



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

EDUCATION AND BUSINESS LEADERS TO DISCUSS STATE OF EDUCATION IN WESTERN MA

Education Secretary James Peyser, Early Education and Care Commissioner Thomas Weber, and education and business leaders to gather in Holyoke on June 5

The [Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy](http://renniecenter.org) invites journalists to a discussion on the status of education in Western Massachusetts and the impact of local early learning programs.

Springfield's innovation around early childhood education was highlighted as a model of success in this year's [Condition of Education in the Commonwealth Report](#). After receiving a federal Preschool Expansion Grant, the city not only increased the number of its most vulnerable students attending PreK, it also improved the quality of early education by creating a partnership between preschool providers.

The event will delve into this innovative approach and look at the latest data from the Department of Early Education and Care on the impact of the Preschool Expansion Grant on students in Western Massachusetts.

WHEN: June 5, 2018
11:30 am – 1:30 pm

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

WHO: More than 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
- **Thomas Weber**, Commissioner, Department of Early Education & Care
- **Jocelyn Bowne**, Director of Research and PEG Administration, Department of Early Education and Care
- **Tricia Canavan**, President, United Personnel
- **Amy Checkoway**, Senior Associate, Abt Associates
- **Linda Noonan**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

- **Chad d'Entremont**, Executive Director, Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

Panelists:

- **Stephen Huntly**, Executive Director, Valley Opportunity Council
- **Dexter Johnson**, President & CEO, YMCA of Greater Springfield
- **Laura Mendes**, Director of Literacy, Elementary and Early Childhood Education & Preschool Expansion Grant Program Coordinator, Springfield Public Schools

EVENT The event is co-sponsored by the Economic Development Council of Western
PARTNERS: Massachusetts, Greater Holyoke 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.

Additional event details can be found at www.renniecenter.org/events/condition-education-western-ma

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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