

**Remarks of Mayor Thomas M. Menino
Massachusetts High Tech Council Annual Meeting
February 16, 2010**

- Thank you, Chris Anderson. It's great to be with the Mass High Tech Council. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you. This is an impressive group. You have a priority and you go after it 100 percent each day. I like that.
- I share that sense of purpose and urgency. My team and I have only 1,420 days remaining in this term. We are dedicated to making the most of each one.
- Today I want to talk about two of the goals we are working on: Transformative progress in education and building an Innovation District on our waterfront that brings the New Economy to Boston's new Downtown.
- You know how closely education is tied to our economy. That's why you were so dedicated to passing landmark education reform. I want to publicly thank the Mass High Tech Council for putting kids' needs before adult interests.
- Passing that law was one of my proudest moments as Mayor. A lot of people have asked me why I was so fired up about education reform. Let me say this to start: I am proud of the progress we have made in the Boston Public Schools:
 - U.S. News & World Report ranked 8 – let me repeat that – 8 of our high schools among the nation's best.
 - Our district has one of the highest college enrollment rates in urban America.
 - And in 2006 we won the Broad Prize as America's best city school district.
- But I am frustrated with the pace of change, especially in our low performing schools. I want all kids to get a world-class education, no matter what neighborhood their school is in. I want all parents to have a good pool of schools to choose from. And I want all teachers, staff and principals completely dedicated to making those first two statements a reality.

- The Ed Reform Law was a once in a generation chance to help make this happen – and make it happen quickly. And it was an opportunity to attract 250 million dollars in federal funds. I had some candid talks with friends and made some uncomfortable visits to see people. But the truth is: I was happy to turn up the pressure to turn around schools.
- The goal of education reform is to help ignite a transformation within districts and bring innovation to scale. The Ed Reform bill gives us 3 important tools to do that:
 - One, the authority to create at least 4 in-district charter schools without union approval.
 - Two, the flexibility to assign the best teachers where they are needed most.
 - And three, the ability to bypass lengthy arbitration at persistently underperforming schools.
- Boston isn't just committed to reform; we're committed to results. That's why we are:
 - Already preparing turnaround plans for each of the underperforming schools;
 - Identifying top principals to be turnaround leaders for these schools;
 - And looking for efficient ways to invite charter schools and their innovations into the system.
- We're moving as quickly as we can because our kids and these schools can't wait. But we need your help. I am asking you to help us push the State to make sure that turnaround schools and turnaround plans are identified and approved as fast as possible, so that real transformation begins in our school system this fall. Any delay risks all that we fought for to help our kids – it risks funding, momentum, and real reform.

- With these reforms in place, we can look to a day with one system of education in Boston. When there will be no wasteful feuding on charter versus pilot versus public. Educators and best practices will move across fading boundaries.
- Our system will welcome innovation with one standard: deliver outstanding results for all of our youth. I am the Mayor of all of Boston's children – no matter where they go to school – and I want them all to succeed.
- We know, however, that an education doesn't end in a classroom. Children learn wherever they go. We also know that our students struggle for many reasons – sometimes they are academic, but often children struggle because of problems outside of the school.
- For example, almost all of our underperforming schools are located in Roxbury and north Dorchester, where many young people face barriers to academic success, such as violence, homelessness, and poverty.
- We call this area the Circle of Promise. Here, we are going to explore new models of service delivery and try new things. We will engage businesses, faith institutions, non-profits and community groups to make sure our services are in harmony, that they are effective, and they are not redundant.
- I will have more to say about the Circle of Promise later this week. Needless to say, it's a top priority and one that I hope you will engage in.
- A second goal we have is to build an Innovation District on our waterfront that brings the New Economy to Boston's new Downtown and create new jobs. Together, we should develop these thousand acres into a hub for knowledge workers and creative jobs.
- We want to build something that is truly special – a place that you want to locate your company and an area your employees want to work and live.
- As I said in my Inaugural Address last month, we will define innovation clusters in green, biotech and health care, web development, and other tech industries.

- And there, we'll test new ideas that provide live/work opportunities to entrepreneurs and affordable co-housing for researchers. We'll give architects and developers the challenge to experiment with new designs, new floor plans, and new materials.
- Will this take time? Sure. Has the tough economy limited our resources? Of course. But our greatest mistake would be to scale back our dreams. We must invent a 21st century district that meets the needs of the innovators who live and work in Boston – to create a job magnet, an urban lab on our shore, and to harvest its lessons for the city.
- So we have some big plans for our city that will keep us busy over the next 1,420 days. We're going to be turning around schools for our kids, creating new jobs for our residents, and generating new economic activity for our businesses, among many other things.
- I thank you for your partnership in this effort so far, and I look forward to finding new ways to work together. Thank you for having me.
- Now, I'd be happy to take a few questions.