

The Gateway Cities Education Agenda

Massachusetts' overall record of educational achievement is second to none and a model for the nation. Our students consistently score at the top of the charts on national measures such as the National Assessment of Education Progress and the SAT, and even on international assessments in science and mathematics. We also have a long history of enacting bold reform legislation; the passage of the 1993 Education Reform Act established the foundation for standards-based reform and high expectations for all students, and the passage of the 2010 Achievement Gap Act has given local educators and state education agencies new rules, tools, and supports to significantly increase student achievement.

Massachusetts has much to celebrate, but we have persistent achievement and attainment gaps across the public education system. These gaps clearly illustrate that doing well is simply not good enough; we have an educational, economic, and moral obligation to ensure that all students, regardless of zip code, will have the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy lifelong academic, career, and personal success.

Governor Patrick's Gateway Cities Education Agenda

Closing achievement and attainment gaps is the top education priority of the Patrick-Murray Administration. The primary purpose of the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda* is to close these gaps that disproportionately affect students living in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are English language learners in our Gateway Cities. This *Agenda* will support the development and implementation of local strategies that will provide targeted assistance to students and result in the creation of a stronger and more nimble 21st century public education system.

The FY 13 state budget includes \$3.5 million in new funding to support the implementation of the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda*, and in particular, strategies focused on supporting English language learners and increasing career readiness for high school students.

English Language Learners Enrichment Academies – Despite high levels of overall student performance in the Commonwealth, wide achievement and attainment gaps between English language learners and their peers persist; in fact, the achievement gap for this population is the largest among all student subgroups in the state. For example, 3rd grade MCAS data reveal that there is a 22 point gap between the achievement of English language learners and the statewide average, and their 4-year graduation rate is 57% versus the statewide average of 82%. At the same time, the characteristics of the English language learner population in the state have changed significantly. There are nearly 68,000 English language learners in the Commonwealth, a 51% increase since 2000, and the number of districts that enroll these students has nearly doubled since 2000.

- **The FY 13 budget includes \$3,000,000 in competitive grant funding to operate English Language Learners Enrichment Academies.** Grant applicants will submit proposals to operate Summer English Learning Academies during the summer of 2013 that will provide middle and high school English language learners in their communities with high-intensity and differentiated learning opportunities. Applicants may also submit proposals to operate a Summer English Learning Academy as well as complementary enrichment programs during the spring of 2013, including after-school academies, Saturday sessions, or academies during the April school vacation week. The intended outcomes of these grants include measurable increases in students' English language fluency and comprehension, longer-term improvements as measured by achievement in academic courses and on standardized assessments, and higher retention and graduation rates, especially for high school students. Grant recipients will be awarded up to \$350,000.

Career Academies – Students in the Gateway Cities have an average four-year graduation rate of 63%, and in some of these cities, as few as 15% of incoming 9th graders will complete high school on time and enroll in a four-year college or university. Only 21% of Gateway Cities residents who are 25 years of age or older have attained a bachelor’s degree, compared with the state average of 39%. In addition, as of May 2012, residents in the Gateway Cities had an average unemployment rate of 7.3% compared to the statewide average of 6%. In order to sustain its economic improvement and produce employees who can compete in a global economy, the Commonwealth must ensure that all students are well prepared to successfully pursue postsecondary educational and career opportunities.

- The FY 13 budget includes \$500,000 in competitive grant funding to establish Career Academies and Education and Industry Coordinating Councils (EICCs). Grant applicants will submit proposals to engage in planning activities during the 2012 – 2013 school year that will culminate in the operation of Career Academies by September 2013. Applicants will also commit to establishing EICCs that are co-chaired by the public school district superintendent and the chair of the local Workforce Investment Board and include representatives from district high schools and charter schools, public and private institutions of higher education, industry partners, and local/regional employers. The intended outcomes of these grants include greater opportunities for students to explore career pathways earlier in their academic careers, more motivating learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom, and the creation of multiple and seamless pathways to postsecondary educational and employment opportunities. Grant recipients will be awarded up to \$75,000.

Grant Information

The Executive Office of Education (EOE) will announce the grant awards in November 2012. Statements of Interest signed by the mayor (or the equivalent head of municipal government) and the public school district superintendent on behalf of the eligible applicants in a Gateway City must be submitted to the EOE by Friday, August 31, 2012. Grant proposals must be submitted to the EOE by Friday, November 2, 2012.

The Requests for Proposals and guidance documents are available at the following websites:
<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants13/rfp/375.html>; and
<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants13/rfp/376.html>.

Additional information about the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda* is also available at
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/gateway-cities-education-agenda.html>.

Eligible applicants must be located in or primarily serving a Gateway City, a municipality defined in the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 23A, Section 3A. The 24 Gateway Cities are as follows: Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester. Eligible applicants are as follows: public school districts; charter schools; non-profit education management organizations; local Workforce Investment Boards; local industries, businesses, and employers; educational collaboratives; public and private institutions of higher education; non-profit community-based organizations or business and corporate entities; other non-profit entities; and consortia of these groups.

The *Gateway Cities Education Agenda* is a targeted and aggressive plan to close achievement gaps and build a 21st century public education system for students in our Gateway Cities. By implementing this *Agenda*, Massachusetts will continue its pioneering leadership in educational achievement and reform, and will dramatically accelerate the pace by which we increase levels of educational achievement and attainment for all students.

For additional information about the *Gateway Cities Education Agenda*, please contact Saeyun Lee (saeyun.lee@state.ma.us, 617.979.8351) or Jill Norton (jill.s.norton@massmail.state.ma.us, 617.979.8340) at the EOE.