

## **Massachusetts Wins \$50M Early Learning Challenge Grant**

Hello,

This is great news for the Early Childhood Community! Although the exact amount to be distributed has not yet been released it is a 4 year Federal Grant with a potential investment of up to \$50 million over the next four years coming to Massachusetts. I have copied the key strategic initiatives the Commissioner is targeting. If you have any questions please let me know. I will keep you all up to date with funding and training opportunities as they become available.

\* Enhancing the quality of all early education programs in the state by securing universal participation in the Massachusetts tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which uses a definition of quality and standards designed to elevate the quality of care in state early care and education systems and to ensure growth as children develop. Currently the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses over 12,000 early education and care and out of school time programs across the state, and there are over 2,000 programs currently are engaged in the Massachusetts QRIS.

\* Aligning birth to age five early learning and development standards, including the creation of English Language Development standards for birth to age five.

\* Creating the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System (MELD) from birth to grade three by expanding screening for children and developing a common tool for a kindergarten entry assessment. .

\* Increasing culturally and linguistically appropriate engagement with parents, families and community members regarding literacy, universal child screening and other statewide priorities.

\* Providing essential support to early educators and enhance their effectiveness in practice by providing educational opportunities and targeted professional development. Over 48,000 early educators have registered with the EEC Professional Qualifications Registry. The ELC grant will support new partnerships and expansion of existing initiatives with higher education to increase early educators' competencies.

\* Creating greater alignment between early education and grades K-3 to promote healthy child development. The Commonwealth's grant will support securing kindergarten entry assessment data from school districts with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes and will help create effective partnerships between coordinated family and community engagement grantees and local early learning initiatives, such as the Boston Children Museum's Countdown to Kindergarten, to support successful school transitions

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department  
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick  
Press Release

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**UPDATED: PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES  
MASSACHUSETTS AWARDED  
FEDERAL GRANT IN PRESIDENT'S EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE  
COMPETITION**

Funds will increase access to high quality early education and close achievement gaps

BOSTON - Friday, December 16, 2011 - The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced that Massachusetts is one of nine grant award winners in President Obama's Early Learning Challenge (ELC) competition and will receive significant funding over the next four years to expand high quality early education services and close achievement gaps in education.

Massachusetts is eligible for \$50 million under the ELC and the U.S. Department of Education will announce final grant amounts to each winner in the coming days. Other winners of the ELC competition include California, Delaware, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and the state of Washington.

"Today's announcement demonstrates our place as a national leader in education reform and achievement," said Governor Deval Patrick. "These resources will help us reach kids at an early age, before achievement gaps form, to ensure they are prepared for lifelong success in school and beyond."

The ELC is part of President Obama's Race to the Top initiative, which Massachusetts won in 2010, receiving \$250 million to implement landmark reforms in public education. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services made \$500 million available nationally in the Early Learning Challenge to encourage states to develop bold and comprehensive plans for improving the quality of early learning programs across the nation. Thirty-five states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico applied for this groundbreaking reform grant.

The Commonwealth's plan, From Birth to School Readiness: Massachusetts Early Learning Plan, 2012-2015, represents extensive community outreach and input on best practices and key strategies for moving forward early education outcomes. Today's grant will support the Commonwealth's

continued work across the education and health and human services sectors to build strong foundations for our youngest citizens.

"Massachusetts is way out front on early learning and this win cements the work we're doing," said U.S. Senator John Kerry. "It's a big deal for our students, teachers and principals and parents."

"I'm proud that Massachusetts has been named a winner in the Early Learning Challenge," said U.S. Senator Scott Brown. "The initiatives funded by this grant will help our children receive the educational foundation necessary to be successful students and citizens."

"Today's award is a tribute to the hard work being done in classrooms across the Commonwealth each and every day," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "This funding will ensure that our teachers and schools are able to offer all children the highest quality developmental education possible from a young age, preparing them for the global challenges of the 21st century."

"Access to early education is absolutely essential in preparing our children for continued success throughout life," said Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. "This is encouraging news and I congratulate Governor Patrick and all those whose hard work and dedication made this possible. I am proud that these funds will help provide high quality early education opportunities and close achievement gaps."

Massachusetts' Early Learning Plan will advance the Patrick-Murray Administration's goal of ensuring that all children, particularly high-needs children, have access to quality pre-K education and experiences that will put them on an early path to success; and builds on the Administration's efforts to build a more aligned, statewide early learning and development system. Key strategies of the plan include:

- \* Enhancing the quality of all early education programs in the state by securing universal participation in the Massachusetts tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which uses a definition of quality and standards designed to elevate the quality of care in state early care and education systems and to ensure growth as children develop. Currently the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses over 12,000 early education and care and out of school time programs across the state, and there are over 2,000 programs currently are engaged in the Massachusetts QRIS.
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"This plan reflects our ongoing commitment to providing our pre-K children with access to the types of high-quality, educational and developmental experiences they will need to succeed in school and beyond," said Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville. "I look forward to working with our education, business and other stakeholder partners across the Commonwealth to implement this bold and critical set of strategies."

"This award will enable Massachusetts to accelerate the implementation of our plan that is designed to yield improvements in our early childhood system that significantly raises the level of quality opportunities and experiences for children and families," said Department of Early Education and Care Commissioner Sherri Killins. "The Early Learning Challenge recognizes the importance of early learning in providing the foundation for children's healthy growth and brain development and ensuring the collective future prosperity of our Commonwealth and our nation. Both educators and families alike will benefit from this award."

The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan will bolster the Administration's efforts to create a comprehensive, child-centered education system extending from birth to post-secondary studies, one that is necessary for students to be ready for success in the 21st century. The plan serves as a blueprint for the next phase of early learning and development efforts across the state for the next four years.

"Today's announcement serves as another example of the Commonwealth's steadfast commitment to public education," said Representative Alice H. Peisch. "Early learning prepares our children to be productive members of society in an increasingly competitive world and I commend the Patrick-Murray administration and my colleagues in the state legislature for continuing to work hard to better our students' future."

"This grant award validates Massachusetts' vision for investing in its young children and their families. This is a significant milestone in the Patrick- Murray Administration's efforts to close the achievement gap and an important investment in the Commonwealth's long term economic prosperity," said JD Chesloff, chair of the Board of Early Education and Care and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. "On behalf of the Board, we congratulate Commissioner Killins and her team, as well as the early childhood field and the children and families they serve. This is a good day for early education and care in the Commonwealth."

Massachusetts' full Early Learning Challenge application is posted at [http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board\\_materials/20111017-rttt-elc.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board_materials/20111017-rttt-elc.pdf).