



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

November 30, 2011

Dear Members of the Lawrence Community:

You may have heard that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has been asked to come into the city to help the children of Lawrence succeed by improving the schools. As a result, in the next few weeks, I will name a new leader, called a *receiver*, for the Lawrence school district.

Many of you will have questions about what this means for your child and your school, and I want to hear from you. I will hold a meeting in Lawrence to talk with you in person. Your ideas are important to me. A Spanish interpreter will be available at the meeting. For more information, see below.

On November 29th, after much discussion and after hearing from members of your community, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to take charge of the Lawrence school district. I thank those who shared their questions and ideas with me and my staff, by email, phone, and in the public comment sessions.

As mentioned above, in the next few weeks, I will name a new leader, called a *receiver*, to lead the Lawrence Public Schools. This *receiver* will report directly to me, and will be accountable for improving education in every school in Lawrence for the benefit of all students.

All children in Lawrence can be successful, but that is not happening now. I understand that the circumstances facing many of Lawrence's families and students create substantial challenges. However, we can and will build on the strengths of Lawrence students, parents, educators, and community to ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for success.

I know there may be some questions in the community about what will change with a state *receiver*. If you have a child in school, I do not expect a change in your child's program during this school year. Over the winter and spring, we will be planning for improvements across the district. You will begin to see those positive changes by the start of the next school year.

I will be coming to Lawrence in December to talk with you in person. Please watch for notices about this upcoming meeting on the Department's website (www.doe.mass.edu), on the Lawrence Public Schools website (www.lawrence.k12.ma.us), and through school notices. Together, we can and will improve the Lawrence Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education