

January 2011

Mayor Menino's Speech Priorities

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State of the City and Chamber speeches by Mayor highlight issues for 2011

In his [State of the City Address](#) at Faneuil Hall on January 11th., Mayor Menino focused on several issues affecting the quality of life for Boston residents. A theme woven throughout the speech was "shared progress" reflecting his concern that income inequality is growing among Boston residents. He called on business and non-profit institutions to help fund a few initiatives.

Local Health Insurance Disparity - The Mayor called on Governor and Legislature to provide the same plan design authority for employee health insurance to cities and towns that the state has utilized since 1955. He noted that Boston pays 82% of employee health insurance while the state pays 67%. The City could save \$12M, he stated.

Business and Jobs - The City would launch a \$100M program to retrofit City of Boston assets to make them more energy efficient which would generate 1,000 jobs the Mayor announced. Funding would come from federal grants, utility rebates, the City's capital plan and savings from energy avoidance. Further, cutting "outdated and redundant permits" would occur to reduce red tape for small businesses and to help create jobs.

Neighbor Care - Increased use of community health centers by providing more hours and more services in the neighborhoods was called for by the Mayor. He requested hospitals and health insurance companies to team up to support the greater access of services for Boston residents.

Early Education - The Mayor pledged to double the full-day seats for four-year olds over five years. He expected funding to help support this initiative to come from businesses and non-profit institutions. Increased PILOT payments were considered one source but that is not certain.

Educational Issues

The Mayor did not highlight educational issues in his State of the City Address because he had devoted his [speech](#) at the Chamber of Commerce in December to that topic. Most will remember that the Mayor backed Superintendent Johnson's Redesign and Reinvest plan in that speech. The plan is intended to meet the fiscal challenges facing the School Department and to reallocate resources to better serve the needs of the students. That means closing and consolidating schools and reconfiguring program delivery models.

In addition, the Mayor addressed what his expectations are for the new teachers' contract now being negotiated. The Mayor noted that a highly skilled teacher in every classroom is the most important step that can be taken to improve student performance. He emphasized that an effective teacher is as important to Boston's economy as a researcher in the Longwood Medical Area or a capitalist at one of the City's financial services firms. For that reason, the Mayor cited four objectives for the new teachers' contract.

1. Give principals and headmasters the flexibility to put the best teachers where they are needed most
2. Reward the best teachers for outstanding results in the classroom
3. Extend the school day for more enrichment time for students
4. Reform the teacher evaluation system and include student achievement as a factor

Mayor Menino will present his next major speech at the Research Bureau's Annual Meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2011. [invitation](#)