

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **EDUCATION AND BUSINESS LEADERS TO DISCUSS WORKFORCE READINESS IN WESTERN MA**

*Education Secretary James Peyser, State Senator Eric Lesser, and the education and business communities to gather in Holyoke on May 10*

The [Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy](#) invites journalists to a discussion on the status of education in Western Massachusetts and its impact on workforce readiness.

According to the Rennie Center's [Condition of Education in the Commonwealth Report, 30 percent](#) of Massachusetts public school graduates require developmental—or remedial—courses when enrolling the state's public colleges and universities. Meanwhile, a survey by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education finds that [75 percent](#) of employers have trouble finding qualified job applicants.

The event will look at this disconnect between the lessons taught in schools and the skills needed for success in college and in the workforce. Experts will discuss ways in which student-centered learning, an approach that tailors education to the interests and learning style of each student, can prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market.

The event puts a local focus on the [Condition of Education in the Commonwealth Report](#), which looks at student progress in Massachusetts while pointing to areas in need of continued improvement.

**WHEN:** May 10, 2017  
8:30 – 10:00 am

**WHERE:** The Log Cabin, Southampton Room  
500 Easthampton Road  
Holyoke, MA

**WHO:** Nearly 100 people are expected to attend the event including business leaders, state officials, school and district leaders, educators, and representatives from non-profit and community-based organizations.

***Featured Speakers:***

- **James Peyser**, Massachusetts Secretary of Education
- **Senator Eric Lesser**, State Senator, First Hampden and Hampshire District

- **Tricia Canavan**, President, United Personnel
- **Chad d'Entremont**, Executive Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy
- **Jennifer Poulos**, Associate Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

**Panelists:**

- **Lisa Bakowski**, Principal, Boland Elementary School, Springfield Public Schools
- **Richard Malinoski**, Math Teacher, Springfield Empowerment Zone
- **Kate Phelon**, Executive Director, Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce
- **Steve Zrike**, Superintendent, Holyoke Public Schools

**EVENT** The event is co-sponsored by the Economic Development Council of Western  
**PARTNERS:** Massachusetts, Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, Springfield Business Leaders for Education, and Springfield Regional Chamber.

**CONTACT:** For questions or to RSVP please contact Catherine Rauseo at [crauseo@renniecenter.org](mailto:crauseo@renniecenter.org).

Additional event details can be found at [www.renniecenter.org/May10](http://www.renniecenter.org/May10)

*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](http://www.renniecenter.org).*

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