

The Massachusetts College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan: “Where we want to go and what we think will get us there”

Delivery Plan Overview, Definition, Goal, and Targets

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) recently prioritized a number of goals as critical efforts for the Department to undertake as part of Race to the Top (RTTT) and other state reform and strategy efforts. As a result, the Department created a new office – the Office of College and Career Readiness – and developed a strategy to increase *College and Career Readiness* among Massachusetts students. This strategy continues to promote the current high school graduation requirements (i.e., earning a Competency Determination and meeting local requirements), while providing additional opportunities for students to participate in: quality, upper level high school coursework; approaches to assist them with the completion of high school; and supports to assist with the transition to higher education and the workforce.

Massachusetts definition of college and career readiness

Being *College and Career Ready* means that an individual has the knowledge and skills necessary for success in postsecondary education and economically viable career pathways in a 21st century economy.

Massachusetts goal

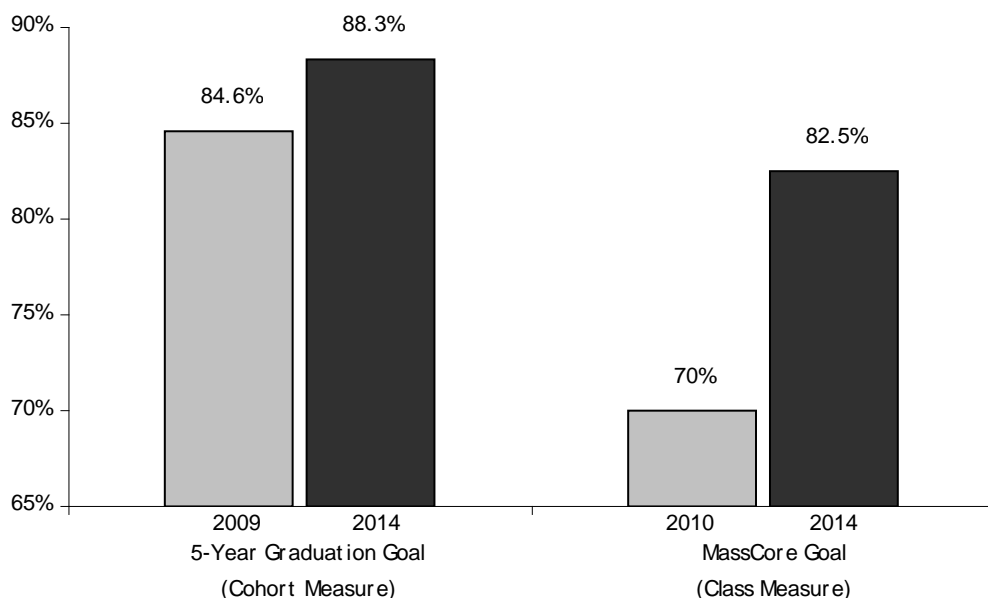
The state goal is to prepare students to succeed in entry level college credit-bearing courses and for entry level jobs with career opportunities.

State 2014 Targets

There are two main parts to the College and Career Readiness Target:

1. *Increase the Graduation Rate* – Increase the number of students who graduate from high school within five years (five year cohort rate) to 88.3 percent by 2014.
2. *Increase the MassCore Completion Rate* – Increase the number of students completing the rigorous MassCore program of study to 82.5 percent by 2014.

Current Status and Targets for 5-Year Graduation Rate and MassCore Completion Rate



Why were these targets selected?

The *five-year graduation rate target* is used to recognize the importance of earning a high school diploma as the first step on the ladder towards success in post-secondary education and in a career. The five-year cohort graduation rate (rather than four-year rate) is included as the target measure to increase innovative support and programmatic opportunities for student success throughout high school. This is particularly critical for those students for whom it may take a longer period of time to graduate, such as English language learners and recovered dropouts. The five-year graduation rate target emphasizes the overall importance of earning a high school diploma, rather than only earning a diploma within the traditional four-year timeframe.

The *MassCore target* is used to measure the value of completing a rigorous high school course of study in preparation for college and career. Taking a rigorous, well-rounded course of study is among our state's strongest policies to ensure that a student is prepared for future education and training. One of the specific goals of MassCore is to reduce the percentage of students who are required to take remedial, non-credit developmental courses in college.

In the spirit of continually increasing our awareness of what it means to be ready for college and career, one of the developmental projects of the Department included in this *College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan* is to identify a more comprehensive measure of what college and career readiness entails for a well-rounded and well-prepared student. In addition to the forthcoming implementation of the Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC), many existing measures, as well as newly developed ones, may be used to develop this more direct measure.

Targets for closing achievement gaps

The Department will measure our success based on the overall gains made in these two outcome measures. While progress in the aggregate is central to our effort, we will also pay close attention to the individual subgroups that make up these outcome measures. After all, those students who aren't graduating within five years and aren't completing MassCore are disproportionately found in low income, special education, limited English proficient and racial/ethnic minority groups. We are mindful of closing the achievement gap on these measures by focusing resources and our priority projects specifically on students in these groups. We have projected that, through our combined efforts on these projects, we will see the following improvement by 2014 (note the percentage changes for subgroups compared to the percentage changes in the aggregate):

5-year Cohort Graduation Rate

| Subgroup | 2009 | | 2014 | | Percentage Point Difference | Percent Change |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | | |
| Limited English Proficient | 3,124 | 63.3% | 3,475 | 71.4% | 8.1% | 11.3% |
| Hispanic | 6,679 | 64.6% | 7,390 | 72.5% | 7.8% | 10.6% |
| Student with Disability | 10,288 | 69.3% | 11,173 | 76.3% | 7.0% | 8.6% |
| Low-Income | 21,026 | 71.3% | 22,668 | 77.9% | 6.6% | 7.8% |
| Black/African American | 5,093 | 73.7% | 5,445 | 79.9% | 6.2% | 6.9% |
| Male | 32,187 | 81.7% | 33,585 | 86.4% | 4.7% | 4.3% |
| Overall | 64,737 | 84.0% | 55,242 | 88.3% | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| Female | 32,550 | 86.4% | 33,542 | 90.3% | 3.8% | 3.0% |
| White | 48,632 | 88.7% | 49,836 | 92.1% | 3.4% | 2.5% |
| Asian | 3,217 | 89.1% | 3,294 | 92.4% | 3.4% | 2.4% |

Percentage of Graduates Completing MassCore

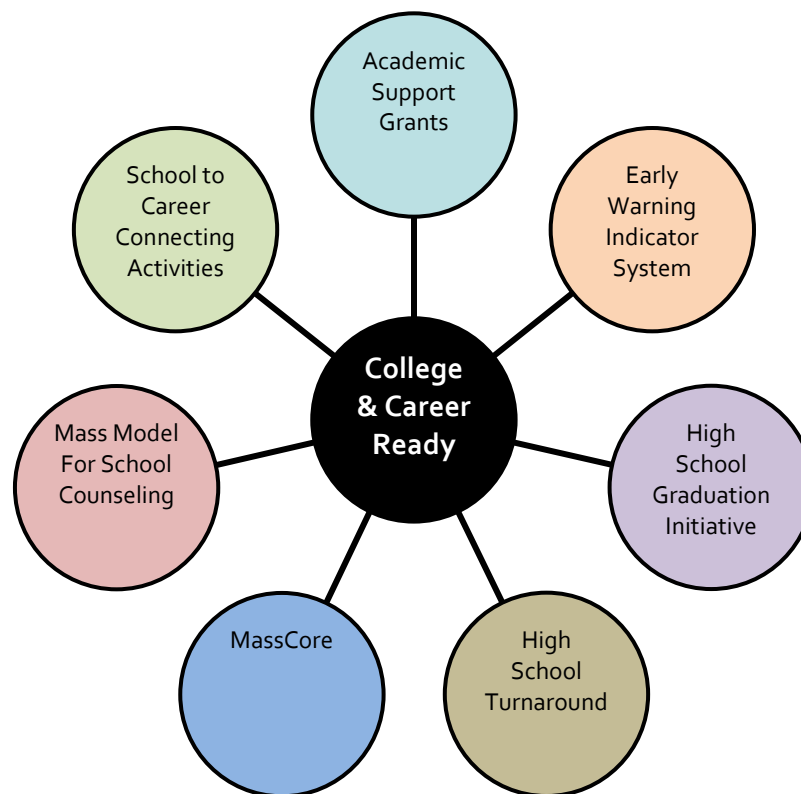
| Subgroup | 2010 | | 2014 | | Percentage Point Difference | Percent Change |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | | |
| Limited English Proficient | 384 | 29.7% | 913 | 66.5% | 36.8% | 137.8% |
| Black/African American | 2,291 | 46.8% | 3,811 | 73.2% | 26.5% | 66.3% |
| Hispanic | 3,536 | 53.5% | 5,323 | 75.9% | 22.4% | 50.5% |
| Low-Income | 8,950 | 55.2% | 13,185 | 76.6% | 21.4% | 47.3% |
| Students with Disability | 4,175 | 60.4% | 5,767 | 78.6% | 18.2% | 38.1% |
| Male | 21,492 | 69.1% | 27,097 | 82.0% | 12.9% | 26.1% |
| Overall | 44,311 | 70.3% | 55,242 | 82.5% | 12.2% | 24.7% |
| Asian | 2,260 | 70.9% | 2,801 | 82.7% | 11.8% | 23.9% |
| Female | 22,819 | 71.4% | 28,145 | 82.9% | 11.5% | 23.3% |
| White | 35,395 | 75.0% | 42,264 | 84.3% | 9.3% | 19.4% |

Key Projects to Move the College and Career Readiness Needle

Seven key priority projects

Many projects managed by the Department will have an effect on the preliminary College and Career Readiness target described above. The projects identified as priorities for reaching the target, which are included in the diagram below, were selected due to their potential for: 1) substantially affecting the target in the near future; and 2) supporting broader systemic impacts on a more direct indicator of college and career readiness which will be developed in the future. In fact, many projects on the elementary and middle school levels not listed here are more likely to have a substantial impact on college and career readiness in the long term, such as: implementation of the new MA Curriculum Frameworks, incorporating the Common Core State Standards, ESE/EEC literacy initiatives, and the pre-AP training initiative.

Seven Key Projects for Meeting College and Career Readiness Targets by 2014



Overarching themes among the key projects

The themes below will be incorporated across the implementation of the key projects. These themes emerged in both Department staff discussions, as well as in feedback received from external stakeholders:

- Increase the focus on students earlier in the pipeline – The College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan will not be focused solely on grades 9-12. More attention will be given to transition from grade 8 to grade 9 and the impact of earlier grades on high school outcomes.
- Engage students in creative, high-quality pathways to meet graduation requirements – Students need to be engaged or they will not graduate college and career ready. In fact, disengaged students are the ones most likely to drop out. Work-based learning, community service-learning, and student participation in other community-based or project-based educational experiences are important to ensure that students remain engaged through graduation.
- Resources are necessary for high-quality, creative implementation across the state – Resources including funding, technical assistance, and sharing of good practice are needed to meet the targets of the overall Delivery Plan and the objectives of the individual priority initiatives. These resources are especially important for the implementation of innovative programming and services to reach the hardest-to-serve students. In particular, the Department will increase sharing of promising practices, including innovative practices that give “permission” to districts and schools to try new, high-quality ideas.
- Rely on the expertise and services of external partners – External public and private partners at both the state and local levels are important for successful implementation of each of the priority initiatives, and the use of partners will be promoted and supported.

Details on the Department's seven key projects

The following pages provide brief overviews of each of the seven key projects to increase college and career readiness. More information about each project is provided on the Department's website, as noted for each project area.

Academic Support – Academic Support provides academic support and remediation services to secondary school students scoring in warning/failing and needs improvement on the mathematics, English language arts (ELA) and science/technology and engineering (STE) MCAS. In fiscal year 2011, line item 7061-9404 provided nearly \$9.3 million for services to be delivered through the five allocation and competitive MCAS Academic Support programs, serving school districts, community colleges, work and learning programs, and one-stop career centers. To further leverage this existing line item, the Department plans to:

- Enhance services for 8th and 9th grade students based on early warning indicators, the growth model and previous MCAS scores with a goal of proficiency in these subject areas
- Enhance services for 11th and 12th graders as well as for students who have yet to meet their Competency Determination (CD) but are not in school with a goal of increasing the five year graduation rate particularly in STE
- Allow competitive community college and work and learning grantees to serve students as young as the 9th grade (involves change to current budget language) with a goal of academic proficiency
- Focus technical assistance efforts and attention on level 3 and 4 schools (differing applications and accountability measures)
- Serve students in the classes of 2003-2016 who have yet to meet their competency determination and/or scoring below proficiency on the STE, mathematics and ELA MCAS on the 7th, 8th and 10th grade levels
- Provide additional academic support and wraparound services for students who have yet to meet their CD using more detailed academic data (growth model, Early Warning Indicator, etc) to target services.

More information about Academic Support is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/as/>

Early Warning Indicator System – The Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) is a data-driven system to identify students K-12 that are potentially “off-track” for grade-level or developmental age, including those students that are off-track for high school graduation (potential dropouts). This project is funded through the federal Longitudinal Data System Grant Program (LDS-2).

The EWIS is expected to impact all school districts, and all grade levels (K-12). The EWIS will build-off of the current, internally developed EWII that is based on middle school data and is made available to districts at a single point in time. The Department hired an outside expert in the field of early indicators, American Institutes for Research, to review the current system and propose a methodology to incorporate data from EEC and ESE (across all grade levels). The new system will provide student-level data to schools and districts for students in grades K-12, and indicate students’ risk level for becoming “off track” for developmental age or grade level. The new system will also provide the data in a friendlier technical format.

More information about the EWIS is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/reduction.html>

High School Graduation Initiative (MassGrad) – The High School Graduation Initiative (MassGrad) is a new federal project that will support several new and expanded programs to decrease the Massachusetts statewide dropout rate. The 133 high schools (76 districts) that exceeded our statewide dropout rate average in 2008-09 are the target for the project. These high schools enroll over 100,000 students and have an aggregate dropout rate of 6.2 percent (6,234 students).

The identified high schools and school districts are eligible to participate in new networking, technical assistance, training, and competitive grant opportunities. ESE expects to receive \$15 million over the next five years (\$3 million a year starting with the 2010-11 school year) to support four key activity areas:

- Key Activity 1: Creation of a State High School Graduation Coalition
- Key Activity 2: Expansion of the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group
- Key Activity 3: Implementation of Research-Based Practices in the MassGrad School Cohort through competitive award opportunities
- Key Activity 4: Establishment of Three New Gateway to College Sites

More information about MassGrad is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/reduction.html>

High School Turnaround –Through a combination of a federal funds available through Title I Section 1003(g) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), grant funding is available to eligible Massachusetts schools to engage in school turnaround work, redesigning the way their schools operate by implementing one of four federally defined school intervention models—Turnaround, Transformation, Restart, or Closure. There are four level-4 high schools and 65 level-3 high schools. All eligible high schools have less than a 60 percent four-year cohort graduation rate.

In addition to the turnaround grants available through this large federal grant program, the Department is considering the creation of specific supports for school improvement efforts among alternative education schools and programs.

More information about school turnaround is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/turnaround/>

MassCore Policy and Implementation – MassCore is the Board of Education’s recommended program of high school studies, which includes four years of English and mathematics (including Algebra II), three years of history and social science, three years of lab sciences, two years of foreign language, a year of the arts, and physical education. It also encourages students to take electives, including Advanced Placement (AP), a capstone senior project; dual enrollment: courses taken for both high school and college credit; online course for high school or college credit; service learning; and work-based learning. Core courses and electives should total a minimum of 22 units.

169 districts listed MassCore as a Race to the Top (RTTT) priority. Those districts have identified \$1.07 million of RTTT local funds for MassCore for year 1 of RTTT funding. Implementation support for districts will take the form of allowing districts to use local RTTT funds to expand sections of existing courses and create new courses so that all students will have access to the courses they will need to complete MassCore. Additionally, the Department will:

- Develop policy options for Board of Education to consider adopting that will incentivize students to complete MassCore, including supporting the Board of Higher Education in adopting course requirements for college-entry that will encourage students to complete MassCore
- Develop model high school course syllabi, based on the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Disseminate information relating to best practices
- Work internally with licensure, technology and curriculum and instruction units to enhance student access to rigorous coursework
- Improve data collection and analysis of MassCore

— More information about MassCore is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/masscore/>

Mass School Counseling Model – The Mass Model is a collaborative leadership model whereby Guidance is charged with spearheading systemic school change to help raise student achievement in the academic/technical, workplace readiness, and personal/social domains. Forty-five districts signed on to participate in RTTT under *College and Career Readiness* representing 90,506 students in Grades 8 -12. Districts identified \$113,443 of local RTTT funds in the first year to support this effort. Local efforts will help to:

- Enhance and coordinate services for 8th and 9th grade students as they transition into high school based on early warning indicators, the growth model and previous MCAS scores with a goal of proficiency in the academic/technical, workplace readiness and person/social domains
- Focus targeted efforts on developing college and career plans for all incoming 9th graders and tracking every student’s progress while making data driven adjustments to insure student success over their high school experience
- Coordinate academic support services for students in Grades 9-12 who have yet to meet their CD by leveraging allocation and competitive academic grants designed to meet the specific needs of at-risk populations
- Ensure all students are “on track” to graduate high school college and career ready by completing MassCore, taking all appropriate coursework and participating in experiential learning opportunities to support their success in postsecondary education, training and career pathway opportunities

More information about Mass Model is available at: masca.org

School to Career Connecting Activities – Connecting Activities provides quality work-based learning experiences that are connected to classroom teaching and learning for high school students participating in school-to-career initiatives across the Commonwealth. Priority is given to students who are most at risk of dropping out or who are academically at-risk and in danger of not acquiring their Competency Determination. The primary goal of Connection Activities is to design and implement brokered “work and learning” experiences both school year and summer to support career development and academic achievement. Employer connections are brokered by the 16 regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) working in partnership with districts/schools and School to Career/Connecting Activities networks.

Under the umbrella of the Delivery Plan, Connecting Activities will be enhanced to:

- Provide a scope and sequence of career development and work-based learning experiences in participating schools for grades 9 to 12
- Target career development/work-based learning experiences to students who have identified these activities as goals in a College and Career Plan (CCP) and/or Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP)
- Work more closely with school guidance programs to identify a options designed to connect career development/work-based learning experiences with school success, so that these experiences as part of interventions for students who are most at-risk

More information about Connecting Activities is available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/connect/>

Additional projects that support college and career readiness

The following are additional current and planned projects that will help drive both the overall Delivery Plan goal and targets, as well as benefit the seven priority projects included in this Delivery Plan.

- Pre-AP professional development
- STEM-focused Early College High Schools
- Online Courses and Modules for At-Risk Students
- Certificate of Occupational Proficiency
- YourPlanforCollege.org: Get Ready for Life After High School
- Competency Determination Requirement (ELA, Math, STE) and changes to Koplik and/or Adams policy
- Educational Proficiency Plans
- State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All (NGA) – dropout reduction policy initiative
- Alternative Education state grants
- Early College Designs Policy Initiative with Jobs for the Future
- Forums and research briefs in partnership with the Rennie Center for Education Policy and Research
- Innovation school development
- Charter school development
- Enhancing STEM instruction at high-need middle schools (Green in the Middle)

Massachusetts College and Career Readiness: How do your efforts align?

The following guiding questions provide a starting place to consider how school, district, community, regional, and other state efforts align with the Department's Delivery Plan. In order to reach our state's 2014 targets for college and career readiness, initiatives throughout the "delivery chain" must be in place.

1. Is your school/district/community/organization involved with any of the seven key projects included in the Department's College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan? If yes...
 - Which one(s)?
 - What is the scope of the project(s)?
 - Is the project(s) being leveraged to their maximum capacity? If not, how could the project(s) be further leveraged or aligned towards increasing college and career readiness?

2. Is your school/district/community/organization involved with any of the "additional" projects identified to support college and career readiness? If yes...
 - Which one(s)?
 - What is the scope of the project(s)?
 - Is the project(s) being leveraged to their maximum capacity? If not, how could the project(s) be further leveraged or aligned towards increasing college and career readiness?

3. What additional projects does your school/district/community/organization have to help move the needle towards meeting our state’s college and career readiness targets (increasing 5-year graduation rate and increasing the MassCore completion rate)? How do these projects align with the projects identified in this Delivery Plan?

4. What indicators do you monitor to hold your school/district/community/organization accountable for increasing college and career readiness?