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Governor Deval Patrick

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Governor Patrick to protect METCO funding in FY 11 budget

Governor's focus on education continues, METCO funding follows Chapter 70 investment, landmark education reform law

BOSTON - Friday, January 22, 2010 - Governor Deval Patrick today announced that he is funding the METCO program at \$18.5 million in his Fiscal Year 2011 budget, fully maintaining the program that provides opportunities for students and their families to receive a high quality education. The Governor also plans to fully fund Chapter 70 education aid in the budget he will release next week.

"METCO lifts kids up," said Governor Patrick. "I wish we could do more, but in these challenging economic times, our commitment to supporting programs that provide opportunity to students and their families is firm."

METCO is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities and increase diversity by permitting students in certain cities to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. In existence since 1966, METCO currently serves about 3,300 students in 33 school districts in the greater Boston area and in four school districts outside Springfield.

The Governor's FY11 budget will provide a record \$4.048 billion in education aid. This ensures that every school district will receive Chapter 70 funding that meets or exceeds the level of funding they received last year.

In keeping with his commitment to education, the Governor also signed historic education reform legislation on Monday. The new law will turnaround underperforming schools, promote innovation and choice and eliminate achievement gaps that persist despite the successes of the state's landmark Education Reform Act of 1993.

The spending plan, set to be filed Wednesday, January 27th, will include full funding for unrestricted local aid, a reflection of Governor Patrick's commitment to cities and towns and the local services residents depend on. The most flexible category of aid, this account will be funded at \$936 million in FY11 -- the same level as FY10. This will help reduce pressure on property taxes and allow communities to mitigate budgetary impacts on police, fire and other essential services.

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