

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

To: School Library System Directors
From: Pat Webster and Mary Daley
Subject: The Great Irish Famine Curriculum

Date: September 17, 2001

In reply to:

Enclosed is a copy of The Great Irish Famine Curriculum that is sent to you as a resource for your School Library System. In the next several weeks the School Library Media Specialist in each New York State school building will receive a copy of The Great Irish Famine Curriculum. The principal in each building will receive information similar to this regarding the curriculum document. Since the Curriculum is mailed without instructions, we are asking for your help in alerting Library Media Specialists that it is being sent to them so that it can be housed centrally in the school library. It should be inserted into a three-ring binder and appropriate portions made available for teachers to copy specific units and accompanying handouts. It would also be helpful to have a place to display the chart that is included with the Curriculum so teachers have easy reference to the contents of the document.

The Curriculum has been developed to help teachers meet the provisions of a 1998 amendment to the Education Law that requires instruction about the mass starvation in Ireland 1845-1850 (Education Law § 801, Chapter 697). The Curriculum is comprised of 150 learning experiences and materials framed by the New York State learning standards for grades 4-12. During the past two years of development it has been field tested in over thirty school districts across the State, representing New York's diverse student and teacher population, particularly in high need districts.

The Curriculum makes accessible to students in New York State the history of the Great Irish Famine in the context of Irish history and culture from a global perspective. In addition, it is specifically designed to encourage the exploration of key concepts and develop essential skills outlined in the seven learning standards areas. The curriculum includes exploration of social studies concepts such as history, culture, religion, economics, scarcity, democracy, citizenship, public policy and demographics, as well as issues in science and the environment. It enables students to examine and understand the intersection of art, music and literature with science, culture and history.

Additional copies are available from our Publications Sales Desk. An order form is included with this memorandum. For additional information, contact Mary Daley, New York State Summer Institutes Office, Room 866 EBA, Albany, NY 12234; (518) 474-8773; mdaley@mail.nysed.gov

Thank you for your assistance in alerting School Library Media Specialists in your system to this upcoming mailing and distribution.