

**The Readiness Project:**  
**From Cradle to Career - *Education as our Competitive Edge***  
**Governor Deval Patrick**  
**June 1, 2007**

**The Starting Point**

- Massachusetts is a national education leader.
- Our students outperform students from across the country.
- Our K-12 system of standards and accountability is a national model.
- The Commonwealth's #1 resource is intellectual capital and we have a solid information/research infrastructure.

**The Challenge:** Providing a World Class Education & Making Massachusetts Globally Competitive

- Achievement gaps persist.
- Of the nearly 75,000 students in the class of 2006, only 80% who entered as freshmen graduated in four years..
- While the state's overall graduation rate surpassed the national average, minority students lagged behind the state average – Only 64% percent of African Americans, 57% of Hispanics, and 70% of Native Americans in the same cohort graduated.
- College freshmen too often require remediation in math and English.
- Upon graduation, 85 % of MA public higher education students remain in the Commonwealth to work, yet business and industry leaders say those entering the work force are under-prepared for available jobs.
- 20,000 jobs requiring an associate's degree in high growth, high need, industries remain unfilled.
- US student test scores lag international competitors.

**Without Action...**

- More and more students in our public education system will be at risk for dropping out, limiting their personal potential and increasing costs to the state.
- A greater percentage of our students will be unable to fill critical jobs.
- Wages in Massachusetts will decline.
- The Commonwealth will be unable to compete for new businesses or to recruit additional workers in the new economy.
- Massachusetts and its residents will lose their historic, competitive advantage.

## **Meeting the Challenge - 5 Education Objectives:**

In the New Era, the Student is at the Center

- Provide every child with the opportunity to **enter public school ready to learn.**
- Provide every student with **outstanding and highly qualified teachers** who are respected professionals recruited from among the best and the brightest in the Commonwealth.
- Provide **every student with the support necessary** to meet the state's high standards and high expectations.
- Provide the support and infrastructure needed to ensure the opportunity for every student to have an **accessible, affordable and globally competitive higher education.**
- Provide an education system that enables every student to **transition successfully** from high school to higher education, to the work force ready to succeed and to be a productive, engaged and contributing citizen.

## **The Governor's Plan**

- To outline and communicate a **strategic vision for the next generation.**
- To introduce key **components and initiatives** that will lead the state toward the vision.
- To launch "**The Readiness Project.**" This will be a team of the brightest leaders and thinkers in our legislature, in education, in business, in local communities to work through the fundamental and systemic challenges and the solutions, to hammer out the compromises and to confirm where compromise is unacceptable. We know where we are headed. Their job will be to implement.

## **The Vision**

- A **comprehensive, child-centered public education system** that begins before kindergarten, continues through grade 12 and higher education, and extends to work force development and lifelong learning ensuring that **each individual** has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Public schools, higher education institutions, private and community **partners working together to provide pathways for the youth of the state** to prepare for life and work and to enable **our state to be competitive** in the 21st century.

## **Key Components to Implement Vision**

- Universal public education pre-K through two years of community college or education in the professional trades
- Free Community College
- Extended Day and Year
- Universal Pre-K
- Full Day Kindergarten
- Improved Teacher Certification, Licensure and Professional Development
- Strong, Systemic Accountability
- Strengthen the High School Curriculum
- Higher Education Investment
- Short-Term Interagency Funding Task Force
- “The Readiness Project”

## **Universal public education pre-K through two years of community college or education in the professional trades - Free Community College**

- We must create an integrated, comprehensive educational system that nurtures and develops students through each critical phase of development.
- In today’s economy, a high school diploma is not enough.
- **The Commonwealth must universally extend education for an additional two years, either through training in the professional trades or through free Community College.**
- In the Commonwealth, there are more than 20k unfilled jobs in high growth, high need sectors of the economy unfilled that require an associate’s degree and above. Those jobs are expected to grow over the next ten years.

## **Extended Day and Year**

- The agrarian school calendar no longer meets the needs of a modern educational system.
- Students need additional time to develop their academic skills and to participate in activities that develop the whole child, like art, music, physical education and athletics.
- Teachers need additional time to cooperate, collaborate and differentiate instruction.
- Further, it is essential that we lessen the amount of time that children are left unattended after school.

## **Universal Pre-K**

- Students who attend pre-school achieve at higher levels and are less likely to require other kinds of services.
- Children with a strong early education are 40% less likely to repeat a grade and twice as likely to go to college.
- In a 2003 report, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis estimated a 16% return for every dollar invested in early childhood education.

## **Full Day Kindergarten**

- Full-day kindergarten students spend 30% more time on reading and literacy instruction and 46% more time on mathematics than children in half-day programs.
- Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers than half-day kindergarteners.
- Full-day kindergarten allows a more consistent schedule for children, reduces the ratio of transition time to class time, reduces stress for children, and assists working families.

## **Improved Teacher Certification, Licensure and Professional Development**

- Mid-Career Certification will allow the Commonwealth to tap the expertise of professionals nearing retirement or looking for a new challenge; Mid-Career Certification will provide an opportunity to **transfer their knowledge and skills to students**.
- **Regional Professional Development Centers** will create strong local partnerships to facilitate teacher education and training throughout an educator's career.

## **Stronger, Systemic Accountability**

- The commonwealth needs to provide **strong benchmarks** that hold every school at every level to the same standard and recognize that we are all held accountable for providing a child with a future.
- The accountability mechanisms must be standardized and used to provide **best practices and technical assistance** throughout the Commonwealth.
- This level of standardized accountability allows for **comprehensive analysis of charter and pilot school models**.

## **Strengthen High School Curriculum**

- Institute the MassCore Curriculum to strengthen students' proficiency in **math and science for them to compete in the global economy**.
- Use college-readiness tools as a formative assessment for high school sophomores to ensure that the final two years of high school serve as a **gateway for continued education** or entry into the global workforce.

## **Investment in Higher Education**

- Massachusetts' higher education infrastructure, which represents 70% of the state's capital assets, is aging and has been under-funded for decades.
- A bond bill dedicated to repair and improve of these critical facilities will allow the Commonwealth to provide a world-class learning and research environment.
- The Commonwealth can provide more financing flexibility and increased certainty in annual campus budgeting by allowing local campuses to retain the revenue generated from tuition and fees. Today, ours is only one of few states that prohibits institutions from retaining tuition.
- As the cost of higher education increases, it is essential that the Commonwealth emphasize need-based financial aid to ensure higher education opportunities for all.

## **The Readiness Project: -- A Review of the Future of Public Education in the Commonwealth**

- A group of educators, legislators, business leaders, and community leaders who will work through some fundamental and systemic challenges that face public education in Massachusetts. Some questions confronting the Project members include:
  - How best to expand time for teaching and learning;
  - How to improve teacher licensing and certification on a broad scale;
  - How to enhance and improve teacher mentoring, induction and professional development;
  - How to align curricula throughout the entire system;
  - How to position and support charter schools, pilot schools, and traditional district schools so they are cooperative components of a comprehensive system;
  - How to improve MCAS and introduce additional standards and assessments;
  - How best to universally extend education an additional two-years;
  - How to fund the education system adequately, equitably, and reliably.