

Lt. Gov. Polito visits GLTHS to see grant's effects

Polito see grant's effects at GLTHS

By Amelia Pak-Harvey

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TYNGSBORO — Just after **Greater Lowell Technical High School** received a \$493,395 grant to update its machinery, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito visited the school Thursday to see where the money will be spent.

The funding will go toward upgrading machine-technology equipment, some of which dates back to 1940s.

It will also be used to purchase 14 automated machines, including tool-room lathes and miniature milling machines that help craft metal parts.

“This shop is going to look completely different,” Polito said to an instructor, standing in the middle of the machine shop.

The money is part of a \$9.3 million Workforce Skills Capital Grant the Baker administration distributed to 35 high schools, community colleges and vocational schools. It's aimed at closing a workforce skills gap that is leaving industries without enough properly trained workers to fill available jobs.

“It's surprising in a state like Massachusetts, with the quality of K-12 education that we have, that that gap

Please see **GLTHS/4**



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito speaks to **Greater Lowell Tech** senior Shanelle Martinez in cosmetology shop during a tour of the school on Thursday. She is joined by state Rep. Rady Mom, left, and state Rep. Dave Nangle.

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GLTHS/ From Page 3 exists,” Polito said.

The governor's administration is also proposing \$83.5 million for vocational-technical education — grants to fund equipment, workbased learning and career partnerships for students.

Ray Boutin, chairman of the **Greater Lowell Tech** School Committee, said the school is fortunate to receive the grant.

“It’s going to help (students) learn and be more competitive in the job market,” he said.

In her first visit to the Tyngsboro- based school, Polito spoke with culinary-arts students, toured the new mock CVS Pharmacy storefront, and visited the salon that cosmetology students staff.

She visited the machine shop to see how the grant money would change the school, which hopes to get the new machines delivered by the end of June.

“This is so important to us,” she said to staff, noting that she hopes the investments the Baker administration makes will grow the economy.

Vocational education has been highlighted throughout the governor’s budget process, as has his support for lifting the cap on charter schools.

Yet for traditional public schools, Polito said the proposed budget includes the highest-ever amount of Chapter 70 funds — state money that goes to local school districts — with an increase of \$72 million.

The governor’s fiscal 2017 budget also proposes an additional \$20 million for charter-school reimbursements to local school districts.

“The Legislature is taking that matter up in their budget,” she said. “There may be some adjustments that need to be made to the foundation formula across the board for Chapter 70.”

Charter-school and vocational school spots, she argued, are options for students that the state needs to support.

“We support choices for students and parents through strong traditional schools, voke-tech schools and charter schools,” she said.

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Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, during her visit Thursday to Greater Lowell Technical High School