



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906  
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Commissioner Mitchell Chester  
**From:** Delivery Unit  
**Date:** June 6, 2013  
**Subject:** Bimonthly Memo for Success After High School Agency Goal



### FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE ACTION/ATTENTION

For your attention: ESE recently released the **Integrating College and Career Readiness Demonstration Initiative Grant RFP** (Fund Code: 105). This is a new competitive grant program designed to provide start-up support to districts to create a comprehensive approach to college and career readiness through the creation and integration of activities that mutually support both academic and workplace readiness goals. The program offers two years of funding, with up to a year to create a plan, and then an implementation phase upon completion of the plan so that participating districts can launch their plans. The awardees will serve as demonstration sites. The funds were privately raised by Gerald Chertavian for a total of \$250,000. Each of the five grant recipients will receive ~\$50,000. Applications are due on Friday, June 28th.

### OVERALL LIKELIHOOD OF DELIVERY

#### Last 4 ratings

● ● ● ●	At Risk	MassCore Policy & Implementation	Need aggressive communication and marketing
● ● ● ●	Likely	Academic Support	Changes to grant language and summer '13 increases
● ● ● ●	Likely	MA School Counseling Model	Setting measurable goals
● ● ● ●	Highly Likely	Connecting Activities	Promoted ICCR agenda
● ● ● ●	Highly Likely	MassGrad	Sharing promising practices in Malden
● ● ● ●	Highly Likely	Early Warning Indicator System	Revising risk model and promoting use

### STATUS OF 2014 PRIORITY PROJECTS

#### **MassCore ● At Risk: Need aggressive communication and marketing**

In the previous iteration of the *Success after High School* delivery plan, the MassCore policy and implementation project relied heavily on changing the policy to a default course of study for high school students. The team revised the MassCore activities and timelines based on the decision to postpone changing the policy until a further date. The revisions categorize activities into two major buckets; providing more individual and group technical assistance and guidance to the current MassCore framework and expanded the framework to include more career development activities, per the Integration of College and Career Readiness recommendations. Although we documented new activities, we are still unsure of how much impact this will have on the MassCore completion rate. A strong agency communication and marketing campaign and a heightened sense of internal urgency for such a campaign (beyond the CCR unit) are needed in order to increase the MassCore completion rate.

Proposed MassCore Framework Implementation Strategy	Inclusion of Career Development Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Host webinars about implementation of MassCore</li> <li>★ Host regional meetings about implementation of MassCore</li> <li>★ Provide individual TA to districts and schools</li> <li>★ Build a communication campaign both internally and externally about the importance of MassCore</li> <li>★ Integrate MassCore into other ESE initiatives</li> <li>★ Emphasize data collection and reporting through Edwin reports, DART, and SCS</li> <li>★ Inventory district graduation requirements</li> <li>★ Identify on-track indicators for MassCore completion (e.g. using SCS to track course taking patterns)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Present “expanded” MassCore framework to BESE</li> <li>★ Develop definitions and examples of career awareness, exploration, and immersion activities</li> <li>★ Develop guidance for incorporating career development activities into school curricula</li> <li>★ Explore using SCS codes in tracking career development activity completion</li> <li>★ Disseminate Career Development Activity survey to high school principals and guidance counselors</li> <li>★ Share best practices/case studies of those schools that implement career development education</li> </ul>

*Next Steps: Based on the revised activities, update the MassCore completion delivery target and present at next Stocktake meeting.*

#### **Academic Support ● Likely: Changes to grant language and summer 2013 increases**

The Academic Support RFPs were updated to include language on ESE priorities, and where applicable, District Standards and Indicators and the Conditions for School Effectiveness. The new language encourages districts to incorporate academic support programming into whole school/district planning, rather than a one-off intervention. In addition, ESE is redistributing unclaimed FY13 Academic Support allocation funds to grantees (\$1,500-\$4,500), to be used for new or increased summer 2013 Academic Support grants. At this time, ESE reports 71 summer increases for a total of \$292,145. Programs may use the funds to create, increase, or enhance services. One of the priorities of these supplemental funds is to use the new EWIS to create a framework for planning and identifying future effective academic support programming. All Academic Support RFPs should be released in the next two weeks for school year 2013–14. Competitive grant recommendations will be ready for your approval in mid-July.

*Next Steps: Host webinar to update districts about the new RFP language and department priorities.*

#### **MA School Counseling Model ● Likely: Setting measurable goals**

The Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA) hosted a three-day April convening aimed at improving the use of school counselors through partnerships. The presenters and presentations covered a wide variety of topics, some of which included contemporary issues in urban counseling, developing emotional literacy skills, and positive behavior interventions and support. Race to the Top Project 4C was the focus on the third day of the convening. Counselors reviewed the Edwin Postsecondary Readiness and Success and the EWIS reports with CCR staff and were encouraged to use those data points to set measurable goals for their work with students. The counselor goals vary from school to school, but tend to focus on trends in graduation and MassCore completion rates. Districts and schools also look at more leading indicators of these outcomes, such as attendance rates. ESE encourages school counselors to become leaders in their schools around data-based decision-making and to create synergy between the qualitative information they gather from everyday interactions with students and the more quantitative data available from ESE and other sources.

*Next Steps: Districts engaged in RTTT Project 4C are submitting Year 4 RTTT goals for review and feedback. ESE continues to work with a MASCA professional development liaison to encourage counselors to work in a systemic and data driven fashion to increase the counselor role in school leadership to drive student performance.*

#### **Connecting Activities ● Highly Likely: Promoted Integration of College and Career Readiness agenda**

The Future Ready Summit was an event to promote awareness and understanding of what it takes for all students, both youth and adult learners, to be college and career ready. The goals of the summit were to bring multiple stakeholders together to discuss strategies to build a statewide system of structured, aligned, and strategic partnerships to support students’ transitions, provide influential adults with the tools and resources that will support all students as they prepare for a 21st century economy, and showcase replicable practices that are moving the college and career ready agenda forward. Of the 500 participants at the event, over 100 were part of the Connecting Activities network of school staff, workforce development professionals, and staff from CBOs. They took a close look at the new guide and glossary being created by ESE for Career Development Education, both to offer insights about its accuracy and sufficiency, as well as to consider its applicability to their work. They also learned about the new metrics that have been selected by ESE to measure the impact of the ICCR recommendations.

*Next Steps: All Connecting Activities grantees are being asked to approach their goal-setting for the next fiscal year more*

*strategically and with greater accountability, setting SMART goals that they then monitor as they file required quarterly reports. The metrics that are sought from grantees are aligned with ESE trajectories, and will support ESE efforts to increase the extent of students' career readiness across the state.*

**High School Graduation Initiative (MassGrad) ● Highly Likely: Sharing promising practices in Malden**

The team recently shared promising practices coming from Malden in both the MassGrad Minute (monthly email newsletter) and at an open-house event available to all districts. Malden has made sustained progress over the last five years in decreasing its high school dropout rate and increasing its graduation rate (see the addendum below for a brief snapshot). The final convenings and trainings for MassGrad this school year ended with the open house in Malden; an awardee gathering where districts shared their practices through a facilitated process; and a Dropout Prevention & Recovery Work Group webinar that showcased innovative practices for improving graduation rates in three student subgroups: special education students, expectant and parenting teens, and homeless and unaccompanied youth. The College and Career Readiness Unit is working with the Office of District and School Turnaround and the Office of Regional Systems of Support to better coordinate their efforts with level 3 and 4 high schools, including a potential pilot focusing on New Bedford High School and coordination between the Dropout Prevention & Recovery Work Group and other high school support networks.

*Next Steps: Continue coordination efforts with other ESE offices, develop the training and professional development calendar for the 2013-14 school year, and invite non-participating districts to participate in opportunities next school year.*

**Early Warning Indicator System ● Highly Likely: Revising risk model and promoting use**

The team is proving that this project goes far beyond the development of an early warning system. Since the release of the new EWIS, ESE published Edwin Analytic reports featuring EWIS data; conducted group and individual technical assistance on interpreting data; presented at various events, including the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group, the Mass School Counselors Association, and the House and Senate Ways and Means; created the model technical documentation; recorded tutorials; engaged in the Data Quality Campaign; started to develop case studies of EWIS implementation; and began the EWIS Implementation Pilot project with American Institutes for Research (AIR). In the upcoming months, the team plans to refine the risk models, update the FAQ document, record additional tutorials, increase collaboration with other ESE units (e.g. MTSS), and present at various events, including the 21st Century Community Learning Center programs and the Education Commission of the States summer conference. The download rate of the EWIS report in Edwin Analytics was over 7,000 through the end of April. ESE also received some anecdotal feedback on positive ways districts are beginning to use the data. Districts are looking at EWIS with other sources of locally-maintained data (e.g. ongoing attendance, course grades) and are beginning to target and match students to interventions.

*Next Steps: Continue to meet with internal subgroups on risk model improvements and promoting EWIS use. Select districts for the Implementation Pilot project and develop guides and tools for this pilot.*

## **Addendum A: Breakdown of Academic Support Allocation and Competitive Grants**

- ★ 632/625: Academic Support Programs for Districts & Approved Private Special Education Schools/Collaboratives
- ★ 598/593: Academic Support & College Transition Services
- ★ 596/597: Work & Learning Programs
- ★ 619/592: Collaborative Partnerships for Student Success (CPSS)
- ★ 627/626: Pathways One Stop Career Center Initiative

## **Addendum B: Highlighting Progress in Malden Public Schools and their Participation in the MassGrad Initiative**

Malden Public Schools is an active participant in the MassGrad initiative. Malden is a recipient of two MassGrad awards: the Implementation Award and the Coalition Challenge Award, and is also an active participant in the Dropout Prevention & Recovery Work Group opportunities open to all districts. Malden is working towards a comprehensive approach that relies on a team of staff (principals, guidance counselors, and community partners) all working together towards the same goal. Major promising practices include focusing on identifying students that are most likely to fail a class, not be promoted, and/or drop out of school; building a district and school culture that makes the focus on improving graduation rates a priority; and providing a range of programming to provide supports to students with differing needs (e.g. summer programming, mentoring programs, alternative programs offering internships, online classes, and behavior supports).

