



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

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**To:** District Superintendents of Schools; Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools; Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools  
**Date:** September 4, 2001

**From:** James A. Kadamus

**Subject:** Distribution of the Great Irish Famine Curriculum

In the next several weeks each school building in New York State will receive a copy of an exciting new resource, the Great Irish Famine Curriculum. The Curriculum has been developed to help schools 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 its high needs 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 concepts such as 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.

The Great Irish Famine Curriculum will be mailed to the School Library Media Specialist in each building so that the School Library Media Center serves as a central repository. The Curriculum can then be made available to all teachers so they can use the learning experiences individually or in clusters as it relates to their specific teaching responsibilities.

Additional copies are available from the 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.