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## Governor Deval Patrick

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## GOVERNOR PATRICK VISITS PITTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO PROMOTE INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION



*Governor Patrick visits with teachers and students at the Silvio O. Conte Community School in Pittsfield to discuss the importance of investing in education. (Photo credit:*

*Ben Bocko / Governor's Office)*

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PITTSFIELD – Thursday, March 28, 2013 – Governor Deval Patrick today visited with students and faculty at the Silvio O. Conte Community School to highlight the importance of investing in education to grow jobs and create opportunity throughout the Commonwealth.

“Every child in Massachusetts deserves the opportunity to receive high quality early education,” said Governor Patrick. “We know from educators, from academic research, from years of public policy and from our own experience as parents, that investing in our children at a young age pays huge dividends for them and for our community as a whole.”

The Governor’s FY14 budget calls for a \$550 million investment in education, reaching \$1 billion over four years, to expand access to high quality educational opportunities and make higher education more affordable for all students in Massachusetts. These investments include \$131 million for high-quality early education and care programs, which will eliminate the Department of Early Education and Care’s (EEC) current 30,000 child birth to age-five waitlist; expand initiatives to ensure the highest educational quality among providers of early education and care; assist early educators and providers with attaining higher levels of proficiency, skill and quality; increase educational programs and supports for parents and family members to further engage them in their child’s success; and expand efforts to provide comprehensive support services to children and their families. There are currently 671 children in Pittsfield on the EEC waitlist. The Conte Community school serves students in pre-K through grade 5.

Increased investments in the Commonwealth’s early education system will enable the state to mitigate developmental and achievement gaps for our youngest citizens, and will help ensure that students are reading and writing proficiently by grade three. The Governor’s plan will work to close the achievement gaps that still persist in Massachusetts, especially among children of color, those who live in poverty, children with special needs and those who speak English as a second language.

“Improving the access and quality of our children’s early education is always a sound investment,” said Congressman Richard Neal. “And the Conte Community School in Pittsfield is a perfect example of a learning environment that has been successful in getting our young people in Pittsfield off to a good start. I share Governor Patrick’s commitment to improving the education system across Massachusetts, and look forward to working with him as he implements his ambitious plan. As a lifelong educator, I will continue to support programs that help our local school children reach their full potential.”

“Over the past several weeks I have heard from many Pittsfield teachers and parents who agree that the budget crunch has lasted long enough, and I am committed to promoting meaningful investments in our community during this year’s budget debate,” said Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier. “In particular, the Governor’s proposals for early education will help our city build on the momentum created by Pittsfield Promise’s efforts to promote early literacy.”

As a Gateway City, Pittsfield is eligible to apply for competitive grant funding to

support educational programming in the following areas: to increase early literacy by enhancing the quality of early education services; provide targeted and supplementary assistance to English language learners by offering spring and summer enrichment programs; provide comprehensive support services to students and families; increase career readiness for high school students by establishing Career Academies; and implement innovative strategies to close persistent achievement gaps.

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