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**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY VISITS HOLYOKE STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE RECENT EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS****Visit follows several weeks of significant education victories for students and teachers**

HOLYOKE - Tuesday, September 21, 2010 - Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray today visited with the students of Holyoke High School in Holyoke to celebrate the new school year and highlight recent education victories for Massachusetts students and teachers.

"In Massachusetts, education is both the reason for our great success and the reason we will emerge from these challenging economic times even stronger," said Governor Patrick. "That is why we are making historic investments in public schools and implementing reforms that will lift all students up. I am proud to say that our efforts are working here in Holyoke and in schools across the Commonwealth."

"Our students and our schools continue to prove that high standards and high expectations for all students, combined with the right resources creates a winning formula for success," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "I am pleased to join Governor Patrick in wishing the students in Holyoke and across the Commonwealth another successful school year."

Governor Patrick recently announced strong improvement on the statewide MCAS exams noting that the number of tenth graders who scored Proficient or Higher on the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math exams has nearly doubled since the first year the state's graduation requirement was enforced. In addition, MCAS results showed that for the first time ever, more than half of all seventh and eighth graders statewide scored Proficient or Higher in Math and the percentage of third graders reading and doing math proficiently increased by six points in ELA and five points in Math.

The Commonwealth also recently earned the top score in the national Race to the Top competition and secured \$250 million in funding to help implement the next generation of education reform in Massachusetts. The funding will be utilized to build a statewide data system to better track student performance, inform instructional practices and provide a new measure of teacher and principal effectiveness as well as to build a more professional teacher development and support system.

Additionally, Governor Patrick allocated \$204 million from the federal Education Jobs Fund to school districts across the Commonwealth, bringing state support for public schools to its highest level in history. A combination of state and federal dollars totaling \$4.07 billion will ensure all school districts receive more state aid - at least \$25 per student - than they did last year.

Lt. Governor Murray today visited with students and their teachers at Holyoke High School to learn about their focus for the new school year and encourage them to try their hardest and reach new levels of academic performance.

"Education takes place in the classroom so we have a responsibility as state leaders to make every decision based on what is going to work best for students," said Education Secretary Paul Reville. "The Governor has demonstrated that leadership with his vision for an improved education system and his efforts to set the right goals and providing the necessary support to help all students succeed."

In Holyoke, the Race to the Top funding will provide approximately \$4.98 million to support the full implementation of the strategies outlined in the proposal to improve teaching and learning and outcomes for students. Thanks to the Governor's allocation of Education Jobs Fund, Holyoke is set to receive over \$2.9 million to help fund up to 49 teaching positions and help secure their budget for the upcoming academic year.

"Governor Patrick's sustained commitment to education in Massachusetts will be the backbone of long term economic growth in Holyoke and throughout the Commonwealth. I've been happy to support record funding and the Governor's education initiatives in the Legislature," said Representative Michael F. Kane.

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