# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | April 19, 2024 |
| **Subject:** | Early College Update |

**Introduction**

The Early College initiative is a key lever in advancing the [educational vision](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/) of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Through the Early College Joint Committee, our Board and DESE work with the Board and Department of Higher Education and the Executive Office of Education to connect districts, high schools, and colleges in partnerships that give thousands of Massachusetts students pathways to college completion and career success. At the April 30 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting, we will present an update on Early College.

**Early College Program Update**

The number of designated Early College programs continues to grow across the state, positively impacting a growing number of secondary students. In school year 2023-2024, there are 50 designated Early College programs comprised of 27 higher education partners and 58 high schools. These designated programs currently serve 8,241 students in grades 9-12. On March 20, 2024, the Early College Joint Committee approved three new programs for designation to be launched in fall 2024. The programs that were approved for new designations are:

* East Boston High School (Boston Public Schools) and Fisher College
* Southbridge High School (Southbridge Public Schools) and Quinsigamond Community College
* Taunton High School (Taunton Public Schools) and Bristol Community College

In total, these three new programs will enroll a projected additional 800 students statewide by school year 2028-2029.

**Early College Grant Update**

Through the Office of Early College, DESE awards grant funding to currently designated partners and to those working on their designation application. The grant offerings include:

* **Fund Code 460: Early College Support Grant**. The purpose of this targeted grant is to provide resources to support designated Early College programs seeking to continue to reimagine the high school experience so that all students are engaged and prepared for post-secondary success. The resources allocated are intended to support the designated secondary school and institute of higher education partners in developing and sustaining their Early College work. These resources are intended to support partners’ work during school year 2024-2025. The total allocation received by grantees for this grant was $4,822,298 and all 50 designated programs were awarded this grant.
* **Fund Code 461: Early College Planning Grant**. This competitive grant targets high schools and institutions of higher education that seek to reimagine the high school experience so that all students are engaged and prepared for post-secondary success by applying for an early college designation. The grant was posted with a total allocation of $2,100,000 and applicants could select from four funding options. A total of 17 applicants were awarded funding.
* **Fund Code 470**: **Early College Capacity Grant.** This competitive grant targets high schools and institutions of higher education that are seeking to expand staff to promote access to Early College and recruitment, and/or to provide professional development to strengthen the institution’s capacity to deliver high-quality designated Early College programs. The grant was initially posted with a total allocation of $800,000 and was subsequently increased to $1,528,885. A total of 18 applicants were awarded funding.

**Other Program Updates**

* The Office of Early College, in partnership with the E2C Data Hub, recently released a public [dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiYzE2NzI3ODAtNjUyZS00MWVmLTkwNzYtMTRjOTQ1NTk3Y2IxIiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9) that includes participation and credit information for all designated Early College programs. Version 2.0, which includes outcome indicators, will be released later this spring.
* The Office of Early College hosted two statewide convenings this school year including one for students and one for designated program leaders.

At the April 30 meeting, Executive Director of Early College, Phylitia Jamerson; Senior Director of Early College Policy and Planning, Dr. Kristin Hunt; and Director of Early College Programs, Danielle Wheeler will present the Early College update to the Board and invite discussion, questions, and feedback.