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DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**Media Contact**

Kyle Sullivan  
Becky Deusser  
Kim Haberlin  
(617) 725-4025

Jonathan Palumbo (EOE)  
617-979-8348

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**GOVERNOR PATRICK PLEDGES \$168 MILLION IN FEDERAL RECOVERY FUNDS FOR SCHOOLS ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS**

**Education investment is part of Massachusetts Recovery Plan to help communities preserve programs, avoid teacher layoffs**

BOSTON- Thursday, March 19, 2009 - As part of his Massachusetts Recovery Plan to secure the state's economic future, Governor Deval Patrick today announced he will commit \$168 million in federal education recovery funds to ensure every district in the Commonwealth reaches so-called foundation spending levels next school year.

The Governor's investment will give 166 districts the ability to preserve programs and avoid teacher layoffs at a time when the global economic crisis is forcing communities to increase class sizes, cut positions and make other difficult budget decisions that threaten the quality of education in Massachusetts. The state's historic education reform law established so-called foundation budgets for communities, setting a minimum funding threshold districts must meet so that students receive a "fair and adequate" education.

"Second graders only get one chance at second grade. Thanks to these federal recovery funds, we can give our students the education they deserve and avoid short changing their future," said Governor Patrick.

The Governor protected Chapter 70 education funding from cuts in his Fiscal Year 2010 budget proposal, maintaining the current allocation of \$3.984 billion. However, due to a historic drop-off in state revenue collections brought on by the recession, level-funding of Chapter 70 still prevented 166 districts from reaching foundation spending levels. If the Governor's Chapter 70 proposal is approved by the Legislature, dedicating a portion of the state's estimated \$1.88 billion for education programs from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will guarantee foundation-level funding for all districts.

[View the list of districts in line to receive education funding as part of the Governor's Massachusetts Recovery Plan](#) .

"It is vitally important that we apply the federal stabilization funds to restore adequate operating budgets at the elementary and secondary education levels," said Education Secretary Reville. "We have made much progress on education reform initiatives and our students are achieving at higher levels every year. These funds will allow us to continue to build on our success and more fully prepare all students to reach their full potential."

Joined by Commissioner Chester and Education Secretary Paul Reville at the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Framingham this morning, Governor Patrick spoke to teachers and students about his commitment to achieving foundation-level funding, noting that communities are already making difficult budget decisions that will have long-term consequences for the Commonwealth's schools, students and economic competitiveness. Framingham is one of the districts at risk of falling below foundation in FY10. If adopted, the Governor's plan would direct an additional \$3.5 million in education funding to the town.

"I applaud the Governor for maintaining the state's commitment to public education by dedicating stabilization money to filling budgetary gaps so many of our schools and districts now face," said Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester. "We are fortunate that even in the midst of an economic crisis, the Governor recognizes that there is no better place to invest in the future than in public education."

Education investments are a critical component of Governor Patrick's Massachusetts Recovery Plan. The plan, unveiled earlier in the week, will combine state, federal and, where possible, private efforts to provide immediate and long-term relief and position the Commonwealth for recovery in the following ways:

- Deliver immediate relief by investing in the road, bridge and rail projects that put people to work today and providing safety net services that sustain people who are especially vulnerable during an economic crisis;

- Build a better tomorrow through education and infrastructure investments that strengthen our economic competitiveness, prepare workers for the jobs of the future and support clean energy, broadband and technology projects that cut costs while growing the economy; and
- Reform state government by eliminating the pension and ethics loopholes that discredit the work of government and revitalize the transportation networks that have suffered from decades of neglect and inaction.

Governor Patrick played a key role in developing the federal recovery law's State Stabilization Fund that is now being used to shore up state education funding as well as to prevent layoffs and cutbacks in other critical areas of government during the recession. Over the next two years, Massachusetts will receive an estimated \$1.88 billion to support early education, K-12 education and higher education. For more information about what the federal recovery law means for Massachusetts, please visit [www.mass.gov/recovery](http://www.mass.gov/recovery).

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