

Governor Patrick, State Education Officials Celebrate First Year of Race to the Top Initiative

MARLBOROUGH – Wednesday, September 28, 2011 – Governor Deval Patrick and state education officials today celebrated the accomplishments of the first year of the state's Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative at the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Early College High School in Marlborough.

In August 2010, Massachusetts was awarded \$250 million from the U.S. Department of Education, receiving the highest score of any applicant in the national RTTT competition. Massachusetts will receive this funding over four years, through academic year 2013-2014, to bolster the Administration's efforts to increase educator effectiveness, turn around underperforming schools and provide educators with the tools they need to ensure that all students are prepared for college and career.

"Race to the Top is providing critical support to our statewide reforms aimed at closing achievement gaps and ensuring that all children have access to a world-class education," said Governor Patrick. "The progress we have made to date is a direct reflection of the commitment and support of our federal, state and local partners, and I look forward to building upon the successes of the first year to see continued improvement for all children."

"All students deserve an opportunity to achieve academic excellence, and Race to the Top is helping to provide a high quality education for every student," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Chair of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. "This initiative is also providing schools with resources to engage students in STEM fields so our youth can be more competitive and prepared for the growing, innovative economy and workforce."

"The educators, administrators, parents and kids at Whitcomb Middle School have set the bar high and that's what Race to the Top is all about. Principal Murphy and Assistant Principals Pantazopoulos and Labbe have launched the kind of innovative learning that strengthens the entire community. We need to be their partners and advocates in Washington, and that's an effort I'm proud to keep pushing," said U.S. Senator John Kerry.

In its first year, RTTT has already proven successful in spurring several of the Administration's key education reform initiatives including Innovation Schools, which give schools an array of flexibilities to improve learning outcomes for all students and reduce achievement gaps, and Wraparound Zones, which help address non-academic and out-of-school learning barriers, while maximizing teaching and learning time to allow educators to focus on raising student achievement. These initiatives, along with other critical supports provided in the Administration's Achievement Gap Act of 2010, have placed schools in the 258 participating districts, and beyond, on a pathway for success.

"We are proud of our accomplishments so far," said Education Secretary Paul Reville. "The Race to the Top initiatives are having significant and positive impact on teaching and learning across the state, and we will continue to work hard for the next three years of the program."

"We made significant progress on many of the goals set forth in our winning Race to the Top application, and have set the groundwork for even more rapid implementation," said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester. "Our goals are ambitious and bold, but achievable. Most importantly, this is work that is worth doing."

Among the primary objectives of the Commonwealth's RTTT plan and the Administration's Achievement Gap Act are increasing college and career readiness for all students; attracting, developing and retaining a highly effective educator workforce; and turning around the state's lowest performing schools.

Progress in each of these areas has been demonstrated through:

- Adoption of the Common Core Standards in July 2010 and adoption of new Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts, Math and pre-K standards which are now being implemented in schools across the state;
- Establishment of 18 Innovation Schools across the state, the majority of which have received planning and implementation grants through RTTT funds;
- Adoption of groundbreaking regulations regarding the evaluation of teachers and principals;
- Launch of a superintendent induction program to develop and coach emerging education leaders;
- Allocation of RTTT funding to the state's six Readiness Centers that will provide and coordinate professional development opportunities and increase coherence across the public education system;
- Establishment of STEM Early College High Schools (the Marlborough STEM Early College High school is one of six to be established); and the
- Implementation of aggressive and creative intervention strategies in the state's Level 4 schools, many of which are now showing tremendous gains in MCAS scores.

Over the next three years, the Administration will work in close partnership with federal, state and local leaders to continue leveraging the excitement and collaboration with educators and other stakeholders to achieve the Commonwealth's ambitious and nation-leading education reform agenda.

"It is of critical importance that we prepare our middle school students for the high school curriculum, and ultimately, a college education. In an increasingly competitive world, focusing on STEM education gives our students the best opportunities to succeed. I am pleased that the Commonwealth, and especially Marlborough, is leading the way," said Representative Steven L. Levy.

"Here at the ground level, we can demonstrate the state's valuable function in implementing the goals of Race to the Top. This collaboration is evident today as Marlborough highlights new opportunities for student engagement, achievement and readiness," said Mayor Nancy Stevens.

"Marlborough is fortunate to have developed strong partnerships with local industry and to have received Race to the Top program assistance to help fund our STEM Early College High School effort," said Marlborough Superintendent Anthony Pope. "The heightened awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics literacy has given us the opportunity to draw from these partnerships and collaborate with Framingham State University to create an innovative design that enriches students' STEM experiences and their pursuit of STEM careers. The dual enrollment with Framingham State will enable these students to receive up to 16 college credits, well on their way to a college STEM degree and career."

The Marlborough STEM Early College High School was developed by district officials in the 1LT Charles W. Whitcomb Middle School this fall for students entering grade 6 at Whitcomb and grade 9 at Marlborough High School. Additional grades will be added each year until the school reaches 6-12. The Marlborough STEM Early College High School will integrate project-based learning experiences and personalized portfolio assessment with community involvement and internships in STEM-related careers. Students at Marlborough STEM will also have the opportunity to earn up to 16 college credits through Framingham State University while they are still in high school.

For more information on the Commonwealth's Race to the Top plan, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/rttt/>