



794 Purchase Street • P.O. Box 8827 • New Bedford, MA 02742
(508) 999-5231 Tel • (508) 999-5237 Fax • www.newbedfordchamber.com

June 4, 2009

The Honorable Therese Murray
Senate President
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House, Room 330
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Support for funding School-to-Career Connecting Activities (Line-item 7027-0019)

Dear Senate President Murray:

On behalf of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, we are writing to you to endorse and support funding for the School to Career Connecting Activities Initiative.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, a 1,000 member strong business organization, provides leadership on issues and activities important to our economy and quality of life. Our mission is to serve the interests of member businesses while advocating business advancement, economic growth and job creation for the benefit of New Bedford and the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts.

The Chamber understands the difficult fiscal challenges faced by the state and we applaud you for taking decisive action by implementing budget cuts and spending controls in order to respond to the projected state revenue shortfall. However, the Chamber believes that the Connecting Activities program is an important initiative that benefits our students, businesses and community at large and is worthy of being fully funded in the 2010 fiscal year. This popular and very successful program links businesses and schools and provides Massachusetts students with the educational, technical, and employability skills necessary to compete in higher education and high performance workplaces. Students benefit directly by participating in internships that help them gain job experience, explore career pursuits, and achieve stronger academics with real world learning. Not only do students experience incredible internships, but the business and school partners experience significant organizational improvements. The state benefits as the program promotes education and workforce skills for the 21st Century workplace.

In the New Bedford area alone, over 250 local employers and nearly 700 students participate in Connecting Activities. The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong and active supporter of this important statewide initiative. We respectfully request that you support funding in the FY2010 state budget for the School to Career Connecting Activities Initiative.

Thank you for your consideration on this important economic development issue.

Sincerely,

James R. Pratt, Jr. CPA
2009 Chairman of the Board

Maureen Armstrong
Vice Chair of Government Affairs

Roy M. Nascimento, IOM
President & CEO

cc: Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo
Chairman Charles A. Murphy, House Ways & Means Committee
Chairman Steve C. Panagiotakos, Senate Ways & Means Committee
SouthCoast Legislative Delegation