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**STATEMENT ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD:
*NAEP 2009 Science Trial Urban District Assessment –
Grades 4 and 8***

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Welcome to Boston, the birthplace of public education in this nation. We have been educating children for more than 375 years, and we have raised our standards and demanded more of our students in each successive year.

Last year was the first time in Massachusetts' history that our high school seniors had to pass a state science exam to earn a diploma. Even with that tougher standard, in Boston we raised our graduation rate for the fourth year in a row—to the highest level since measurements began.

Learning about science is no longer optional. The physical sciences teach students about energy and motion. The life sciences teach about evolution and diversity, and Earth sciences teach critical lessons about geology, conservation and climate change. Through ideas and innovation, these are the areas that will power our 21st century global economy and create jobs at every level. If we are to truly equip all our students to compete, then we must give them the tools to out-think and out-imagine their counterparts around the world.

The report being released today shows that our big cities are making historic strides in science education. However, too many of our students are still struggling. The new NAEP Science Framework and the assessment based on it provide us with a snapshot of our students' knowledge at the moment of testing. We cannot compare the scores to previous NAEP science tests; nor can we compare the scores across the science disciplines assessed. We can, however, use this data as an additional indicator of what we have accomplished and what we have yet to do.

With the help of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and others, Boston Public Schools has developed a strong cadre of teacher leaders to support the implementation of engaging and demanding science instructional materials. With the development of strong university partnerships with our science department, we have created pathways for licensure in science—234 new science licenses were earned through our Boston Science Partnership (BSP) grant. We have increased science teacher retention as well. Teachers who participate in our NSF-supported science professional development are

nearly five times more likely than teachers who do not to remain teaching science in our district.

Additionally, we have shown that when our science teachers participate in our content-focused BSP professional development, a greater percentage of their students are proficient or advanced on our state assessment—and a smaller percentage of students are failing. Through BSP, we have tripled AP science enrollment while increasing the percentage of passing scores. AP science student enrollment demographics are more reflective of our district enrollment, and we are striving to improve the performance on this measure.

Moreover, we have launched a district-wide curriculum audit to make sure our teachers have the tools, training and materials they need to align their work with the new Common Core State Standards. We have rebuilt science labs and invested in technology across our city. And we are shifting to a weighted student funding model to ensure that our students get the resources they need, no matter where they live or where they attend school.

In Boston, we know we have traveled far from where we were with the last NAEP Science Assessment in 2005. We have made great strides in science and we are well positioned for continued growth. This new NAEP Science data provides an important opportunity to gain insight, reflect and refine strategies to strengthen our programs and practices in science.

Science is more than a new requirement for graduation. It is the core of a modern education—the engine that drives curiosity, inquiry, creativity and ingenuity. Whether it's the year 2011 or 1635, these are the constant qualities that we always strive to instill in every student.