

GOVERNOR PATRICK VISITS FIRST INNOVATION SCHOOL IN BOSTON

Visit underscores Administration's work in closing achievement gaps through flexibility, innovation in education



Governor Patrick visits with students and teachers at the Roger Clap Innovation School to highlight efforts to close the achievement gap. (Photo: Matt Bennett/Governor's Office)

BOSTON - Tuesday, September 13, 2011 - Governor Deval Patrick today welcomed students back to school at the Roger Clap Innovation School in Dorchester, Boston's first Innovation School, to highlight the Innovation School model as a successful tool in helping close achievement gaps in communities across the Commonwealth.

Governor Patrick has named closing the achievement gap as one of his second-term priorities and today's visit is part of a series of events the governor and Education Secretary Paul Reville will be participating in over the next two months to demonstrate the Administration's progress on this front.

"Innovation Schools give educators the tools they need close achievement gaps and create an environment where every student can access a high quality education," said Governor Patrick. "I want to thank the team here at Roger Clap for being willing to try some new things with us in education, and look forward to many more Innovation School proposals to come here in Boston."

The Roger Clap Innovation School is a newly reopened K-5 school with a mission of ensuring that every

student, regardless of socio-economic, linguistic or academic history, is educated to the highest level through a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum. The school was among 10 schools in the Boston Public School system slated to be closed last year, but through strong community support has been approved to re-open this year as an Innovation School under new leadership and staff.

The school will use its innovation model to extend the school day by thirty minutes, increase professional development prior to the start of the school year, provide language instruction in Mandarin to all students and increase academic rigor by using the BPS advanced work curriculum for all of its 4th and 5th grade students. Additionally, the school will create a strong governing board comprised of the school principal, teachers, parents, community leaders, business and university partners who will deliberate on school policies and procedures, including principal evaluation.

The Administration also recently awarded the Roger Clap a \$50,000 Innovation School Implementation Grant to train teacher leaders on a variety of student assessment techniques that will help support the school's more demanding curriculum.

"Innovation Schools are a signature feature of the governor's nation-leading education reform agenda, providing every district with the tools to deliver creative strategies that improve learning outcomes for all students and reduce achievement gaps," said Secretary Reville. "I applaud Mayor Menino, Superintendent Johnson and the entire Roger Clap School community for pioneering an Innovation School model that holds enormous promise for our students and our future."

The Innovation Schools Initiative is a signature component of the Patrick-Murray Administration's education reform efforts and was authorized as part of the Achievement Gap Act of 2010. Innovation Schools provide educators, and a wide range of community stakeholders, the opportunity to create in-district schools that operate with greater autonomy and flexibility while keeping school funding within districts. These schools can implement creative and inventive strategies related to curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, staffing, professional development, and school district policies to improve learning outcomes for all students and reduce achievement gaps.

"As part of the educational reform legislation passed last January, the Roger Clap School and its innovation concept is the first in our city," said Senator Jack Hart. "This school will provide the foundation for our students so that they may compete as adults in our World's innovative economy."

"With the Roger Clap School initially slated for closure last year, I am delighted that it was chosen to be an Innovation School," said Representative Nick Collins. "Despite the challenges that lie ahead, I am looking forward to a successful 2011-2012 school year at the Clap."

"I am thrilled to finally see the fruits of a collaborative effort that saw our state adopt the comprehensive Education Reform Act in 2010 and win coveted Race to the Top funds from the federal government," said Representative Linda Dorcea Forry. "I look forward to watching and evaluating the progress of this first Innovation School in Boston."

Innovation Schools are approved by local school committees through a collaborative process that invites

community and school stakeholders to engage in solving their communities particular issues by taking advantage of the flexibilities and autonomies afforded to Innovation Schools. These schools have been established at the elementary, middle and high school levels, and range from new or converted schools, to programs within an existing school.

Many Innovation Schools are organized around specific themes like Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), dual language instruction, International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, alternative education opportunities including dropout prevention and dual enrollment at community colleges, virtual platforms and wraparound services. Several of these schools also operate with non-traditional schedules that significantly increase instructional time for students and professional learning opportunities for educators. There are currently 18 operating Innovation Schools located across the state.