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NEW REPORT TRACKS PROGRESS, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN MASS. EDUCATION

Research Highlights Need to Give Students a Larger Role in Shaping Education Reform

(BOSTON, MA) January 24, 2019 – The [Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy](#) released its annual status report to an audience of 300 state leaders, legislators, students, and educators this morning. The [Condition of Education in the Commonwealth](#) report looks at school performance in Massachusetts, highlighting successes while zeroing in on areas in need of improvement.

The annual series includes a [data dashboard](#) that looks at 25 state-level indicators of school performance, from early education through college and career readiness. It shows progress over time and highlights disparities in student outcomes based on several factors including income and race.

The report's [Action Guide](#) examines the role students play in shaping our education system. While educators and leaders look to improve schools for students, students themselves are rarely given a seat at the table while decisions about their education are being made. The report offers recommendations for elevating the voice of students in classrooms, schools, and communities.

“Over the past year we’ve seen young people become increasingly more involved in public activism, leading the National Student Walkout and voting at higher rates in the mid-term elections than we’ve seen in 25 years. We thought this was a good time to consider why students rarely have the opportunity to play an active role in shaping the education system and how that can be changed,” said Chad d’Entremont, Executive Director of the Rennie Center.

“There is a power dynamic in education that can delay progress. Education should respond to the needs of students the way a business would respond to the needs of a customer. By valuing students’ thoughts, opinions, and experiences, education will remain more relevant to their needs,” said Maya Mathews, Student Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Newton North High School Student.

The report features local programs that prioritize student voice. Examples include Generation Citizen (a nonprofit organization working with districts throughout the state), Sociedad Latina and Youth on Board in Boston, and programs within Andover Public Schools, Monomoy Regional School District, Waltham High School, and Worcester Public Schools.

The event also featured remarks from Education Secretary James Peyser who spoke about the Baker-Polito Administration's education funding reform plan that would increase K-12 school funding.

"While increased investment is incredibly important, how we spend it is equally important to ensure we are using strategies and providing programs that accelerate learning for all students and close achievement gaps," said Secretary of Education James Peyser. "We are asking the lowest-performing schools to partner with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make reforms that will help our neediest students achieve their potential academically."

The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy's mission is to improve public education through well-informed decision-making based on deep knowledge and evidence of effective policymaking and practice. As Massachusetts' preeminent voice in public education reform, we create open spaces for educators and policymakers to consider evidence, discuss cutting-edge issues, and develop new approaches to advance student learning and achievement. Through our staunch commitment to independent, non-partisan research and constructive conversations, we work to promote an education system that provides every child with the opportunity to be successful in school and in life. For more information, please visit www.renniecenter.org.

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