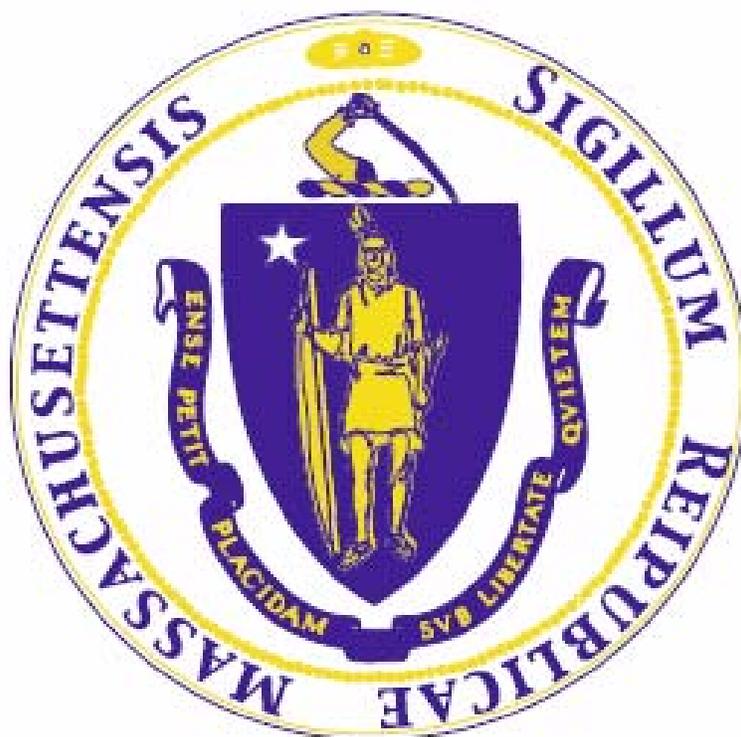


**The Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
Commission on Gay, Lesbian,
Bisexual, and Transgender Youth**

**Annual Report
FY2009 - Part 2**



Lisa Perry-Wood, Executive Director

Arthur Lipkin, Chair

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Letter from the Chair

2009 marked the second year the Massachusetts Legislative Commission on GLBT Youth issued recommendations for policies that focus on GLBT youth and students. 2009-10 saw a severe economic downturn that worked against our goal to stabilize and expand resources that support GLBT programs and services.

Important legislation related to the Commission's mission is currently under consideration. The "Act Related to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes" promises to extend protections against discrimination to include gender identity and expression, a key step for securing legal protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people, yet its swift passage is far from certain. Additionally, the recent hearings on anti-bullying legislation give hope that a bill with enumerated youth categories will soon become law.

Nevertheless, these rights and protective measures on their own will not solve the complex health and safety issues that face the youth whose welfare is the focus of our work. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/gender expression as well as race/ethnicity, is a key factor in many young people's lives. An entrenched discriminatory environment is toxic for GLBT youth in both institutional and private settings.

The Commission maintains that an approach rooted strongly in public health is the only way to address these systemic and pernicious barriers to population health. GLBT youth suffer poor health outcomes chiefly as a result of harassment and violence. Addressing the well-documented health disparities between GLBT youth and their heterosexual peers should be the responsibility of all state agencies that deal with youth and/or families.

Addressing health disparities based on race and ethnicity is a key priority, reflecting standard, well-established national public health policy. It is based on widely accepted data and our lived experiences in the United States. It is well documented that youth of color experience worse health and safety outcomes than their white counterparts. Eliminating racial and ethnic disparities *within* the GLBT youth cohort has been the Commission's primary goal for more than a year. We emphatically recommend that the government target programs and services to eliminate health risk disparities for GLBT youth of color.

The needs of transgender youth across all races and ethnicities demand greater attention. Based on numerous studies, the Commission believes this population experiences violence and homelessness with alarmingly high frequency. Nevertheless, transgender youth's demographics and health risks have gone un-assessed in Massachusetts, creating fundamental barriers to effective policies and programs. The Commission appreciates the very recent work of a DPH

task force to develop reliable research measurements for surveying transgender youth. We urge that this long-awaited first step be followed by swift integration of these tools into existing youth health surveys.

Sexual and gender minority young people reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth; they also embody the changing identity constructs of sexuality and gender themselves. Among youth, the identity label “GLBT” is no longer adequate to describe all the youth and students on whose behalf we work. Because conventional GLBT identity-based approaches may not suffice, we must have a more comprehensive strategy to reach a broader “queer” youth population who may not self-define in conventional terms.

The Commission values the 40 year history of trailblazing GLBT youth work in Massachusetts and the progress that community activists, providers, government allies, and the former Governor’s Gay and Lesbian Youth Commission have made here. Yet today, after resting perhaps too comfortably on our laurels, GLBT youth need and deserve better. We must challenge the status quo and change how the work is done.

The Commission calls for population based improvement to GLBT youth health. Providing “rescue” services to GLBT youth, but failing to address root causes of their predicament, including structural ones, is not acceptable. Currently, the amount and allocation of resources for GLBT youth work severely limits its impact.

In a tight fiscal environment, the Commission insists that programs be objectively assessed by means of proven public health research methods. We do not suggest that current programs aren’t doing good work; but Massachusetts must embrace a data-driven process to document program impact and value. This would constitute a significant shift in how GLBT youth programs are currently assessed.

Our 2009 recommendations called for some short-term enhancements that could be accomplished at little or no cost. Those recommendations sought to enhance and formalize collaborative and reporting relationships with the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The Commission appreciates each department’s staff efforts to communicate and work with us, and looks forward to continuing such collaboration.

This year and next do not appear to be times for expansion, given the economic downturn. Levels of state GLBT youth funding were modestly raised to \$550,000 at DPH and \$300,000 at DESE in FY 2009, only to see a \$150,000 9c cut to the DPH line item and a hiring freeze that prevented the hiring of a DESE Safe Schools Coordinator and then the abandonment of all GLBT youth programming at DESE. While staff at each department have worked with the Commission to minimize the impact of these cuts, the stress on GLBT youth service infrastructures has been keenly felt.

The Commission believes policy and program development must be based on evidence. At the same time evaluation of both policies and programs must be objective and transparent.

The legislative statute that governs the Commission requires that government agencies work with this body to take a coordinated and comprehensive approach to improving the health and safety of GLBT youth and students. As this Annual Report demonstrates, the Commission is not yet satisfied that our recommendations are being met. In some instances, circumstances beyond government's control have understandably limited its agencies abilities to fulfill its obligations. In other instances, we have regrettably met with inattention, perhaps unintended, or outright resistance.

As a government entity, we do however remain committed to a respectful working relationship with other government partners in common purpose for the safety and well being of the youth about whom we all care deeply.

Sincerely,

Arthur Lipkin, Chair
Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth

History and Structure of the Commission

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth was created by the General Court in 2006 (Act of Jul. 1, 2006, Ch. 139 §4, codified in Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 3 §67). Up to 50 commissioners may be appointed, representing twelve Public Education, Public Health and GLBT organizations, and fourteen state regions. The Commission's leadership includes a Chair who appoints an Executive Committee which meets monthly. All members meet quarterly as a full body and monthly in one of the following committees: Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Education, Human Services, and Membership.

Mandate

The work of the Commission is to eliminate the disparities between GLBT youth populations and non-GLBT youth populations. The Commission adopts a public health approach, which focuses on the root causes of disease and injury in GLBT youth populations in Massachusetts. The scope of Commission activities includes:

- Reviewing current research, identifying disparities and disseminating that information publicly;
- Researching best practices for programs and services for GLBT youth populations;
- Making policy recommendations to state agencies: including MA Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE);
- Supporting, testifying and crafting legislative initiatives to redress disparities;
- Advocating for increased funding to support programs for GLBT youth populations;
- Recommending targeted use of state agency funds to best improve the public health of GLBT youth populations, and
- Serving as the connecting point regarding policy targeting GLBT youth populations in the Commonwealth, through its diverse organizational and regional representation.

Summary of Accomplishments - Goals, Actions and Outcomes for FY 2009

Goal #1: Building a Strong and Stable Commission Infrastructure, with Staff.

Actions: A part-time Administrative Assistant was hired as of October 2008.

Outcome: The Commission was staffed by a full-time Executive Director and part-time Administrative Assistant.

Goal #2: Creating a Road Map for GLBT Youth Health through Actionable Annual Reports.

Action: The Commission formulated FY10 recommendations for the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Outcome: FY10 Recommendations were published on Commission website in June 2009.

Goal #3: Strengthen GLBT youth advocacy and leadership through the Commission.

Action: Youth applicants were actively recruited to the Commission in Fall 2008.

Outcome: Two additional high school students were added to Commission roster in January 2009, one of whom played an active role on the Education Committee.

FY 2009 Commission Activities

The following are activities carried out by the Commission in FY 2009.

- Full Commission Regional Meetings were held in: Andover (Andover Public High School), Boston (New Mission High School). A third Full Commission Meeting was held in Boston at the Department of Public Health. [See Attachments]
- Community Youth Forums were held at each regional meeting, to gather input from youth in local gay-straight alliances (GSA) and community-based GLBT youth groups.
- A Legislative Briefing was held in April, 2009, with participation of twenty state representatives and senators and their staff. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to GLBT youth legislative allies.
- Collaborative working relationship-building continued with state agencies: Executive Office of Education, Members of the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), DESE, DPH, and the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- Review of GLBT-related research (i.e. 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data) and best practices for work with GLBT youth in schools and in communities.
- Film introduction for “Straightlaced: How Race and Gender’s Got Us All Tied Up” premiered at Roxbury Community College, May 2009.
- Participation on “Gender Measures Project” Committee: research and piloting of gender identity question/s for addition to FY11 statewide youth health survey.
- Participation on the Massachusetts Youth Action Planning Team “Ready for Lifelong Success” project :
<http://inspire4life.org/sites/inspire4life.org/files/09%20Statewide%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- Testimony provided by Commissioners for House Bill 1728, An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes, “Transgender Rights Bill”. [See Attachments]
- Participation in three statewide regional GLBT Youth Conferences: Barnstable, Worcester and Holyoke.
- Panel presentation at Springfield Anti-Bullying Community Forum in memory of Carl Joseph Walker Hoover.
- Distribution work, in partnership with DESE, toward widening distribution of GSA mini-grant RFP and technical assistance to applicant schools.
- Collaborative work with Mass Equality, GLAD and ADL on details of proposed Anti-Bullying legislation.
- Signed on to official letter in support of the Massachusetts Coalition for a United ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act: ENDA HB 2015) asking our Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to pass a fully- inclusive ENDA in this Congress and to oppose any version that leaves transgender people behind.

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Education

Starting Points

In FY 2009, the Committee on Education worked to strengthen and elaborate its collaborative relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Executive Office of Education (EOE), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and the Joint Committee on Education of the General Court. We believe our outreach and advocacy efforts have resulted in greater awareness among the Commonwealth's education sector of the issues facing GLBT students in the public schools. We are grateful for the positive and constructive exchanges between these entities and the Commission, and look forward to building on this collaborative spirit in the next year.

The following is a detailed review of work completed by the Committee on Education in fiscal year 2009.

Recommendations to the DESE

At the start of FY 2009, the Commission issued recommendations to the DESE on priorities and persistent challenges to address in its work with GLBT students. The following incorporates these FY09 recommendations directed to DESE, the October 1, 2009 progress report sent to the Commission from the DESE regarding these recommendations, and the Commission's assessment of the work to date. Each recommendation is restated, followed by the DESE progress report response, and lastly by the Commission's assessment of the Department's implementation of that recommendation. On behalf of the full Commission, the Committee thanks the Department for its timely progress report of October 1, 2009, and for its continued cooperation with the Commission in pursuing its mandate and mission.

Recommendation 1: INCLUSION OF BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

In all mention of "gay and lesbian" by the ESE, including, but not limited to curricula, regulations, grant opportunities, and training documents, the terms "bisexual" and "transgender" must be added.

DESE Report: During FY'09 bisexual and transgender youth language was added to Safe School RFP's and related documents. The Department is committed to change language of all DESE documentation to fully include bisexual and transgender youth alongside "gay and lesbian". Curriculum frameworks will have the language updated at the time of their formal reviews. Every effort is being made to expand language to include bisexual and transgender youth alongside gay and lesbian during the creation of new materials and the reprint of old.

DESE Addendum, 1/29/10: In terms of the inclusion of bisexual and transgender students, the intention was to add the language to include bisexual and transgender youth, along with gay and lesbian youth, during the creation of new materials and the reprint of existing materials.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission acknowledges the Department's stated commitment to use language that is inclusive of bisexual and transgender youth and students. However, to date the Commission has been unable to locate any document either in the Safe Schools Mini-Grants RFP or accompanying attachments that includes "bisexual and transgender" where gay and lesbian students are referenced. While we understand the intention to add inclusive language in new documents, this did not occur with the FY09 Safe Schools mini grants. The Commission reasserts the recommendation that the DESE move as swiftly as possible to make this needed language change on all parts the Safe Schools webpage and in all materials currently posted, as well as in any new materials and RFP's. A written plan for language changes in curricula, regulations, grant opportunities, and training documents should be in place, by the March 1, 2010 Progress Report deadline.

Recommendation 2: DATA-GATHERING

The DESE needs to capture transgender data, as well as better-detailed race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic data. DESE should consider supplementary assessment tools. For example, the DPH Youth Health Survey is currently being reworked, in collaboration with DESE YRBS specialists.

- *Ensure transgender student populations are measured;*
- *Ensure that 2007 YRBS data with subpopulations that include GLB students, is reported out fully, this year and in subsequent years, as in previous years;*
- *Ensure instruments provide information on ethnicity;*
- *Ensure instruments include socioeconomic status and geography.*

DESE Report: Commission members met with staff of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and Department of Public Health (DPH) to discuss the feasibility to make changes to the 2007 survey. We learned then that changes were not possible for 2007. Although we were unable to include the change in 2007, we were able to include the following question in the 2009 survey:

‘Which of the following best describes you?’

A. Heterosexual (straight) B. Gay or lesbian C. Bisexual D. Not sure’

CDC does its analysis by race/gender. We will have crosstabs available on the 2009 data to provide additional analysis beyond CDC's categories of race and gender. We anticipate that we will have the crosstabs analysis conducted by late spring 2010. In 2009, Massachusetts added 39 questions to the CDC questions. The questionnaire maximum number of questions is 99 to be administered in one classroom period and MA reached

that maximum with the addition of these questions. Our Massachusetts survey, with Massachusetts questions highlighted, is attached in an appendix.

We are currently reviewing potential questions for the next survey administration. We will also explore with CDC the inclusion of a school meal eligibility question so that we can get information on socio-economic status of respondents. We are concerned, though, that self-reporting in the areas of geography and socioeconomic status have not been shown to be reliable and, in some cases, make it difficult to comply with the confidentiality assurance we are required to provide as a condition of administering the survey.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission appreciates the Department's efforts to better capture GLB students in the 2009 survey, and its agreement to fully report out subpopulations as it has previously done. We look forward to reviewing the crosstabs analysis in spring 2010. The Commission remains concerned that the Department is not measuring transgender / gender non-conforming student populations. This is a critically vulnerable population in our schools, and a priority of the Commission. It is imperative that the DESE appropriately gather data on transgender students and we reassert our recommendation to do so as swiftly as possible. A written plan for data-gathering should be in place, by the March 1, 2010 Progress Report deadline or to meet the deadline for revisions for the FY11 YRBS administration. We have reviewed the Massachusetts Survey instrument the Department referenced and forwarded for the Commission's review. We appreciate the added Massachusetts questions, and are hopeful they will provide valuable data that will drive better program development. We remain concerned that there is insufficient data collection on ethnicity and socioeconomic status of respondents. We understand the Department's concern with regard to confidentiality assurance, and urge the Department to continue to investigate ways to collect this data without compromising the confidentiality of students and families.

Recommendation 3: SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students has been in place since 1993, with a mandate to increase school safety and prevent suicide and violence related to gay and lesbian students. The Program's mission has been to assist public schools in implementing the 1993 Board of Education Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students, and in complying with the Massachusetts Student Anti-Discrimination Law (amended in 1993 to include sexual orientation). Since 1993, the safety of bisexual and transgender youth has been at issue in the state, necessitating a broader range of impact for both the Commission and the Safe Schools Program. The following recommendations address the current situation for GLBT youth in schools in Massachusetts.

- **Program Coordinator:** DESE should hire a full-time coordinator for the Safe Schools Program by 9/30/08. The coordinator should create policy to improve program design and evaluation.

- ***Focus on Needs of Underserved Populations:*** DESE should develop the means for schools to address issues for students who identify as transgender, as well as GLBT Students of Color. This may include staff training, grants or other initiatives.
- ***Evaluating/Targeting Programs and Grants:*** DESE must generate information and evaluation to better identify and meet the needs of GLBT students.
SES, racial/ethnic identity, urban/suburban, size of school must be included;
 - *The criteria by which DESE measures and evaluates outcomes of Safe Schools programs should be delineated.*
 - *Assess compliance with the Student Anti-Discrimination Law Regulations.*
- ***GSAs.*** The following issues must be addressed by the DESE:
 - *Determine what populations are being served by GSAs and which populations are being left out in the GSA approach to GLBT student support;*
 - *Discover the reasons that some schools have historically not had GSAs;*
 - *Investigate the factors that contribute to GSA resilience/endurance or failure;*
 - *Ensure that GSA advisors are adequately trained and mentored;*
 - *Establish a reliable directory of GSAs and their advisors, as well as communications technology (i.e. listserv) to support their work.*

DESE Report: ESE attempted to identify and hire a qualified candidate for the coordinator’s position. Due to state 9C budget cuts and a hiring freeze, a coordinator could not be hired. However, we were able to address several of the other recommendations here through an Inter State Agency Agreement (ISA) with DPH to provide technical assistance and training to Schools and GSA through a contract with Health Care of Southeastern MA, Inc (HCSM). The goals and objectives of the ISA were as follows:

Goals:

- A. Organize and implement two Regional GLBTQ conferences for school based GLBTQ youth and their GSA advisors/ group facilitators.
- B. Coordination and delivery of in-service trainings for staff on GLBTQ youth violence prevention. Provide technical assistance, support and school personnel training to a minimum of 16 schools across the state not including workshops or presentations at one or two state-wide conferences for school personnel.

Objectives

- A.1DPH staff shall monitor contract compliance of the provider GLBTQ Youth Support Project of Health Care of Southeastern MA, Inc. See description above. The provider will coordinate and conduct two regional GLBTQ Youth Leadership conferences for youth and their GSA/Group Advisors in high need areas of the state.

B.1 The provider Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. GLBT Youth Support Project will provide technical assistance, support and conduct personnel trainings for a minimum of 16 schools across the state not including workshops or presentations at one or two state-wide conferences for school personnel. Duties include:

- Serving as a point of access for professional development and in-service training for school personnel.
- Planning and phone assessments for building capacity in the school (e.g., becoming familiar with GLBTQ youth work that has happened in the past, the school climate, presence or lack of presence of a GSA, what is needed for the school personnel training, composition of the group, etc.
- Arranging and conducting on-site planning meeting with staff, GSA members and/or students.
- In-service staff training preparation and logistics.
- Arranging for additional trainers, school alumni speakers etc. as needed
- Conducting the in-service training

Under this contract, HCSM provided sixteen trainings in twelve school districts and one event at the Massachusetts School Counselor Association Conference (MASCA), reaching a total of 754 participants. Host schools included high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, and included both public and charter schools as well as one specialized therapeutic school. Each training included components designed to:

- Increase awareness and empathy related to the needs of GLBTQ youth, students who have GLBTQ parents, and students who don't conform to gender norms;
- Provide context and facts including relevant laws and state regulations;
- Provide opportunities for participants to improve their skills to address bias and to proactively create a more supportive learning environment;
- Engage participants in developing action steps to improve the school climate.

In addition to in-service trainings, the GLBT Youth Support Project Training Team provided extensive technical assistance and team-building for a number of schools and districts. Multiple trainings were offered in six districts and intensive technical assistance was provided for eight districts. Copies of the HCSM Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Support Project Report and FY 2009 End-of-Year Report: ESE School – Based Training and Support are attached.

During the 2008-2009 school year, ESE provided technical assistance to school districts and public two-year colleges with career/vocational technical education programs concerning supporting students who do not conform to traditional gender roles under funding from the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV). Perkins IV has an emphasis on the enrollment and retention of students in career/vocational technical education programs that prepare students for careers that would be nontraditional for their gender, such as females in plumbing and males in

nursing. ESE staff is exploring ways to engage local community based organizations, including district attorney offices, in discussions about expanding their programming regarding GLBT youth issues.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission finds it unacceptable that the DESE failed to meet the 9/30/2008 deadline to hire a qualified coordinator for the Safe Schools Program. While we acknowledge the Department for all it has been able to do without a dedicated staff person, the challenges facing GLBT students in the Commonwealth are too great to be left to the availability of staff members who go above and beyond their job descriptions to do what they can to serve this population. The Commission urges the Department to review its staffing structure and budget and develop potential solutions to overcome the lack of dedicated staff to this urgent challenge.

The Commission recognizes the Department's work with the GLBTQ conference provider and the technical assistance and trainings provided to the sixteen school districts. However, we have reviewed the contractor's report on the regional GLBTQ conferences and the in-service trainings and did not find data on the racial / ethnic identity as recommended under the Evaluating / Targeting Programs and Grants bullet. When developing and funding programs, we recommend that DESE focus on the needs of underserved populations, especially transgender students and GLBT students of color. We appreciate that conferences were conducted in geographic areas where there was a higher likelihood that underserved students could attend, but the collection of demographic data that identifies who is being served by these programs and who isn't, is a priority of the Commission.

How the Department delineates criteria for development, targeting, and evaluation of programs for GLBT students, especially underserved GLBT student sub-populations remains unclear. When developing a program with a provider, the Commission recommends a clearly defined process for targeting the GLBT students most in need of services and evaluating success not just on program outcomes but also on how well the program was able to target those youth, through robust data collection and analysis.

Although, the Safe Schools mini-grants program was not a recommendation from the Commission, we know it was a key component of the Safe Schools Program this fiscal year. A full report on the effectiveness of this program is in order. Also, given the Commission's recommendation to work with underserved GLBT youth, the Commission is interested in how the Department marketed and targeted the grant program to those schools with the greatest number of these youth.

The Commission acknowledges the Department's technical assistance work with public school districts and two-year colleges which have technical/vocational programs. This important program that asks students to consider careers that are considered non-traditional for their gender is critical, though more work could be done to be fully inclusive of gender identity and gender non-conforming students within this program. We also acknowledge the Department's exploration into coalition building and community development with municipalities and the district attorneys' offices. The Commission

seeks additional information on the development of such programs and how they can be aligned with Commission priorities.

Still unclear is the current state of gay-straight alliance student groups in the Commonwealth's public schools. The Commission has identified five key issues / questions that need attention within the model. Most assuredly a coordinator for the Safe Schools Program could address these questions, but in view of current staff limitations, the Commission challenges the Department to consider what collaborations can take place to gain better insight into what is commonly thought of as the key building block for safe schools work – the gay-straight alliance.

A written plan for addressing all of the Commission's concerns regarding the Safe Schools program, as detailed above, should be in place, by the March 1, 2010 Progress Report deadline.

Recommendation 4: COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM (CSHP)

The Commission's approach is grounded in a public health model, reflected in the Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP). The purpose of the CSHP is to address school health through curriculum, professional development, community awareness, and family involvement. CSHP provides a framework into which GLBT student health logically fits. With primary focus on the MCAS and other testing, the Commission is concerned that health curriculum, for instance, is being weakened, thus putting GLBT students at greater risk.

The Commission recommends active collaboration of the DESE with the Department of Public Health to achieve full implementation of the CSHP model within all Massachusetts school districts.

DESE Report: ESE has reorganized the Safe Schools Program activities by assigning the program to the Office for Nutrition, Health and Safety Programs. This provides better coordination with the Office's programs and activities including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools programs.

The CDC funded programs include the Coordinated School Health Program, AIDS/HIV Education Program, the YRBS Program, Profiles Survey and the National Professional Development Program. In October 2008 and February 2009 ESE provided workshops for school counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers using the American Psychological Association's curriculum, Preventing Health Risks and Promoting Healthy Outcomes for LGBTQ Youth. Under the CDC grant, we received additional funding for district grants to develop plans to address teen pregnancy. As part of the technical assistance provided, The MA Alliance for Teen Pregnancy worked with the districts awarded grants to address local issues, review the many aspects of teen pregnancy including findings related to minority populations and GLBT youth and develop plans within the districts. It is anticipated that trainings for the coming year under CDC programming may have greater capacity to address GLBT health concerns. ESE is reviewing the CDC cooperative agreement and planning for discussions with CDC.

The purpose of the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) grant is to support programs that: (1) prevent violence in and around schools; (2) prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; (3) involve parents and communities; and, (4) are coordinated with related Federal, State, school, and community efforts and resources to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that promotes student academic achievement. During the past year a number of school districts used SDFSCA funds to support Gay/Straight Alliances. We see that trend continuing this year and are encouraging it.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission recognizes the reorganization at the Department to allow better synergy between GLBT student programs and the larger student health work. We are hopeful that this reorganization will allow for better collaboration and coordination across functional units and better position the GLBT student programs for federal funding opportunities.

The DESE trainings conducted with school health professionals and counselors with the American Psychological Association curriculum are commendable. We encourage the Department to continue to look for ways to incorporate GLBT student material into the training curricula.

The Commission is interested in learning more about how school districts are using SDFSCA funds to support Gay-Straight Alliances, and what the outcomes have been. If the Department deems the GSA model to be positioned well to make the greatest impact on improving GLBT student health and academic outcomes, and to attract underserved students; the Commission looks to the Department to help replicate such success with other school districts.

Recommendations to the DESE in Conjunction with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

This year the Commission worked with members of the BESE to bring more awareness and understanding to the issues afflicting GLBT students in Massachusetts public schools. We are grateful for the commitment and urgency the BESE has assigned to these issues and the Commission looks forward to partnering with the BESE and the DESE together in the coming year.

Recommendation 1: CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

DESE should review the MA Curriculum Frameworks and Vocational Technical Education Frameworks in all subject areas to ensure adequate inclusion of GLBT-related content.

DESE Report: In May, 2009, ESE staff from the Office for Humanities, History & Social Science met with Arthur Lipkin of the Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and
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Transgender Youth. The Department has a systematic process for the review of the frameworks and the recruitment of individuals to appoint members to framework review committees and MCAS committees. At the time of the meeting, members were being recruited for the science and technology/engineering review pane. ESE staff informed Mr. Lipkin that the recruitment for assessment development committees and for the MCAS bias review committee would begin in October. As the development of national standards is being conducted there may be some adjustments to the schedule. Information on the frameworks review schedule and other information is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission appreciates the time and attention DESE staff gave Commissioner Lipkin regarding the humanities and social sciences curriculum frameworks. We also appreciate the Department informing us of opportunities to apply and join the MCAS review and bias committees. We applaud the Department’s active engagement of the Commission on this matter and are encouraged that it can continue in the coming year. In the meantime, the Commission would appreciate being kept informed of the progress being made to incorporate GLBT-related content and knowledge outcomes into appropriate curriculum frameworks such as Language Arts and Social Studies.

Recommendation 2: TEACHER CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

DESE should review certification standards (esp., 603 CMR 7.08, (c) Manages Classroom Climate and Operation and (d) Promotes Equity) to ensure that GLBT student welfare is explicitly and thoroughly addressed.

DESE Report: During the spring Commission Members met with the newly-appointed Associate Commissioner for the Center for Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development. As a result, work has begun to incorporate some of the Committee's recommendations in the development of the draft performance indicators for educational leaders that will be shared with the Board next year. Below is the draft policy standard the Associate Commissioner shared with the Board in June:

IV. Ethical and Reflective Leadership: The education leader promotes the success of all students and staff by providing ethical, culturally proficient, skilled, and reflective leadership.

Education leaders embrace the ethical, pedagogic, and civic imperatives of public education. Their leadership is grounded in a framework of action and decision-making that reflects this understanding. Educational leaders are culturally proficient and embrace diversity as an essential ingredient to a vibrant school culture. They understand the deleterious impact that discrimination or negative stereotyping based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, language, sexual orientation, or religion has on students’ lives, self perceptions, and opportunities to learn. They work actively to ensure learning environments that are free of bias and open to differences in backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, sexual orientation, and learning styles.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission thanks the Department for its prompt attention and movement on evolving teacher preparation to ensure culturally relevant instruction practices that include sensitivity to GLBT students in the classroom. The Commission recommends that the Department also ensure that gender identity and/or expression are added to the draft policy. While reforming the Ethical and Reflective Leadership policy draft is an important step, the Commission recommends that the Department engage in a more thorough review of teacher and administrator licensure to guarantee that GLBT student awareness is explicitly addressed.

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Human Services

The Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth and its Human Services Committee thanks the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) for the effort it has made responding to our FY 2009 recommendations. The following is our FY 2009 annual report on the recommendations directed to MDPH, incorporating each of the five (5) recommendations, the response of MDPH and the Commission assessment on progress regarding these recommendations.

Recommendation 1: COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION

Funding the Commission administration sends a message that the Commission itself is a significant and valuable asset that is worth funding. The Commission has an important function in public health advocacy for GLBT youth: its work assists service providers, improves public policy, and enables public hearings on the most current topics.

Details:

- *Staffs the commission with a full-time Executive Director and part-time administrative assistant.*
- *Covers costs of quarterly mandatory full commission meetings (includes, but is not limited to: refreshments, security, rental costs), as well as travel costs for commissioners for all mandatory meetings.*
- *Covers costs of up to 3 trainings per year for commissioners*

MDPH Report: Fiscal year 2009 began with \$550,000 dedicated in account 4590-0250 for the Commission and its programs (historically, Safe Spaces for GLBT Youth). \$100,000 of this was identified specifically for Commission staff salaries and other expenses. Funds were made available from other DPH accounts in the amount of \$30,000 for Commission expenses in addition to significant in-kind support that was provided in terms of office and meeting space, IT support, telephone access, copying, postage, and supplies. Unfortunately, the state economic situation resulted in a mid-year reduction by the Governor's Office to this portion of the account. However, the Department honored the Commission's request to keep the proportional reduction to the Commission as low as possible. In the end only \$5,000 of the \$150,000 cut was taken by the Commission due to the availability of Department support.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission thanks MDPH for its generous support, which at the start of FY 2009 dedicated \$100,000 for Commission staff salaries, \$30,000 for mandatory meeting expenses and significant in-kind office and meeting space support, as outlined above. This reflects MDPH's laudable, ongoing support of the Commission's efforts to improve the lives of GLBT youth. The Commission also applauds MDPH's efforts to mitigate cuts to account 4590-0250 in FY 2009 as described above, reflecting its understanding of the vulnerability and service needs of the Commonwealth's GLBT youth. Ultimately, the Commission was allocated and spent less than half of the original \$30,000 allocated for meeting expenses, through a series of cost-cutting measures. We appreciate MDPH response to the Commission request to keep the reduction of Commission budget as low as possible, in the context of

very deep and difficult budget cuts. The rationale for this was that, absent the Commission, already scarce funding for Safe Spaces for GLBT youth programs would be in further jeopardy; historically, the Commission has taken a lead role in securing state resources for GLBT youth programs and services.

Recommendation 2: HOMELESSNESS AND GLBT YOUTH

There is a body of qualitative evidence suggesting that homelessness is a growing public health problem facing GLBT Youth. The Department should apply resources to identify the scope and severity of the problem, a plan for surveillance, as well as a plan to directly address the problem.

Evidence suggests that transgender youth and youth of color are disproportionately represented among GLBT homeless youth in Massachusetts. The prevalence of homelessness in these sub-populations should be proactively addressed by the Department within the following recommendations.

Details:

- *Identify the scope and severity of the problem of homelessness in GLBT youth populations;*
- *Submit a plan to include this issue in on-going Department efforts to improve public health surveillance of GLBT populations;*
- *Create a plan in FY2009 to ensure services meet the needs of GLBT homeless youth statewide, over next 3-5 years.*

MDPH Report: The Department of Public Health is committed to working with those state agencies charged with responding to homelessness. In FY '09 the primary responsibility for this work was transferred from the Department of Transitional Assistance to the Department of Housing and Community Development. DPH is also a member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Any comprehensive solution to addressing GLBT Youth and homelessness must include these agencies and the interagency council. While it is important that DPH programs and services are accessible to GLBT homeless youth (and the Safe Spaces for GLBT Youth Program has providers that specifically focus on these populations), DPH must work with lead state agencies in responding to homelessness and in planning efforts.

Massachusetts has led the states in conducting health and behavioral surveys that are inclusive of GLBT youth, and has conducted considerable original research into the disproportionate impact of a variety of health issues on GLBT youth. These include the population-based Youth Health Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey, as well as specialized analyses of existing surveillance and program performance data systems. As resources permit, the Department will explore the inclusion of survey items that assess housing instability in this population in future survey administrations.

Commission Response and Next Steps: This recommendation arose from ongoing reports of GLBT youth homelessness being a significant and pressing problem with no clearly effective solution offered in government funded transitional assistance or shelter systems. The Commission limited the scope of its recommendation to MDPH to researching and proposing a plan to address the problem—with the implicit

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understanding that any solution would have to include any other government agencies primarily charged with addressing homelessness. While we appreciate the position of MDPH in relationship to the Department of Transitional Assistance and/or the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), it is disappointing that no progress was made nor response offered corresponding to our three-bulleted requests. The Commission urges MDPH, as a longtime member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, to take action on the issue of homeless GLBT youth needs. During FY 2009, MDPH's representative, when asked of its progress on this recommendation, advised the Commission that one of its health disparities research projects led by JRI Health—focusing on community-based participatory research on GLBT youth of color—would incorporate questions about and generate the requested findings on the scope and severity of the problem of homelessness in GLBT youth populations. Consequently, we anticipated a report of the findings in MDPH's response; however, there is no mention of the project at all. We would appreciate a report on the status of this work and any findings it may have generated or an acknowledgement that it did not yield the expected results and the reasons why not. The Commission itself intends to reach out to DHCD and we expect MDPH to exercise leadership in making a strong case for action on this issue.

The Commission supports and applauds MDPH's efforts to further survey the needs of GLBT youth, including the Youth Health and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, and we understand there is minimally a question regarding homelessness on the latter. The Commission respectfully notes, however, regarding this recommendation, that homeless youth are also frequently those who are absent from or drop out of school, and therefore might not be effectively surveyed on school-based instruments alone. Moreover, the Commission would welcome current results of the Youth Health Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey as they relate to GLBT Youth. The most current results shared with the Commission date back to 2007. Longitudinal data on GLBT Youth is necessary to inform policy recommendations and assess the progress made.

Recommendation 3: CURRENT VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The current infrastructure funded by the Department to provide services to GLBT youth is unstable. This instability is driven in part by lack of support from sources outside the Department, a problem the Commission is addressing, but also in part by a lack of coordinated and comprehensive approaches to GLBT youth services as a population within the Department. While we note that the Department was working under political constraints in the past, the current environment is amenable to a proactive approach to this problem. We know that the current leadership of the Department has the vision to stabilize the infrastructure but are concerned that this vision has not been taken up by the Department staff. We are also concerned that there are insufficient evaluation tools in place to monitor current programs to ensure that services are being provided, to ensure the programs are achieving impact, and to ensure that they can produce population-level changes.

Details:

- *Institute evaluation systems to measure population impact of new and existing programs.*

- *Ensure that programs fit into a comprehensive model that targets all levels of society and that the programs achieve not only impacts at the individual level but also are properly situated to achieve significant and measurable impact on GLBT youth populations*
- *Program monies should be spent where there is potential for greatest population impact. Spending on programs that provide health improvements for the benefit of individual GLBT youth, e.g. scholarships, should be avoided*
- *Develop new and existing programs according to identified geographic and socioeconomic needs of GLBT youth of color. At a minimum, programs should be targeted and identified by ethnicity, geography and socio-economic status to ensure all programs are targeting the populations with the greatest health burden*
- *Ensure demonstrable population impact through use of evaluation tools.*

MDPH Report: Stability, Infrastructure and Funding: The Department does not understand the contention that the infrastructure support for GLBT youth program is inherently unstable. While the resource base for these services is dependent on state appropriations, the managerial, administrative, and technical supports surrounding these programs are reliably and consistently available. As indicated above, the Department has also devoted alternative resources to back-fill loss of dedicated state funding for the Safe Spaces for GLBT Youth program.

Commission Response and Next Steps: The Commission appreciates the efforts MDPH has made to preserve funding for GLBT programming—not only in this year, but in previous years and over various administrations. This demonstrates the agency’s commitment to this vulnerable population.

The use of the terms “unstable” and “instability” refer primarily to the overall low level of state funding provided to each GLBT youth development program, as explained to MDPH personnel when these recommendations were first issued. “Infrastructure” refers to the individual and collective ability of funded programs to implement effective programs, which also suffer from the low level funding. In Commission conversations, providers and MDPH staff have agreed that funding levels are a fraction of what one would reasonably expect to run a successful youth development program. This challenge has often been raised in the context of our requests for better evaluation and outcome data from MDPH and the programs. The Commission would have been remiss not to flag this oft-repeated assertion that the programs are not, and never have been, fully-funded as it strives to assure that Massachusetts resources are effectively used to meet GLBT youth needs. If we are in agreement that more resources are necessary to fully actualize programs that meet GLBT youth needs, we urge MDPH to work in partnership with the Commission to secure such resources—if necessary from sources other than state appropriations, such the Department’s partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for the Municipal Wellness and Leadership grants --and to ensure that they are then used to adequately fund effective programs.

MDPH Report: Program Model: Youth Violence Prevention efforts within the Division of Violence and Injury Prevention, including those of the Safe Spaces for GLBT Youth Program, are designed to reduce violence through the comprehensive promotion of positive youth development. These programs utilize a socio-ecological framework of youth development that recognizes assets (and risks) at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. Safe Spaces providers, many with years of developed expertise working with GLBT youth, are able to tailor these models specifically for their populations (including cross-cutting issues such as cultural-specificity, homelessness, transgender identity, etc.).

MDPH Report: Evaluation: There is a considerable body of literature on youth development. Because the Safe Spaces program utilizes the evaluated best practice of youth development, the program collects service delivery data, including program narratives, which assure that they are maintaining fidelity to a youth development model. The forms used for data collection are attached.

Additionally, Safe Spaces staff are engaged in working in partnership with a national youth development organization's research tool and an experienced research investigator to create a tool for GLBT youth that will augment the existing 40 developmental assets with a focus on key identity social supports needed for GLBT youth.

MDPH Report: Population Impact and Targeting those with the Greatest Health Burden: The Safe Spaces procurement design targeted race, ethnicity, geography, and homelessness to ensure programs funding reached GLBT youth with the greatest health burden.

Population-level impacts will be assessed via the survey research and epidemiologic methods described above, but as a matter of sampling design cannot be linked directly to the effects of the Safe Spaces Program. However, future program evaluation approaches may, given sufficient available resources, more directly measure health outcomes as experienced and reported by program participants.

Commission Response and Next Steps: Our current understanding is that MDPH as a funder ascertains only whether a program proposes an acceptable youth development model (no particular models are recommended or specified) and then uses reporting to assure that implemented components are congruent with the program as proposed, and therefore with the youth development model cited. Population-based impact that the Commission seeks, we have been told, is not a reasonable expectation of these programs, based on the level of program funding/activities.

Recommendation 4: SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance of GLBT youth populations is limited and limits effective public health policy. The Department, working with the Commission, should make effective surveillance of GLBT youth populations a priority. While disparities exist among all GLBT youth, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities exist across the board.

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Disparities for the transgender youth population remain unsurveyed to date, though anecdotally they are at critical levels. The past ten years of YRBS data has not been inclusive of transgender and gender questioning youth. The need to acknowledge and address health disparities within transgender and gender questioning youth populations is critical.

Details:

- *Ensure transgender youth populations are measured*
- *Ensure that GLBT youth are measured in every setting, not only school settings*
- *Ensure instruments provide information on ethnicity*
- *Ensure instruments include socioeconomic status*
- *Investigate surveillance using natural data sources that provide for accretion of data*
- *Maintain privacy of GLBT youth*

MDPH Report: The DESE-sponsored YRBS and DPH-sponsored YHS provide the state with the largest body of population-level data on adolescent health available. Smaller studies cannot be generalized to the population of Massachusetts youth. The Department agrees that it is critical to have tools that measure health risks and assets of transgender youth and in FY '09 funded the development and pilot testing of appropriate survey items for inclusion in the YHS (and consideration for inclusion in the YRBS). Focus groups were conducted for cognitive testing for pilot questions addressing gender variance. These items are likely to be added to the YHS in the FY '11 administration. Such population studies may only be sufficiently powered over multiple administrations to permit multiple stratifications by sexual orientation/gender identity and race/ethnicity, socio-economic status (despite well documented difficulties in accurately measuring SES among adolescents via self-report), and housing status.

Commission Response and Next Steps: MDPH progress on this recommendation is commendable regarding surveying transgender youth populations, and Commission particularly appreciates its inclusion in and the work of the Gender Measures Project working group. That said, the Commission is very concerned about ongoing resistance to inclusion of gender identity questions by DESE, based on the fear, often and vaguely asserted that, schools or principals “won’t like it” or that “school staff need to be trained first”. DESE and those at MDPH in charge of implementing YHS and YRBS have a duty to quickly and effectively address and resolve any substantial concerns articulated regarding implementation and not allow further delay of this long-needed surveillance.

2009 Commission Members

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Tom Bardwell
Doug Bounds
Jeff Butts
Edward Byrne
Eleni Carr
Christine Coughlan
Jessica Flaherty
Kenneth Garber
Pam Garramone
Jeremie Giacoia
Donna Harlan
Marisa Howard-Karp
Richard Juang
Mike Langlois
Zita Lazzarini
Arthur Lipkin
Marty Martinez
Theodore (Chris) Mattocks
Jim Maynard

Michael McManus
Joyce McNickles
Greg Miller
Alex Morse
Danielle Murray
Rhiannon O'Donnabhain
Alishia Ouellette
Marta Rivera-Monclova
Nancy Perna
Marta Perrupato
Susan Rees
Cathryn Samples
Jean Chapin Smith
Grace Sterling Stowell
Al Toney
Phillip Veysey
Judith Vreeland
Micaela Walsh
Mark Weber
Ronald White
David Wilson

2010 Commission Members

Arthur Lipkin, Chair
Michel Anteby
Tom Bardwell
Edward Byrne
Eleni Carr
Christine Coughlan
Jessica Flaherty
Marion Freedman-
Gurspan
Kenneth Garber
Pam Garramone
Donna Harlan
Kathleen Henry
Richard Juang
Mike Langlois
Nicholas Lee-Diaz
Arthur Lipkin
Brandon Lee Markowitz
Marty Martinez
Chris Mattocks

Rachel Holt McGrath
Michael McManus
Alex Morse
Danielle Murray
Alishia Ouellette
Marta Rivera Monclova
Nancy Perna
Marta Perrupato
Susan Rees
Cathryn Samples
Gunner Scott
Jean Chapin Smith
Grace Sterling Stowell
Al Toney
Phillip Veysey
Judith Vreeland
Micaela Walsh
Mark Weber
Ronald White
David Wilson

ATTACHMENTS

MCGLBTY Full Commission Meeting
MINUTES
October 20, 2008, 6:30 PM
Andover High School

Commissioners present: Doug Bounds, Ed Byrne, Eleni Carr, Jessica Flaherty, Dr. Donna Harlan, Marisa Howard-Karp, Mike Langlois, Arthur Lipkin, Dr. Chris Mattocks, Greg Miller, Alex Morash, Alex Morse, Marta Rivera Paczynska, Averill Saunders-Roberts, Elyn Ruthstrom, Gunner Scott, Jean Chapin Smith, Jason Smith, Kirsten Steinbach, Grace Sterling Stowell, Al Toney, Armando Velez III, Judy Vreeland, Mark Weber, David Wilson, and Jacob Smith Yang.

Staff present: Lisa Perry-Wood, Executive Director, and Steph Plourde-Simard, Administrative Assistant.

Commissioners absent: Abigail Carpenter-Winch (excused), Ken Garber, Paige Kruza, Richard Marshall, Marty Martinez (excused), Jim Maynard, and Rhiannon O'Donnabhain.

Welcome from Andover High School's Principal, Peter Anderson.

Announcements: Steph Plourde-Simard has been hired as Administrative Assistant. Stan Griffith and Luigi Ferrer have resigned from the Commission.

Springfield Meeting Minutes were moved to approve by Arthur Lipkin, seconded by Chris Mattocks, and approved by the Commission.

Report of the Chair: Jason Smith addressed how Governor Patrick's recent budget cuts affect the Commission and how the Executive Committee is working to gain and continue receiving funding. A new committee on researching and creating new funding has been established. There was discussion about what raising money for the Commission would look like and what options exist. The Executive Committee will work with the Executive Director on this and report back.

Report of the Executive Committee: Jason Smith gave an overview of work done since March, which includes hiring new staff and improving the administration, planning 3 trainings (public health, transgender youth, and anti-racism), and approving the Commission's recommendations to the DPH.

Approval of Bylaw Amendments: Jacob Smith Yang presented the new bylaw changes and noted a typo on page 7. David Wilson moved to approve the changes and Gunner Scott seconded. There was discussion in favor of the changes and thanking both the committee and those who had shared comments through the process. It was mentioned that in the nominations section it may be possible to be in violation of the statute, and brought up that some were opposed to the chair of the Commission not having a vote. These comments were noted. David Wilson called a vote and Eleni Carr seconded. The bylaw amendments were approved unanimously with 26 votes.

DESE Recommendations: Arthur Lipkin gave a synopsis of the proposed recommendations to the DESE. Gunner Scott moved to approve them and Marta Rivera Paczynska seconded. The recommendations were approved.

Nominations Process Overview: The Nominations Committee has generated criteria for new Commissioner applicants, to address what the qualities and skills the Commission is looking for. Letters will be sent to appointing organizations about new or re-applicants. It was suggested that in 2009, the committee meet before the open application period of August 1st, in order to edit the application so the questions asked help assess these qualities and skills.

Chair Election Overview: Lisa Perry-Wood gave a timeline for the process to elect a new chair and Jason Smith added comments on what serving as chair involves based on his experience.

Anti-Racism Training Follow-Up: There are some things which can be done immediately by the Commission to address racial and ethnic disparities. Follow-up with Community Change will happen to discuss longer-term changes and efforts the Commission can make. It was proposed that the sexual health roundtable in December focus exclusively on racial and ethnic disparities in sexual health for GLBT youth.

Annual Report Process: The bylaws have been approved with the understanding that this year there is not enough time to put together an annual report by the January deadline. It was suggested to produce a mid-year report by June. The Commission will revisit the timeline and report back on how this would work.

Announcements: The next policy meeting date has been changed to November 17 at 6 PM. The next full Commission meeting will be held on December 15 in the Roxbury/Dorchester area. Deb Burch and Steven Sousa from the Andover High School GSA were thanked for their hard work to put together this meeting and the Youth Forum.

MCGLBTY Full Commission Meeting
MINUTES
December 15, 2008, 6:30 PM
New Mission High School in Roxbury, MA

Commissioners present: Doug Bounds, Abigail Carpenter-Winch, Eleni Carr, Jessica Flaherty, Ken Garber, Marisa Howard-Karp, Paige Kruza, Mike Langlois, Arthur Lipkin, Marty Martinez, Chris Mattocks, Jim Maynard, Alex Morash, Alex Morse, Rhiannon O'Donnabhain, Marta Rivera Paczynska, Averill Sanders-Roberts, Gunner Scott, Jean Chapin Smith, Jason Smith, Grace Sterling Stowell, Armando Velez, Judy Vreeland, Mark Weber, David Wilson, and Jacob Smith Yang.

Staff present: Lisa Perry-Wood and Steph Plourde-Simard.

Commissioners absent: Ed Byrne, Donna Harlan, Richard Marshall, Ellyn Ruthstrom and Al Toney.

Brief introduction and warm welcome from Dorotea Manuela, Chairwoman of the Board of New Mission High School.

John Auerbach, Commissioner of the Dept of Public Health, gave remarks in support of the work of the Commission and pledging to work together for the benefit of GLBT you. Stewart Landers of the DPH was also present in support.

Election of Commission Chair and slate of Commissioner nominees: Jacob Smith Yang and Alex Morash, both running for position of Chair, gave their remarks, followed by a 10 minute question and answer period.

Arthur Lipkin moved to vote and Eleni Carr seconded the motion. A vote was taken and staff members counted the votes.

Jason Smith, Chair, called for the slate of new nominees. Jacob Smith Yang of the Nomination Committee reviewed the process of how the new nominees were collected. The Commission's Bylaws allow up to 50 Commissioners, and the committee chose a full slate of new organizational Commissioners, new regional Commissioners, and incumbent Commissioners who have re-applied. David Wilson moved to approve the slate as presented and Marissa Howard-Karp seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken.

The slate of Commissioner nominees was approved with 27 yes votes, 1 abstention, and 1 no vote.

The results of the Chair election were announced: Jacob Smith Yang received 22 votes and Alex Morash received 7 votes.

Report of the Chair: Jason Smith thanked the 4 Commissioners who have fulfilled their terms on the Commission and did not plan to return, for the work they have done. He remarked that the Commission is on the way to building stronger infrastructure, needs to continue the focus on disparities and must continue to hold government agencies

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accountable to also focus on disparities.

Committee Updates: Eleni Carr gave a brief update on the work of the Government Relations Committee, which is preparing for legislative work in the spring.

Lisa Perry-Wood gave a report on the process to find new funding. She has undertaken a research project that will involve interviewing providers, funders, and other organizations to explore possibilities, collect information on the climate, and what sources may be available to the Commission. She will draft a report with an analysis of her findings to the Committee on New Funding and Executive Committee in January.

Arthur Lipkin gave a report on the Education Committee, which he reported has been in a bind due to the hiring freeze at the DPH and therefore has been in various meetings over whether the money that was set aside for hiring a staff member can still benefit GLBT youth in some way. The committee has also met with a researcher at Boston College on working together around the issue of bullying.

Judy Vreeland reported on the Human Services Committee, which recently sent a letter to JudyAnn Bigby, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and plans to meet with Stewart Landers and Carlene Pavlos of the DPH in the near future.

Announcements: The next full Commission meeting will take place on March 16, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned.

MCGLBTY Full Commission Meeting
MINUTES
June 1, 2009, 6:00 PM
Dept. of Public Health; Boston, MA

Commissioners present: Talitha Abramsen, Doug Bounds, Ed Byrne, Abigail Carpenter-Winch, Eleni Carr, Jessica Flaherty, Ken Garber, Pam Garramone, Jeremie Giacoia, Mike Langlois, Zita Lazzarini, Arthur Lipkin, Marty Martinez, Chris Mattocks, Michael McManus, Joyce McNickles, Greg Miller, Rhiannon O'Donnabhain, Marta Rivera Monclova, Nancy Perna, Susan Rees, Cathryn Samples, Jean Chapin Smith, Jason Smith, Grace Sterling Stowell, Phillip Veysey, Judy Vreeland, Micaela Walsh, Mark Weber, Ronald White, David Wilson, and Jacob Smith Yang.

Staff present: Lisa Perry-Wood and Steph Plourde-Simard.

Commissioners absent: Tom Bardwell, Jeff Butts, Zachary Greene, Donna Harlan, Marisa Howard-Karp, Richard Juang, Jim Maynard, Alex Morash, Alex Morse, Alishia Ouellette, Marta Perrupato, Averill Sanders-Roberts, Al Toney, and Armando Velez.

Approval of December 15, 2008 minutes

Chris Mattocks motioned to approve the minutes with a corrected typo, Arthur Lipkin seconded the motion. The Commission voted to approve the minutes from the December 15th Full Commission Meeting with 1 abstention.

Committee Updates:

Arthur Lipkin reported for the **Education Committee**. He gave a report on the mini-grants from the Safe Schools program. They have received 30 applications so far. He and Lisa plan to ask for a list of who received the grants and what money is left over. The committee will work to ensure the leftover money can be used for purposes that accomplish the Commission's recommendations instead of existing in narrow silos. Representatives from the committee met with President Dana Mohler-Faria of Bridgewater State College, a MA DESE Board of Education member, on working together; the committee also met with a representative from the DESE about including GLBT content in the humanities and social studies curriculum. The committee also reported that in a meeting with the DESE about Commission Recommendations, the response from the DESE was disappointing, and there was no offer from the DESE to work together. Arthur also thanked and congratulated Jacob Smith Yang for his hard work on the Recommendations process and helping the Executive Committee come to a consensus.

Judy Vreeland reported for the **Human Services Committee**. The Commission Recommendations to the DPH have made up the majority of the work of the committee's recent work. The committee has also worked on relationship-building with the DPH. Judy and Jacob met with Paula Tessier about the Recommendations and obtained positive feedback. Lisa Perry-Wood commented that the key to positive feedback on the Commission Recommendations seems to be relationship-building. Jacob Smith Yang commented that the economic climate and budget cuts have made departments anxious.

Eleni Carr reported for the **Government Relations Committee**. Recent work has included organizing the legislative briefing that was held in April. The committee was very happy with Commissioner and legislator attendance. Legislators who have supported GLBT youth were awarded certificates. The committee sends a big thank you to BAGLY, MassEquality and The Bridge of Central MA for contributing youth speakers, photographs, etc. The briefing was overall a good effort and timely. The committee plans to work on building relationships with legislators and Commissioners. Friends were made in the process, including Senators Creem and Galluccio and Representatives Wolf and Sciortino. We did not have as many co-sponsors as last year but believe this to be a function of the fiscal crisis.

In terms of the budget, the economic climate did get more dire before the Senate version of the budget was released. There are no earmarks for GLBT youth funds. The committee is working with representatives from the Conference Committee on language. Where the House said the DPH and DESE “*shall expend funds*”, the Senate said “*may allocate funds*”.

Eleni and Jacob met with an aide from Peter Koutoujian’s office about his upcoming bullying bill to talk about what the Commission would recommend as language and obtained positive feedback. The committee also plans to work towards passing An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes.

Jason Smith spoke on behalf of the **Disparities Committee**, and thanked all members of the committee for their outstanding work on the Recommendations process. The committee was tasked with recommendations based on race and ethnicity, and met in March to create and provide recommendations to the Executive, Human Services and Education Committees for their draft processes. The committee will meet again soon and plans to develop indicators of how to measure progress based on the Recommendations. They also met with a representative of the Health Equity Office, Georgia S. Mays, which was positive and the committee is excited to continue working with her on disparities. They hope to meet soon with Safe Spaces program directors as well. Jason urged the Commissioners to adopt the Recommendations and believes they are substantive around disparities based on race and ethnicity.

Grace Sterling Stowell reported for the **Committee on New Funding**. They have been charged with finding new ways to fund programs. They recently wrote a mission statement and goals and met with the EOHHS. They hope to have a convening of stakeholders in the fall and make a strategic plan.

Jacob Smith Yang spoke on behalf of the **Executive Committee**. The committee has begun holding open meetings. Over the last few months they have worked on the Recommendations draft process and also met with Jewel Mullen, the Commissioner of Health Access and Promotion. The committee is planning a ½ day retreat in June to talk about planning for the rest of the year. They are also working with staff at the DPH on how the likely 23% budget cut will affect Commission staffing and administration. There is no final word yet on this. The committee has also been working on the bullying bills and talking with the media about the budget. Lisa and Jacob appeared on “Legal Lines”, a 30-minute television show, in which they were interviewed about the Commission. Lisa

and David Wilson also introduced the film Straightlaced at an event on behalf of the Commission.

Marta Rivera Monclova reported on behalf of the **Commission Development Committee**. They have met once and made a mission statement, and will circulate the final draft by email. They are putting together a survey of feedback on the legislative briefing, the work of the Commission, and a survey of skills. The committee is also planning the agenda for the Executive Committee's upcoming retreat and working on a document of guidance for new committee chairs. Upcoming work includes reviewing the application for new Commissioners, as recruitment season approaches and begins on August 1st.

Recommendations process:

Jacob presented slides about the process and timeline of Commission Recommendations, explaining that the Recommendations are published each year in June to coincide with the fiscal year calendar, and the Annual Report, to provide time for evaluation, is published 6 months later in January.

Recommendations deliberation and vote:

Chris Mattocks motioned to adopt the Recommendations (the final draft was circulated as a handout) and Arthur Lipkin seconded.

A discussion about the Recommendations was held. Comments and questions included how we should handle publishing now out-of-date amendments to the state budget, and language around criteria for application of funds.

It was discussed that on page 13, the criteria "experiencing the greatest racial and ethnic disparities" reads like a ranking of disparities based on race and ethnicity, which a couple Commissioners object to. It was suggested to add "health" to clarify. It was explained by draft authors that this language intends to refer to the greatest burden on health disparities and calls for a teasing apart of ethnicity categories in their targeted interventions.

There were a number of comments regarding having language match between the separate Recommendations to DESE and DPH, and notes were taken to change the draft in order to be more consistent in language. There were also comments on whether we can change the term "same-sex couples" to broaden the description of families. It was determined that this language is paraphrasing from another source and therefore cannot be changed right now, but since this is a substantive issue, it will be noted for next year's Recommendations.

Arthur Lipkin motioned to vote on the adoption of the Recommendations and Susan Rees seconded the motion. There was a unanimous vote to vote.

A vote was taken in favor of the Recommendations with recorded changes agreed upon in the discussion. 28 voted in favor, 3 opposed, and 0 abstained. The Recommendations were approved.

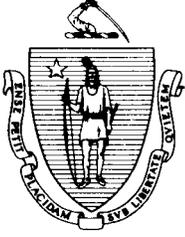
Documenting budget impacts:

Jacob returned to the conversation about the Commission's plan to document budget

impacts and to talk with providers and stakeholders. Next steps are to determine who to invite into the conversation and to let the public know that for the first time in 15 years there will be no funding for GLBT youth. We also need to ask providers how this will impact youth and their services. Comments included that we should think about intermediaries and other commissions as ways to collaborate, and that we should collect/document info on 990s to show the impact of cuts.

Michael McManus motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ken Garber seconded. There was a vote to adjourn.

Announcements: The next full Commission meeting will take place on September 14, 2009, at 6 PM at the Dept of Public Health.



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth**

Administrative Office
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FY10 Budget * DESE Safe Schools Program

DESE Line Item: 7010-0005: “. . .and provided further that the department, in collaboration with the commission on gay and lesbian youth established by section 67 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, shall allocate not less than \$300,000 for programming to ensure public schools’ compliance with the board of elementary and secondary education’s recommendations, which take into account the commission’s recommendations, for the support and safety of gay and lesbian students and the implementation of related suicide and violence prevention efforts and reduction of health disparities for GLBT youth”

NEED:

- **Bullying, intimidation and threats of violence create a hostile environment for GLBT youth.**
- **GLBT youth are at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts than heterosexual youth.**
- **Hostility in school environments compromises GLBT youth school attendance and performance.**

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH

FACT: 92% of students surveyed hear anti-GLBT slurs frequently; 86% experience harassment first hand.

FACT: GLB Youth of Color are 3 times more likely to be involved and injured in physical fights at school.

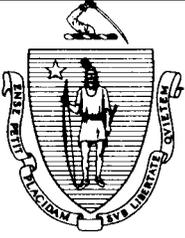
FACT: 61% of students report feeling unsafe at school; 83% say that faculty and staff fail to intervene.

FACT: GLB Youth are 4 times more likely to miss school, as a result of fear and harassment, than their peers.

** Source: 2007 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey*

FY2010 Funding for DESE GLBT Safe Schools Programs (\$300,000) will:

- 1) Reduce incidents of violence and self harm associated with unsafe school environments by promoting GSAs and supporting teachers in establishing physically and emotionally safe learning environments.
- 2) Provide statewide Technical Assistance to schools in promoting safe and healthy school climates.
- 3) Provide conferences, workshops and trainings for staff in all MA school districts.



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FY10 Budget * MA Commission on GLBT Youth

DPH Line Item 4950-0250: "provided further that funds shall be expended for the support of the commission on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth, and shall be used to address the recommendations of said commission for reduction of health disparities for GLBT youth."

NEED:

- Environmental factors put GLBT youth at significantly greater risk for suicide attempts.
- GLBT youth of color are at high risk for violence and weapons threats.
- Youth forced from their homes because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity often end up on the street or in Massachusetts homeless shelters, which are hostile environments for GLBT Youth.

CURRENT STATUS FOR GLBT YOUTH:

FACT: It is estimated that 30% of all youth suicides are GLB youth.

GLB youth are 2-3 times more likely to make a plan for suicide; 4 times as likely to make suicide attempts in the past year.

Source: MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

FACT: GLBT youth, especially youth of color, experience much higher rates of physical violence.

46% of GLBT youth of color report experiencing physical violence related to their sexual orientation. Nearly 45% of youth of color were verbally harassed or threatened with weapons in school, regarding their sexual orientation.

Source: The National School Climate Survey

FACT: 1 in 4 GLBT youth are forced from their homes when they come out to their families.

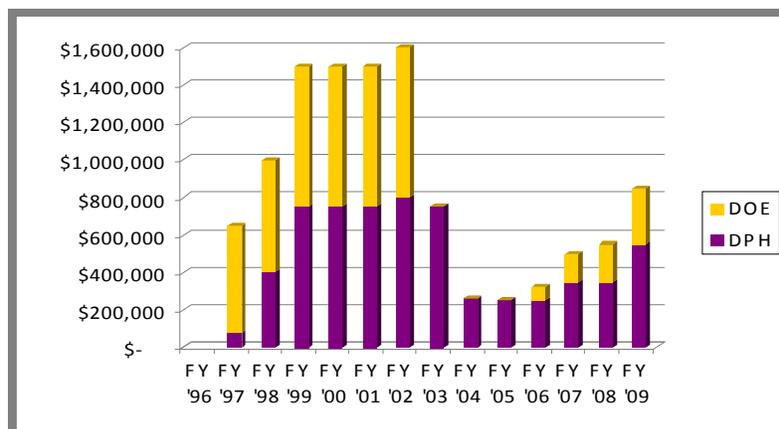
26% of gay teens who came out to their parents or guardians were told to leave home; violence often follows this disclosure. Up to 42% of MA homeless youth identify as GLBT; those identifying as transgender are at highest risk.

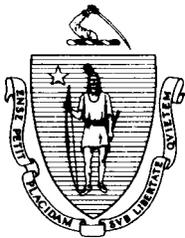
Source: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

FY2010 DPH GLBT youth programs and services will:

- 1) Develop a targeted GLBT violence prevention curriculum for use by skilled trainers.
- 2) Study and pilot evidence-based models that address homelessness for GLBT youth.
- 3) Expand community programs for GLBT youth support across all regions of the state.
- 4) Provide peer leadership and mentoring training for GLBT youth support.

Historical Funding Levels for DESE and DPH GLBT Youth Funding:





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

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EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

JASON A. SMITH

CHAIR

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VICE-CHAIR

GRACE STERLING

STOWELL

VICE-CHAIR

JACOB SMITH YANG

VICE-CHAIR

August 20, 2008

To the Task Force on 21st Century Skills:

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Youth was instated by the Massachusetts Legislature in January 2007, with a mandate to examine every avenue to ensure the overall health and safety of GLBT youth in the Commonwealth. Public schools are a primary intervention point for GLBT youth health issues. Reviewing public school documents, programs, policies and practices, we have encountered some significant facts relevant to the well-being of GLBT youth which can be addressed in part through full adoption of Comprehensive Health Education and revision of the Health Curriculum Frameworks.

Our recommendations are based primarily on two reports from June, 2007:

First, the *Prevention Needs of Sexual Minority Youth Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey 1995-2005*, prepared by Carol Goodenow of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education analyzed ten years of Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data. In the report, Goodenow concludes that, compared with their heterosexual peers, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual* students are disproportionately at risk for the following:

VIOLENCE

- Being threatened or injured at school
- Skipping school due to feeling unsafe
- Experiencing dating violence
- Having sexual contact against one's will

DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

- Making a suicide attempt with injury
- Considering suicide and/or attempting suicide

SUBSTANCE USE

- Binge drinking
- Daily smoking
- Cocaine use

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Injected drug use

SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR

STD diagnosis

4+ sexual partners in lifetime

Being or getting someone else pregnant

* It should be noted that Transgender youth, whose risks have been found to be significant in other studies, are not routinely surveyed in Massachusetts.

Secondly, the *Sexuality Education Listening Tour Final Report* was submitted to the AIDS Advisory Panel of the Massachusetts Department of Education by JSI Research and Training Institute. This report, generated by a survey of health teachers in the Commonwealth, highlights the following:

- Health education teachers do not feel supported in providing comprehensive sexuality education, and
- Comprehensive sexuality education needs to be supported by the Department of Education and school districts as part of a comprehensive health education curriculum.

The MA Commission on GLBT Youth, therefore, recommends six actions to the Task Force on 21st Century Skills:

1. Mandate and fund Comprehensive Health Education that includes science-based GLBT-inclusive sexuality education;
2. Include knowledge and skills for students of all sexual orientations in Health Education, to prevent HIV, STDs pregnancy, substance abuse, and other adverse health outcomes;
3. Establish standard minimum requirements for Health Education in MA;
4. Improve standards and competencies for teaching sexuality;
5. Update GLBT-related resources and training for teachers;
6. Target high-risk youth, including GLBT youth, for supplementary services.

The Commission stands ready to work in close collaboration with the Secretary and Board of Education, as well as the DESE, to strengthen and improve Health Education in Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Lipkin, High School Education Committee Chair
Lisa Perry-Wood, Executive Director



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CO-CHAIR

ELENI CARR
VICE-CHAIR

**GRACE STERLING
STOWELL**
VICE-CHAIR

JACOB SMITH YANG
VICE-CHAIR

October 9, 2008

Dear Governor Patrick,

We greatly appreciate your strong and visible support of GLBT youth, especially your approval of funding this year to better meet the needs of this underserved and vulnerable population.

As you consider cuts in the FY2009 budget to address the Commonwealth financial situation, we write to urge you to not reduce funding for GLBT youth programs and services.

Maintenance of level-funding for GLBT youth through the *Department of Public Health* (line item 4590-0250) and the *Department of Elementary and Secondary Education* (line item 7010-0005) this year is critical to providing essential GLBT youth health education and suicide/violence prevention services. Keeping GLBT youth healthy and safe is of vital interest to youth, their families and the Commonwealth as a whole. Young lives and scarce resources will be saved in the long run through health and education interventions that meet the unique needs of Massachusetts GLBT youth.

Should you have questions or require more information, please feel free to contact Lisa Perry-Wood at 781-883-3411 or Lisa.Perry-Wood@state.ma.us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason A. Smith, Chair
Chair

Lisa Perry-Wood
Executive Director

Cc: Doug Rubin, Chief of Staff
John Auerbach, DPH Commissioner
Mitchell Chester, DESE Commissioner

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VICE-CHAIR

November 25, 2008

Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Commissioner Bigby:

We are writing on behalf of the Human Services Committee of the Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (“the Commission”). Members of the Commission met recently with Marilyn Chase, who encouraged us to follow up that meeting with a formal request for information.

The new Commission, formerly the Governor’s Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, was appointed by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2007, with a mandate to work to eliminate the disparities between Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) youth populations and non-GLBT youth populations. The goals of the Human Services Committee are to establish relationships with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and its agencies in order to assess existing policies and guidelines concerning GLBT youth and to make recommendations for potential additions and changes. We have already begun to engage with the Department of Public Health with Commission Recommendations for FY09 (attached) and look forward to working with other EOHHS agencies.

Our current mandate is to research all policies and guidelines concerning GLBT youth in the EOHHS. Anecdotally, we know that there are positive policies in several agencies. Our mission is to catalog the current policies in place so that we may ultimately highlight best practices, identify gaps, and make recommendations for changes.

To this end, we ask that you provide us with any specific, formal overarching policies and guidelines that apply to EOHHS and to all the agencies under the EOHHS

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umbrella regarding GLBT youth, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity. For example, this may include non-discrimination practices and policies, guidelines for serving GLBT youth, professional development and/or programs specific to GLBT youth. We anticipate that a request from your office will result in timely responses from EOHHS agencies, which will assist us in directly assessing formal and informal policies, programs, and guidelines in effect in each agency.

Our ultimate goal is to advocate for any necessary changes to existing policies and guidelines so that GLBT youth are best served by the Commonwealth's human services agencies.

Thank you for your time. Judy Vreeland, Human Services Committee Chair, will contact your office to follow up. We look forward to working with you.

Respectfully,

Judy Vreeland
Human Services Committee Chair

Lisa Perry-Wood
Executive Director

Cc: Marilyn Chase, Deputy Commissioner