was a year of decisions. 2001 must be a year of results.

Commissioner's Statement

As we enter our eighth year of Education Reform, it is important to recognize the many positive changes that have taken place this year in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The mathematics, English language arts, and science and technology/engineering frameworks have been updated, as required by law. School building assistance has been reformed through significant changes in the law. Special education regulations have been overhauled to reflect changes in the law which, among other things, changed the standard to align with all other states. Teacher licensure and preparation program approval regulations have been completely revised to reflect the preparation educators need for a standards-based classroom, and to open alternative pathways to careers in education.

The educator quality programs we have put in place over the past few years will serve our students well by recruiting, supporting, and rewarding outstanding teachers for Massachusetts' schools. The leading work we are doing in technology has streamlined and simplified data collection for schools and districts. As we continue to move towards accountability for results, there is much more work that needs to be done.

In my travels across the state, I have seen that the number and kinds of changes that education reform has asked of Massachusetts districts, schools, educators, and students have been almost overwhelming. But I have also seen that the majority of schools and districts have risen to the challenges presented to them by making significant improvements to teaching and learning in the classroom. As a former teacher and superintendent, I know that public school educators are some of the hardest working professionals in our society. Education reform has helped us all to focus our efforts on what really counts—student achievement.

I would like to thank our state leaders—the Board of Education, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and many other friends of education in the legislature for continuing to stay the course on education reform. I extend special thanks to the thousands of Massachusetts educators for their efforts on behalf of students every day, and a personal thanks to the staff of the Department of Education who work tirelessly, often out of the limelight, to help children learn. I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve student achievement across the Commonwealth.

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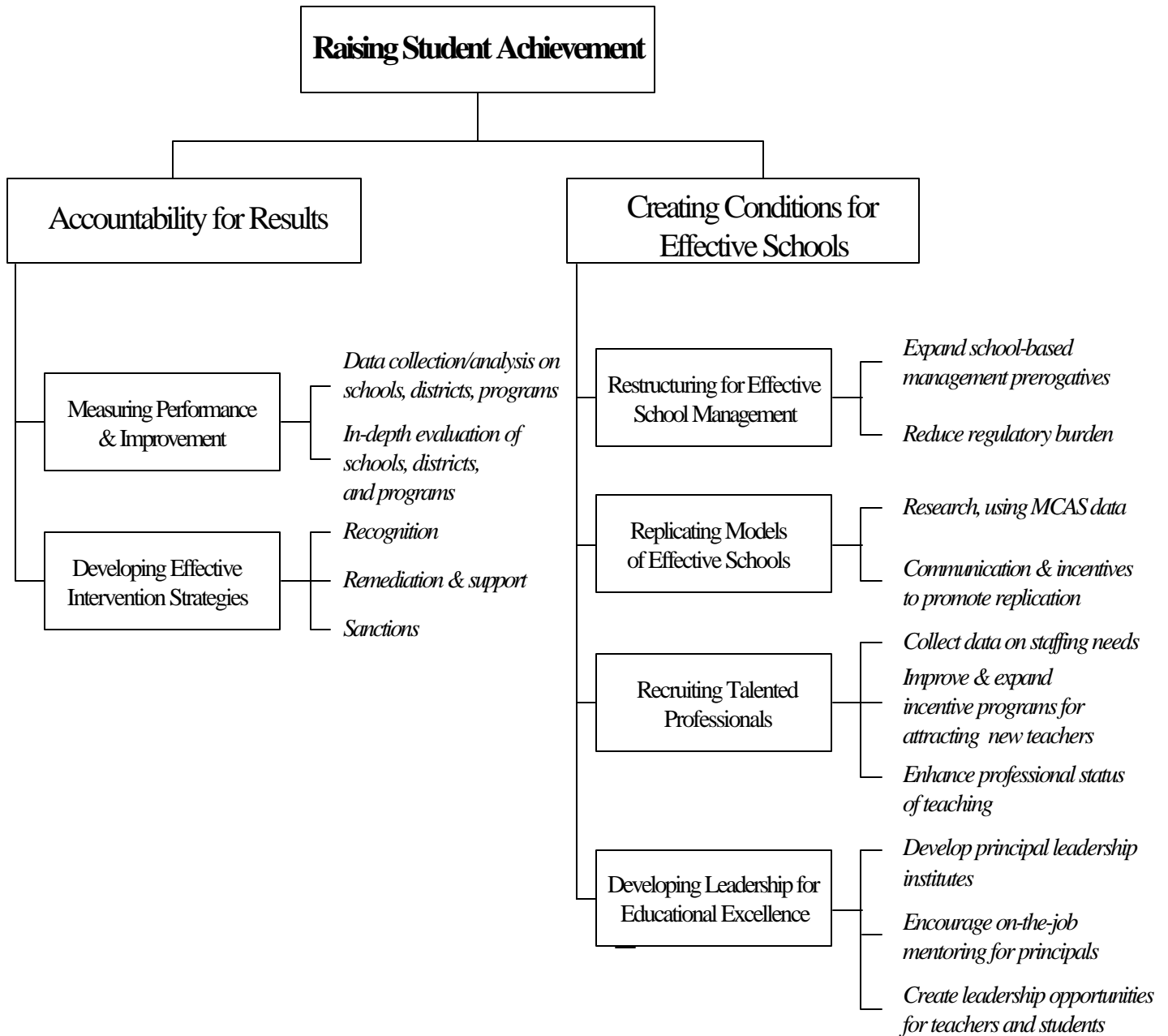
Executive Summary

This has been a very productive year for the Board of Education. As required by law, the mathematics, English language arts, and science and technology/engineering curriculum frameworks were reviewed and updated. Major sets of regulations were revised, including Special Education Regulations, School Building Assistance Regulations, and Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations. District Performance Standards, the foundation of the District Performance Evaluation process under the School and District Accountability System, were adopted by the Board.

As high stakes, standards-based testing becomes a reality in Massachusetts, the Board has remained focused on its primary goal: raising student achievement. This year's MCAS results show trends in the right directions. Eight percent more 10th grade students passed the mathematics test. In addition, the percentage of students performing at the failing level is declining on most MCAS tests, while the percentage of students performing at the proficient or advanced levels is increasing on most MCAS tests. On other measures of student achievement, including SAT and AP scores, Massachusetts' students are also showing improvement. However, much work remains to be done as we work to ensure that all students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that they need in order to succeed.

The purpose of this report is to chronicle the major decisions and actions of the Massachusetts Board of Education from January through December 2000. In February of 2000, the Board of Education adopted the "Board of Education Goals and Strategies" (see page 1). The Annual Report focuses on Board policy decisions and regulatory changes which address the goals and strategies. Also included in the report are Department of Education programs which support these goals and strategies. Demographic and financial data for 2000 in Massachusetts is highlighted in Appendix A.

Board of Education Goals and Strategies



Adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education in February 2000.

Measuring Performance and Improvement: Students

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

During the spring of 2000, the Department conducted the third year of MCAS testing of public school students in grades 4, 8, and 10 in English language arts, mathematics, science and technology, and history and social science. Student, school, and district test results were released in the fall. In preparation for spreading the tests out over more grades, the Department administered question tryouts to grade 3 students in reading, grade 5 students in science/technology and history/social science, grade 6 students in mathematics, and grade 7 students in English language arts.

The Board of Education adopted a regulation setting the standard for the Competency Determination in January of 2000. Beginning in spring 2003, grade 10 students will have to pass tests in English and mathematics at a minimum passing score of 220 or higher in order to receive a high school diploma. Students who do not pass the test(s) on the first try will be given multiple opportunities to retake the test(s) prior to graduation.

In 2000, the Department published the following MCAS reports related to 2000 results:

- Spring 2000 MCAS Tests: Report of State Results
- The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Summary of District Performance
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Individual Student, School and District Results

In 2000, the Department published the following MCAS reports related to 1999 results:

- Report of 1999 Massachusetts and Local School District MCAS Results by Race/Ethnicity
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System 1999 Technical Manual
- The Participation and Performance of Limited English Proficient Students in the 1998 and 1999 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

Please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas> for these and other MCAS publications. Emerging trends from three years of MCAS data indicate¹:

- Overall statewide student performance is beginning to move toward our two-fold goal of moving students out of the *Failing* level and moving students into the *Proficient* and *Advanced* levels. The percentage of students performing at the *Failing* level is declining on most MCAS tests. The percentage of students performing at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels is increasing on most MCAS tests.
- At grade 4, student performance is strong in all subject areas. Statewide performance has improved steadily in mathematics and science/technology. Statewide performance in English language arts has been relatively stable since 1998.

¹ Taken from the Spring 2000 MCAS Tests: Report of State Results

- At grade 8, student performance is improving in all subject areas. Student performance in English language arts is excellent, and improving. For the first time on any of the grade 8 MCAS tests, the average student scaled score reached the *Proficient* level – 240. The percentage of students performing at the *Failing* level in mathematics, science/technology, and history/social science is declining but is still unacceptably high.
- At grade 10, student performance in mathematics improved dramatically from 1999 to 2000. It is noteworthy that the improvement occurred among both low- and high-performing students. The percentage of students at the *Failing* level decreased from 53 percent to 45 percent, while the percentage of students performing at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels increased from 24 percent to 36 percent. Student performance in English language arts and science/technology has remained fairly stable since 1998.

For more detailed information, please see pages 4 through 8 for statewide MCAS results from 1998-2000, and for 2000 statewide MCAS performance by student status. More information on MCAS results can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html>

Massachusetts SAT and AP Scores

The combined 2000 mathematics and verbal SAT scores in Massachusetts have risen eight points since 1998. Over a two-year period, the Massachusetts SAT I scores show a three-point increase on the verbal test, from 508 in 1998, to 511 in 1999, and again 511 this year, and a five-point increase in mathematics, from 508 in 1998, to 511 in 1999, to 513 this year. In addition, Massachusetts has one of the highest percentages of students (78%) in the nation who take the SAT I. Nationally, 44% of students take the SAT I. For more detailed information, please see the chart on page 9, “1996-2000 Massachusetts SAT I Scores by Race and Gender.”

On the Advanced Placement tests, 72.5% of Massachusetts public school students who took an AP exam scored at or above a 3 in 2000. From 1999 to 2000, there was a significant increase in the number of Massachusetts students scoring a 3 (17% increase from 1999), a 4 (18.2% increase) and a 5 (10.5% increase). The number of students taking one or more AP tests (15,212) has also increased by 9.8% from 1999. For more detailed information, please see the chart on page 10, “2000 Massachusetts AP Report.”

Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery

The Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery is designed to recognize and reward students who demonstrate high academic achievement and to promote success in MCAS for grade 10 and beyond. In March 2000, the Board adopted regulations for implementing the Certificate of Mastery program. In the spring of 2000, the Department’s Office of Student Leadership distributed applications to schools for the 4,700 students who were eligible to apply, based on their grade 10 MCAS scores. Over 1000 students applied, and 860 students received this prestigious award in 2000. More information on the Certificate of Mastery program can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/osl/mastery/com.html>

1998-2000 Statewide MCAS Results: Grade 4					
<i>Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level¹</i>					
	Scaled Score	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing</i>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
2000	231	1	19	67	13
1999	231	0	21	67	12
1998	230	1	19	66	15
MATHEMATICS					
2000	235	12	28	42	18
1999	235	12	24	44	19
1998	234	11	23	44	23
SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY					
2000	241	11	51	30	8
1999	240	10	46	36	9
1998	238	6	42	40	12
<p>1. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area. These results include regular education students, students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.</p>					

1998-2000 Statewide MCAS Results: Grade 8					
<i>Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level¹</i>					
	Scaled Score	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing</i>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
2000	240	5	57	27	11
1999	238	3	53	31	13
1998	237	3	52	31	14
MATHEMATICS					
2000	228	10	24	27	39
1999	226	6	22	31	40
1998	227	8	23	26	42
SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY					
2000	228	6	29	27	37
1999	224	5	23	27	45
1998	225	2	26	31	41
HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE					
2000	221	1	10	45	45
1999	221	1	10	40	49
1998	-	-	-	-	-
<p>1. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area. These results include regular education students, students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.</p>					

1998-2000 Statewide MCAS Results: Grade 10					
<i>Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level¹</i>					
	Scaled Score	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing</i>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
2000	229	7	29	30	34
1999	229	4	30	34	32
1998	230	5	33	34	28
MATHEMATICS					
2000	228	15	18	22	45
1999	222	9	15	23	53
1998	222	7	17	24	52
SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY					
2000	226	3	23	37	37
1999	226	3	21	39	38
1998	225	1	21	42	36
<p>1. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area. These results include regular education students, students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.</p>					

General MCAS Performance Level Definitions	
PERFORMANCE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
<i>Advanced</i> 260-280	Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.
<i>Proficient</i> 240-259	Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
<i>Needs Improvement</i> 220-239	Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.
<i>Failing</i> 200-219	Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

2000 Statewide MCAS Performance Level Results by Student Status: Grade 4 <i>Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level</i>						
Subject Area and Student Status Category	Scaled Score	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				
		<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing (Tested)</i>	<i>Failing (Absent)</i>
<i>English Language Arts</i>						
All Students	231	1	19	67	13	0
Regular	234	1	23	70	7	0
Students with Disabilities	222	0	3	58	39	1
Limited English Proficient	221	0	3	53	43	1
<i>Mathematics</i>						
All Students	235	12	28	42	18	0
Regular	238	14	32	42	12	0
Students with Disabilities	224	3	13	45	39	0
Limited English Proficient	220	2	8	35	54	0
<i>Science/Technology</i>						
All Students	241	11	51	30	8	0
Regular	244	13	56	27	5	0
Students with Disabilities	233	3	34	45	18	0
Limited English Proficient	223	1	13	45	41	0
Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area.						

2000 Statewide MCAS Performance Level Results by Student Status: Grade 8
Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level

Subject Area and Student Status Category	Scaled Score	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				
		<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing (Tested)</i>	<i>Failing (Absent)</i>
<i>English Language Arts</i>						
All Students	240	5	57	27	10	1
Regular	243	6	64	24	6	0
Students with Disabilities	225	0	20	40	37	2
Limited English Proficient	222	0	18	33	48	1
<i>Mathematics</i>						
All Students	228	10	24	27	38	1
Regular	232	12	27	29	31	1
Students with Disabilities	211	1	6	16	76	1
Limited English Proficient	211	1	7	14	76	1
<i>Science/Technology</i>						
All Students	228	6	29	27	37	1
Regular	232	7	34	29	29	1
Students with Disabilities	213	1	9	18	70	2
Limited English Proficient	208	0	5	12	81	2
<i>History/Social Science</i>						
All Students	221	1	10	45	44	1
Regular	223	1	11	50	37	1
Students with Disabilities	210	0	2	21	76	2
Limited English Proficient	208	0	1	14	84	2
Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area.						

2000 Statewide MCAS Performance Level Results by Student Status: Grade 10 <i>Average Scaled Score and Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level</i>						
Subject Area and Student Status Category	Scaled Score	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				
		<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Failing (Tested)</i>	<i>Failing (Absent)</i>
<i>English Language Arts</i>						
All Students	229	7	29	30	32	2
Regular	232	8	33	32	25	2
Students with Disabilities	210	0	6	19	70	5
Limited English Proficient	211	1	5	19	72	3
<i>Mathematics</i>						
All Students	228	15	18	22	42	3
Regular	231	17	20	24	37	2
Students with Disabilities	209	2	4	11	78	5
Limited English Proficient	212	4	6	14	73	4
<i>Science/Technology</i>						
All Students	226	3	23	37	34	3
Regular	229	3	27	39	28	3
Students with Disabilities	212	0	5	21	68	6
Limited English Proficient	211	0	3	20	72	5
Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding. For the purpose of computing school, district, and state results, students who were absent without a medically documented excuse from any subject area MCAS test were assigned the minimum scaled score of 200 and a performance level of <i>Failing</i> for that subject area.						

