



# Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

## School-to-College Database and Reports

### Background

In 2005, Massachusetts was one of ten states selected to receive a National Governors Association (NGA) Honor States Grant to increase high school graduation rates and improve college readiness.

As part of this initiative and with additional funding from the Nellie Mae Foundation, the MA Board of Higher Education (BHE) and MA Dept of Education (DOE) worked together to build a data management system to allow the Commonwealth to track the performance of public school students who enroll in Massachusetts public post-secondary institutions.

This streamlined and novel approach to education data systems will enable the Commonwealth to measure the progress of Massachusetts students and the effectiveness of education policies. The data will also be used specifically to promote access to higher education by providing schools, school districts and policymakers detailed and up-to-date feedback on the enrollment and progress of graduates as they move through postsecondary education.

### Details

The main purpose of the *School-to-College Database* is to assess the variables that influence student progress toward earning a postsecondary degree. The data is the result of merging two public education data systems – the DOE public K12 system (SIMS) and the BHE public higher education system (HEIRS).

The *School-to-College Reports* will be drawn from the database and will serve as a tool to evaluate high school graduates' college-readiness. An overall state report will be produced, as well as individual reports for each high school in the Commonwealth that enrolls ten or more students in Massachusetts post-secondary education institutions, detailing their graduates' performance within the system of public higher education. The Reports will include data on the following:

- Enrollment
- Enrollment in developmental coursework<sup>1</sup>
- First-to-second year persistence rates<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Development coursework prepares students for college-level work and does not count towards degree completion.

- Post-secondary institutions where graduates attend
- College GPA and credits earned

Data will be broken down by race/ethnicity, gender, students' performance on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Exam (MCAS) and other variables, such as low income status.

### Next Steps

During the winter of 2008, the BHE/DOE team will generate the state report and the individualized reports for public high schools. The state report will be posted on both the DOE and the BHE websites in January 2008. The individualized reports will be delivered via a secure portal from the DOE in February 2008, and will later be publicly posted on the DOE website.

Based on the data from the reports and on school interest, a subset of high schools will be selected for a pilot program focused on higher education planning in the spring of 2008. The team will work with the selected high schools to assist in using the data provided as a basis for developing work plans for enhancing college-readiness.

In the coming years, the team plans to enhance the *School-to-College Database* by including a more extensive set of college-readiness variables and expanding the tracking system to include student data prior to high school enrollment. In the near future, the *School-to-College Reports* will include information on student majors, college graduation rates, Mass CORE completion rates and trends over time. The BHE recently began to work with the Department of Revenue to establish possible avenues for integrating employment data into the shared database with the hopes of creating a school-to-college-to-career tracking system.

The work of the BHE/DOE team will have a significant influence on the quality of preparation for Massachusetts' students as they enter college and the workforce. This team has been regarded nationally as a role model for the coordination of interagency data sharing, reporting and assessment efforts.

<sup>2</sup> Persistence is the rate of students who enroll in a post-secondary institution in the fall and returned the following fall for a second year.