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LT. GOVERNOR MURRAY VISITS CHARLTON MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGHLIGHT EFFORTS TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

School awarded commendation status for narrowing proficiency gaps for high needs students



Lieutenant Governor Murray visits Charlton Middle School, a recently recognized Commendation School, to highlight the Administration's efforts to close achievement gaps. (Photo Credit: Eric Haynes/Governor's Office)

CHARLTON – Thursday, January 5, 2012 – Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today visited Charlton Middle School to congratulate students and staff for being selected as a Commendation School. During his visit, the Lieutenant Governor recognized the school's success in improving student achievement and discussed the Administration's strategy for closing achievement gaps.

"All students deserve an equal opportunity to achieve academic excellence, and our Administration recognizes the continued progress at Charlton Middle School," said Lieutenant Governor Murray. "As we continue to implement education reform, all 127 recognized Commendation Schools in Massachusetts are making great strides to help close the achievement gap and improve the state's public education system."

Charlton Middle School is one of 127 Commendation Schools statewide recognized for their efforts and results in improving student achievement this year. The schools were all selected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for progress in closing proficiency rates and helping all students achieve at higher levels.

Students at Charlton Middle School demonstrated increased levels of students reaching proficient and higher status on the state's Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams in grade eight English Language Arts (ELA) and Science;

and grade five ELA and Math. The school was also recognized for closing proficiency gaps among its high need students.

Charlton Middle School serves approximately 800 students in grades five through eight and aims to prepare all students with the skills, experiences and knowledge they need to advance to the next level of their education. The school focuses not only on excellence in the classroom, but also seeks ways to provide students and parents with resources that can augment the learning process at home, encouraging families to use online learning resources to bolster mastery in core subjects.

"The hard work and continued efforts of the students and staff at Charlton Middle School are exemplified in the success celebrated today," said Senator Stephen M. Brewer. "Ensuring that every child gets a fair chance to succeed and a good education are essential to strengthening our youth and preparing them for future success as they continue their academic career or enter the workforce."

"Closing the achievement gap is critical to improving our education system, and requires the cooperation of all of the actors in our students' lives---and the hard work of the students themselves," said Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz. "Charlton Middle School, and all of the other Commendation Schools around the state, show what's possible when schools, parents, students and government work together toward the goal of providing our students all the tools they'll need to access the American Dream."

Massachusetts leads the nation in student achievement and education reform efforts. Recognizing that there is more to be accomplished, Governor Patrick has named closing the achievement gap as a top priority for his second term. In November 2011, Governor Patrick announced a new set of strategies aimed at closing the most persistent achievement gaps among Massachusetts students. The initiatives will focus primarily on students in the Gateway Cities, where many of the state's immigrants, low-income students, English Language Learners and others stuck in the achievement gap are found. The challenges faced by students, their families and their educators in the Gateway Cities are pressing and the Governor's plan provides an intense focus on achievement gaps where they are most persistent, to help overcome those challenges.

"I congratulate Charlton Middle School and all of the 127 Commendation Schools statewide for achieving this important recognition," said Representative Peter Durant. "It is a wonderful testament to the focus and dedication of the staff, Superintendent Gilrein and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee."

The Patrick-Murray Administration's second term education strategy is focused on five goals: (1) getting every child to reading proficiency by the third grade; (2) providing every child with a healthy platform for education; (3) providing students, particularly English Language Learners, with the quality and quantity of education they need to succeed; (4) preparing all students for college and career success; and seeding and incentivizing innovation. Each of these goals will be represented by a pilot program the Administration is launching in several of the Commonwealth's Gateway Cities on a competitive grant basis. These programs will be included in the Governor's fiscal year 2013 budget proposal.

To learn more about the Patrick-Murray Administration's Gateway Cities Education Agenda visit www.ma.gov/edu/gatewaycities.

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