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PRESS RELEASE

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Dearborn Middle School Leaders Win Commitments from Treasurer Cahill and Mayor Menino for School's Academic Turnaround and Renovation

On April 26 from 7-8:30 pm at the Dearborn Middle School, over four hundred students, parents, teachers, and community leaders met with Treasurer and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Chair Timothy Cahill, MSBA Executive Director Katherine Craven, Mayor Thomas Menino and Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson. These leaders received commitments from each public official to support their school's academic turnaround vision and to do everything in their power to make sure that the Dearborn is renovated as a 6-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Demonstration Academy with expanded day learning as soon as possible. Mayor Menino, in particular, affirmed his commitment by stating that he had already allotted a million dollars to do a feasibility study for the school's renovation, while State Treasurer and MSBA Chair Cahill declared that the MSBA is ready to release 74% of the money required for the school's renovation as a 6-12 STEM Demonstration Academy.

The event marked both the culmination and a re-commitment of an enormous community effort led by a team of parents, teachers, and representatives from Roxbury Presbyterian Church, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Trinity Boston Church, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, and the Boston Urban Youth Foundation – now known as the Dearborn Leadership Team. For a long time, the school has suffered through a history of neglect – both in terms of the school's building conditions and lack of resources as well as in terms of its low academic performance, for which the district, the city, the state, the administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members all share responsibility. But on this night, the Dearborn Leadership Team sought to pave the way for a new future – to re-invigorate and to reconstruct the Dearborn School from a symbol of an inner city school of educational neglect into a beacon of academic excellence and equal educational opportunity. On the night, Principal Jose Duarte, with support from the Dearborn Leadership Team, laid out concrete academic goals for the 6-12 STEM Academy: (1) By 8th grade, 80% of students will score proficient on the MCAS; (2) The daily attendance rate will be 95%; (3) Over 50% of parents will be engaged in the school, and (4) 80% of students who enter the school will graduate. At the same time, Principal Duarte unequivocally stated that in the interim before the school's renovation, the Dearborn will work with its parents and students and find the right configuration of teachers and programs to ensure that the school meets its goals for Academic Yearly Progress. The Dearborn Leadership Team also announced the school's future partnerships with Northeastern University's STEM Center, Massachusetts 2020, the Boston Science Department, and the Museum of Science. The night ended with a call for and commitment to shared responsibility and accountability among the students, parents, teachers, community members and organizations, the city, the school district, and the state to turnaround the Dearborn school.