

Building a Comprehensive System to Support All Students Getting to High School Graduation and Beyond

Marissa Cole, Massachusetts Executive Office of Education

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Setting an Agenda for All Youth

Governor Patrick's Second Term Priorities (announced in Fall 2010):

- Close the Achievement Gap
- Create Jobs and Expand the Economy
- End Youth Violence
- Lower Health Care Costs

Gateway Cities Education Agenda (announced in November 2011):

\$1M included in Governor's FY13 budget proposal for the development of Education & Industry Coordinating Councils (EICCs) and to support the development of Career Academies. Complements Commonwealth Corporation's efforts to help districts establish career pathways in comprehensive high schools.

Community College Proposal – via Governor's proposed FY13 budget:

- Proposed additional investment and new funding formula that includes performance metrics
- Promotes greater alignment with regional and statewide workforce needs

Key partners: Executive Office of Education – Department of Elementary & Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development – Commonwealth Corporation; Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development

An Evolving Conversation

- **Shift from dropout prevention to dropout prevention and re-engagement.** Over the past five+ years, the policy conversation has changed from a focus on dropout prevention to a focus on re-engagement. Better data informs the design of programs to better support students to graduation and beyond. These two factors elevated the “pathways” discussion in Massachusetts.
- **Integrating and aligning services and supports to meet students' needs.**
- **Recognizing that a “one size fits all” approach is insufficient.**

Policies and Initiatives Supporting the Development of Multiple Pathways in Massachusetts

Innovation Schools (established through Achievement Gap Act of 2010 (Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010) are a model for flexibility and autonomy for in-district public schools. Innovation Schools are locally developed and approved, offer greater autonomy and flexibility in six areas - curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, staffing policies and procedures, district policies and professional development.

Examples include:

- Pathways Innovation School – partnership between Mahar Regional School District and Mount Wachusett Community College
- Leominster Public Schools is developing a new school for 14-22 year olds offering both academic and therapeutic services

School-to-Career Connecting Activities initiative, led by the DESE in partnership with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, establishes public-private partnerships through Massachusetts' 16 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs).

- *Features:* Structured, work-based learning experiences; Focus on both hands-on/experiential learning and career exploration (e.g.: Career Days, Job Shadowing, Internships)

Massachusetts **YouthWorks** funding, administered by Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), provides subsidized summer jobs for youth in 25 communities with greatest incidence of juvenile detention and adjudication and a significant population of low-income youth.

- *The YouthWorks program is being used to encourage improvement in career readiness training for older youth, along with providing transition tools to link summer work-based learning to school experiences*

Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) – 26 regional vocational technical school districts.

- *Career Clusters (11) focus on six strands: Safety and Health Knowledge and Skills; Technical Knowledge and Skills; Embedded Academic Knowledge and Skills; Employability Knowledge and Skills; Management and Entrepreneurship Knowledge and Skills; and Technical Knowledge and Skills*
- *CommCorp is developing several initiatives with the voc schools that will offer innovative vocational training to youth not enrolled in vocational schools, during summer and after-school hours; DYS is using some of our state-of-the-art vocational school facilities to provide training in the after-school hours.*

Development of College and Career Planning Tools, including an online portal **“Your Plan for College,”** provided through the Massachusetts Education Finance Association (MEFA).

Board of Elementary & Secondary Education’s **Integrating College and Career Readiness Task Force** (developed in 2011).

Child & Youth Readiness Cabinet (*Co-Chaired by the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services; Led by a Child & Youth Readiness Cabinet Manager jointly hired by EOE and EOHHS*)

The Child & Youth Readiness Cabinet provides opportunities for Secretaries, Commissioners and staff to come together and think cross-sector about issues that hinder students’ ability to learn and thrive. For example, recent C&YR Cabinet conversations focused on discrepancies between attendance policies among different state agencies that serve children and families and also on student mobility.

Leveraging State and Federal Funding Opportunities

Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) supported by Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program (LDS-2) The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is creating the Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), a data-driven system designed to identify students kindergarten through high school that are potentially "off-track" for grade-level or developmental age, including those students that are potential dropouts and off-track for high school graduation. This project is funded through the federal Longitudinal Data System Grant Program (LDS-2) and is part of a larger effort to develop an integrated suite of tools for Massachusetts educators. Future iterations of the model hope to expand its scope and include children from birth through college. The

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is the contracted research group developing and validating the EWIS statistical model for the Commonwealth.

STEM Early College High Schools (*supported with Race to the Top funding*)

Early college high schools (ECHS) are a proven model for preparing students, especially low-income, minority, and first-generation college-goers, for postsecondary education. Currently there are six districts that were chosen through a competitive Request for Proposals process to open a Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) early college high school. Each received approximately \$120,000 of RTTT funds to be spent over four years for school planning, start up, and full implementation. STEM early college high schools will promote postsecondary and career readiness, foster community and business engagement, and support the Commonwealth's goal of continued leadership in scientific and technological innovation. Technical assistance on program development and implementation is provided by Jobs for the Future (JFF).

Federal High School Graduation Initiative Grant (MassGRAD)

- \$15 million awarded over 5 years; all high schools - 133 in total - with dropout rate equivalent to or higher than the state average were eligible to apply for planning or implementation grant.
- 47 grants (28 implementation and 19 planning) were awarded in March 2011. All 133 schools are invited to participate in the MassGRAD Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group to share promising practices

Example: One grantee developed an “Alternative Pathways to a Diploma” Program involving an alternative education “school-within-a-school;” adult advocates/coaches; dual enrollment opportunities at a local community college; online credit recovery; opportunities for independent study, internships and work-based learning experiences. Their grant funding also supports the GPS Program (Graduation, Promotion, Success), which uses a system “navigator” to assist in matching at-risk students to appropriate supports and interventions and designing individual plans for success.

- Funding will also support the development of new Gateway to College sites

NGA’s State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All Grant (2010-2011)

Key Activities Related to Multiple Pathway Development:

- Segmentation Study Analysis for five districts through the Everyone Graduates Center (EGC); The grant also funded technical assistance to districts to assist with pathway development. CommCorp provide technical assistance and additional financial support.
- Launch of “Virtual Online Toolshed for Dropout Reduction and Multiple Pathway Development”

Other Related Investments:

Increased state funding for YouthBuild, Summer Jobs, Connecting Activities proposed in Governor’s FY13 budget proposal

Challenges & Opportunities

Integrating Various Programs and Initiatives; Funding; Keeping Momentum; Building and Sustaining Capacity; Flexibility/Ability to “be nimble”; Sustainability

About the Executive Office of Education (EOE)

Led by Secretary Paul Reville, EOE’s role is to integrate the work of the Departments of Early Education & Care, Elementary & Secondary Education, Higher Education and the University of Massachusetts to create a seamless, comprehensive, integrated system of education, from Pre-Kindergarten through post-secondary education.