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## City Connects Named Priority Partner for Turnaround Schools through Massachusetts' Race to the Top Grant

**Chestnut Hill, Mass.—August 2, 2011**—The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has named City Connects a “Priority Partner” for turnaround schools in the area of social, emotional, and health needs. A project of the Commonwealth’s Race to the Top grant, the Priority Partners for Turnaround initiative is aimed at qualifying proven organizations to support district and school turnaround efforts.

City Connects, a model of optimized student support, uses an evidence-based approach to collaborate with teachers and school staff in identifying the strengths and needs of every child across four domains: academics, social/emotional, health, and family. Each student is then connected to a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services in the community. Developed at Boston College’s Lynch School of Education in 2001, this school-based intervention cost-effectively addresses the non-school factors that can impede academic achievement. In the 2009-10 academic year, City Connects arranged approximately 13,000 services for 3,700 students in 12 Boston elementary schools, ranging from tutoring to mentoring to athletic programs.

“Children living in high-poverty urban settings face countless challenges that impact learning and healthy development,” said Mary E. Walsh, PhD, executive director of City Connects and the Kearns Professor in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. “As a priority vendor, we are pleased to have the opportunity to work with districts and turnaround schools across the state to address the out-of-school factors that can stand in the way of student achievement.”

DESE has identified vendors to be part of a Priority Partners for Turnaround network. The network will serve as a resource for districts and schools seeking partnerships with educational service providers to help turn around their lowest achieving schools by addressing the state’s priority conditions for school effectiveness, one of which is social, emotional, and health needs. City Connects will work directly with local districts, and in cooperation with DESE, to provide these services.

### **About [City Connects](#)**

Developed at Boston College in 2001, City Connects is an evidence-based approach to student support active in 17 Boston Public Schools that ensures that all children engage and learn in school by connecting each child with a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services. By leveraging the resources of community agencies, City Connects works efficiently within the existing framework of schools and society to alleviate barriers to learning. In the 2009-10 academic year, City Connects facilitated the delivery of 13,000 services to 3,700 students in 12 Boston public elementary schools. Read the City Connects blog at [CityConnectsBlog.Wordpress.com](http://CityConnectsBlog.Wordpress.com) or follow City Connects on Twitter [@CityConnects](https://twitter.com/CityConnects).