

As a Boston Globe subscriber, you enjoy exclusive benefits, including events, offers, and contests. Check out the latest now.

TEXT SIZE | MANAGE ACCOUNT | LOG OUT

The Boston Globe

NEWS ▶	METRO
LOTTERY ▶	OBITUARIES ▶
GLOBE NORTH ▶	GLOBE SOUTH ▶
GLOBE WEST ▶	DATA DESK ▶
MAGAZINE ▶	INSIDERS ▶
TODAY'S PAPER ▶	

Boston students remember Menino as city's 'education mayor'

By **Matt Rocheleau**

| GLOBE CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 01, 2014



0 COMMENTS



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

RJ Petrucci, 10, who is currently about halfway through Thomas Menino's memoir, said he broke down and cried when he found out about the former mayor's death yesterday.

When 10-year-old RJ Petrucci got off the bus from school Thursday, his mom broke the news: former Boston mayor Thomas M. Menino had died. The boy said he broke down and cried.

"I'm so sorry," RJ recalled his mother telling him. "I know how much he meant to you."

A fifth-grader at Eliot K-8 Innovation School in the North End, RJ had met the city's longest-serving mayor "a bunch of times" at various events. Two weeks ago, at his father's urging, RJ began to read Menino's new memoir, "Mayor for a New America." He is about halfway through the 256-page book.

"I just love how much time and effort he put into the schools. He's just been doing a lot for the city and sacrificing for the city," RJ said Friday, after rattling off an impressive list of facts and

highlights from Menino's tenure as a city councilor and mayor.

"He's the one I looked up to. I miss him."

RJ and other students at Eliot spent part of the day writing about the cherished moments they remember of the man who strived to become Boston's "education mayor."

Public schools across the city were finding their own ways to honor Menino on Friday.

"Every one of them is offering students, staff, and parents ways to remember Mayor Menino and support his family," said city schools spokesman Lee McGuire.

At Beethoven Elementary School in West Roxbury, capital letters the size of a sheet of paper were hung across a series of windows to spell out "Thank you Mayor Menino."

At Hugh R. O'Donnell Elementary School in East Boston, a bulletin board features pieces of construction paper in the shape of students' hands with messages written on them thanking Menino and saying goodbye.

At Eliot, students wrote about Menino giving their class goodie bags, pencils, and scarves, or coming by to congratulate them for successfully completing their homework.

Fifth-grader Chiara Haskell wrote that when she was 2 years old and being pushed around in a stroller during an event at Christopher Columbus Park, Menino handed her her very first ice cream cone.

Another classmate, Ava Moniz, wrote that she will never forget meeting the former mayor when he showed up early to a school talent show. Menino spotted a painting of a flower that was listed as being for sale, she wrote. Ava told Menino it was her painting.

"He was very impressed asked and how much it cost," wrote Ava. "But I gave it to him for free."

"He held onto it for the rest of the show," she added. "Since that day, I always have had an interest in drawing and painting."

The school's principal, Traci Walker Griffith, on Thursday night sent an e-mail to families, alumni, and others asking them to send messages about Menino and photos of him. Fifth-grade teacher Jennifer DiSarcina plans to compile those memories, farewells, and condolences into a book, a copy of which will be given to Menino's family.

Menino's legacy includes a long list of accomplishments in the school system. Still, in his final months as mayor, he said he was not fully satisfied with the state of Boston's schools.

"In many ways, Mayor Menino would be the first to say that our job in this city, related to improving schools and meeting the needs of all students, is not finished and he would expect all of us to pick up the baton," said Laura Perille, executive director of EdVestors, a Boston education nonprofit.

“But there’s absolutely no question in my mind that he laid the foundation and his dogged focus on the schools throughout his 20 years as mayor helped the city understand the important role of the schools and the need to improve our schools as being a central focus,” she said.



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Adriana Cepeda (hands showing) and Luke Myers worked on their remembrances of Thomas Menino at the Eliot School in the North End.

More Menino coverage →

- **Thomas M. Menino, Boston's longest serving mayor, has died at age 71**
- **Across the city, tears and memories of Menino flow**
- **Photos: Menino through the years**
- **Videos: Remembering Thomas Menino**
- **Share your memories of Menino**

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)



0 COMMENTS



Trending Articles

MOST VIEWED

MOST COMMENTED

MOST SHARED

1 Thomas M. Menino, Boston's longest serving mayor, ...

2 Brittany Maynard's dilemma: choosing the right tim...

3 High school scoreboard

4 Charlie Baker acknowledges he flubbed fisherman's t...

5 Vote all you want. The secret government won't chan...

6 Why do people earn what they earn?

Learn more

7 Legal Sea Foods to close Prudential Center restauran...

SUBSCRIBE BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS EPAPER EDITION NEWS IN EDUCATION

8 That letter to the future in golden lion time capsule? ...

MY ACCOUNT

LOGOUT

9 Yes on Question 3: Pull the plug on flawed casino law

MY SAVED LIST

MANAGE HOME DELIVERY

10 Baker says he may have gotten some details of fisher...

MANAGE MY PROFILE

CONTACT

HELP

FAQS

GLOBE NEWSROOM

ADVERTISE

SOCIAL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE+

MORE

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

[TERMS OF PURCHASE](#)

[YOUR AD CHOICES](#)

[DIGITAL JOBS AT BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA](#)

[VIEW ALL JOBS AT BGM](#)

© 2014 BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA PARTNERS, LLC
