

The Gateway Cities Education Agenda

The overall record of educational achievement in Massachusetts is second to none and a model for the nation. Our students consistently score at the top of the charts on national measures, such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and the SAT, and even on international assessments in science and mathematics. We also have a long history of enacting bold reform legislation; the passage of the 1993 *Education Reform Act* established the foundation for standards-based reform and high expectations for all students, and the passage of the 2010 *Achievement Gap Act* gave educators and state education agencies new rules, tools, and supports to significantly increase student achievement.

Massachusetts has much to celebrate, but we have persistent achievement gaps across the public education system. These gaps clearly illustrate that doing well is simply not good enough. We must do more to ensure that all students regardless of zip code will have the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy lifelong success.

Governor Patrick's *Gateway Cities Education Agenda*

The *Gateway Cities Education Agenda* is a set of strategies aimed at eliminating deep and persistent achievement gaps that disproportionately affect children living in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are English language learners (ELLs). Many of these students are heavily concentrated in the Gateway Cities, and the challenges that they and their families face are daunting and in many cases, difficult to overcome. **The Patrick-Murray Administration's FY 13 budget proposal includes nearly \$10 million in funding for the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda*** to support a set of principals and action items that will close the achievement gap more quickly and effectively and also result in the creation of a broader, stronger, and more nimble 21st century public education system.

Five Principles and Key Strategies

Renewed Commitment to High Standards and Rigorous Accountability – Our statistics show that three-quarters of children who struggle with reading in 3rd grade will continue to struggle academically, greatly reducing their chances of graduating from high school, going to college or successfully participating in our high skill economy. But we also know that children who receive high-quality literacy instruction during their earliest years are more prepared for kindergarten and success in elementary school and beyond.

- Therefore, the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal includes \$575,000 in line item 7009-6403 for competitive grants to the Gateway Cities to provide targeted professional development opportunities for educators working in family child care programs and provide support for parents and family members of children enrolled in these early education programs. These additional resources will increase the quality of literacy instruction provided in family child care programs, and help educators and parents create and sustain literacy-rich environments both in the classroom and at home.

Comprehensive Student Supports to Ensure that All Students Come to School Healthy and Ready to Learn – In order to truly benefit from high-quality educational opportunities, students must come to school supported by a healthy platform that enables them to attend school regularly and be attentive, motivated, and ready to engage in their own learning. Out-of-school factors – most significantly the effects of poverty – are serious impediments that prevent students from realizing their full academic potential, and are still strongly correlated with achievement gaps.

- Therefore, the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal includes \$3.64 million in line item 7009-6401 for competitive grants to the Gateway Cities to create Student Support Councils and hire Student Support Counselors. The Councils will include educators and social service providers who will work together to provide comprehensive services to institutions that serve predominantly low-income communities. The Counselors will be placed in high-need schools, and will connect students, families, and educators with service providers. The Councils and Counselors will help mitigate the problems that impede attendance as well as student engagement and achievement.

Differentiated Academic Services and Support to All Students – The current “one size fits all” public school system simply does not meet the needs of many of our students. We need to build a system that gives each and every

child the appropriate quantity and quality instruction he/she needs to meet high standards. For English language learners, they need additional time plus customized instruction to rapidly acquire English skills and simultaneously keep pace with their academic subjects.

- Therefore, the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal also includes \$3.75 million in line item 7009-6400 for competitive grants to the Gateway Cities to operate After-school Enrichment Academies and School Vacation/Saturday Acceleration Academies that will provide intensive and targeted instruction to middle and high school English language learners. Students who successfully complete these programs will demonstrate increases in English language fluency, comprehension, and reading/writing ability and the ability to successfully complete their academic coursework.

New Expectations for Career Readiness – A successful public education system is one that prepares all students for lifelong success as citizens, family members, and contributors to their communities. A successful system creates multiple pathways to colleges and/or careers; provides students with information about career options earlier in their academic careers; gives students access to internships and other work-based learning opportunities; and supports robust partnerships among educators, public colleges and universities, and workforce development partners.

- Therefore, the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal includes \$1.008 million in line item 7009-6402 in competitive grants to the Gateway Cities to establish Education and Industry Coordinating Councils and support the establishment of high school Career Academies. The Councils will include representatives from the education, workforce development, and industry sectors, and they will work together to create multiple and seamless pathways to employment. The Career Academies will significantly increase students' readiness for different job opportunities and prepare them for successful careers.

Innovation to Promote Best Practices and Build Stronger Partnerships – Massachusetts must build a new education system designed to meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. Creating this system will require ongoing innovation and creativity.

- Therefore, the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal includes \$1 million in line item 7009-6404 to establish a Commonwealth Education Innovation Fund, a public-private fundraising partnership that will provide the education sector with new resources to develop and implement groundbreaking educational strategies in communities across the state.

The *Gateway Cities Education Agenda* is an aggressive and comprehensive plan to close achievement gaps and build a comprehensive 21st century public education system. The Patrick-Murray Administration is also working on multiple fronts to position our Commonwealth's 24 Gateway Cities as centers of economic activity and growth. This means not only investing in education, but also providing long-term investments in innovation and infrastructure, with special attention to the growth potential of each city's entrepreneurs and small businesses; leveraging the potential of each community's distinctive assets, including their educational, medical and cultural institutions and their historic buildings and neighborhoods; and connecting Gateway Cities to other local, state and global centers of innovation and economic activity.

In keeping with this strategy, the Patrick-Murray Administration has made the following Gateway City investments:

- Over \$1 billion in active construction contracts through MassDOT;
- More than \$20 million in the Gateway City Parks Program;
- \$105 million since 2007 in public safety grants for police and fire departments and non- profit agencies to maintain staffing levels and combat violence; and
- \$17.5 million since 2007 in Workforce Training.

The 24 Gateway Cities are Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester. For more information about the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda*, please contact Saeyun Lee, Policy Director in the Executive Office of Education, at saeyun.lee@state.ma.us or 617.979.8351.