



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Members of the Board of Higher Education

From: Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Noe Ortega, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education

Date: June 18, 2024

Subject: Expanded Access to High Quality Designated Early College Programming

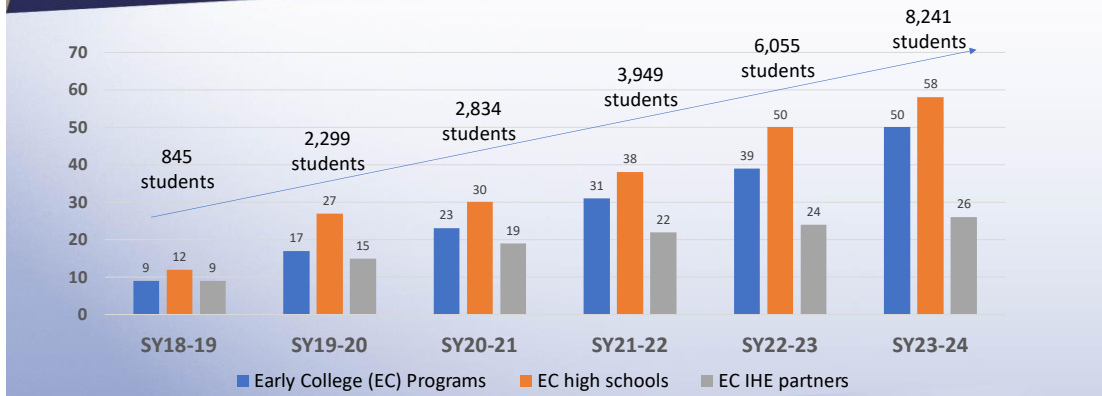
Introduction

Through the Early College Joint Committee (ECJC), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) work with the Board of Higher Education and Department of Higher Education (DHE) 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 June 20th joint meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education, we will present the Early College initiative draft goals, set forth below, and timeline and deliverables for SY24-25 (Appendix A). This information is intended to serve as the preliminary framework that will guide the Commissioners' and ECJC's work to develop a five- to ten-year strategic plan.

Early College Draft Goals

The Office of Early College at DESE, in partnership with DHE and the Executive Office of Education, is committed to the growth and development of high quality designated Early College programming across the Commonwealth. By December 2024, this group will present to ECJC a draft five- to ten-year strategic plan that focuses on the growth of Early College. At the core of the strategic plan will be the identification of both quantitative and qualitative goals. The strategic planning working group has already begun developing the goals, including a review of the historical growth of Early College to date as well as potential growth models.

Early College Program Growth Over Time



Potential Growth Models – Student Enrollment



Draft Goals

By 2030, the Office of Early College in partnership with the Department of Higher Education will work in tandem to fully develop and implement the following goals:

- At least 25,000 high school students will be enrolled in a designated Early College program
- At least 150 high schools (about 1 out of 3 high schools) will have a designated Early College program including:
 - All 26 Gateway Cities and Boston will have one or more designated Early College programs
 - A minimum of X% of high schools with at least 60% or more of historically underserved students will have a designated Early College program
 - A minimum of X% of high schools that graduate fewer than 100 seniors annually will have a designated Early College program

- All public community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses will have one or more designated Early College partnerships
- All high schools with designated Early College programs will implement college and career tools like My Career and Academic Plan (MyCap) for their Early College students
- At least X% of Early College program participants graduating from high school will have completed 12 or more transferable college credits
- All Early College program participants graduating from high school will complete the FAFSA form prior to high school graduation
- At least X% of Early College program participants graduating from high school will matriculate directly to higher education

Early College Working Groups

The Office of Early College at DESE, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and the Executive Office of Education, has developed working groups in order to develop the strategic plan and expand access to high quality designated Early College programming.

Early College Working Group Structure	
Vision/Goals/Strategic Plan Working Group (Policy Summit Group)	This group is established and in accord with this memorandum has identified a new draft, statewide vision statement for Early College. The next steps for this group will be to develop a five-year plan that describes a strategy to meet the goals of Early College Initiative, including setting a goal for scale (e.g., 5-year targets), identifying key measures (i.e., how vision is measured) and creating a timeline and associated strategic plan to achieve the overall goals.
Designation/Redesignation Working Group	The purpose of this group is to revise current policies and procedures pertaining to both designation of new Early College programs and redesignation of existing programs. This includes solidifying essential core criteria and determining acceptable variations in implementing criteria; determining whether the single Early College designation should be replaced with multiple designations corresponding to a range of models; and creating a redesignation policy and process that also identifies how programs will be evaluated. The working group will provide the ECJC with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated plan for designation • A plan for the redesignation process • A plan to further incentivize designation
Fiscal Policy Working Group	The fiscal policy working group was established in December of 2023. This group reviewed the history of funding for MA Early College, reviewed the recommendations made by EY Parthenon to address current fiscal policy, reviewed fiscal policies followed by other states, and considered potential funding models. The group will continue to work on recommendations addressing reimbursement structure options for institutions of higher education and annual support

	<p>funding for K-12 that offers differentiated funding (e.g., by program size, model characteristics, student/program/district need, alignment with EC goals), and will prepare strategic recommendations to support sustainability of funding the initiative. Included in the work will be reviewing the potential of utilization of per student reimbursement models as well as potential alignment or addition to Chapter 70. The working group will provide the ECJC with a pro-forma five-year budget (FY26-FY30) aligned to the strategic plan including recommended funding sources.</p>
<p>Governance and Staffing Working Group</p>	<p>This working group will work to clarify and codify the roles and responsibilities of various Early College agencies and bodies (EOE, DHE, DESE, the Office of EC at DESE, ECJC) with regard to the key processes/decisions, such as designation and redesignation, designation criteria changes, budget/spending plan, funding principles and amounts, and staffing needs within respective agencies. The working group will provide the ECJC a governance and staffing plan including any updated draft ECJC language that would require BHE and BESE adoption.</p>

At the June 20th joint board meeting, Phylitia Jamerson, Executive Director of Early College, DESE; Dr. Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner, DESE; and Dr. Richard Riccardi, Deputy Commissioner, DHE will present on Early College and invite discussion, questions, and feedback. Staff are recommending that the 2024-2025 Timeline and Deliverables (Appendix A) be used as the preliminary framework to guide the Commissioners' and ECJC's future work in developing the five- to ten-year strategic plan.

Appendix A

2024-2025 Timeline and Deliverables

2024-2025 Timeline and Deliverables				
VISION/GOALS	Recommendation: Develop a proposal for a statewide vision and goals for Early College and an associated 5- to 10-year strategic plan and timeline to meet the vision and goals.			
	Current Status: The Office of Early College (OEC) established a working group (in partnership with EOE and DHE) in order to draft a vision statement and begin goal setting. A draft of the vision statement was presented for feedback at the September 2023 ECJC meeting. A subsequent draft of the vision was presented at the March 2024 ECJC meeting. Additionally, the OEC has drafted impact/scale goals for Early College initiative to begin the feedback process.			
	Ownership: Vision/Goals/Strategic Plan working group			
	By September 2024	By December 2024	By March 2025	By June 2025
	Draft impact/scale goals for EC and measures to assess progress for discussion.	Draft timeline and associated strategic plan to achieve the goals for discussion.		
FUNDING	Recommendation: Develop a set of key funding recommendations for potential FY25 implementation.			
	Current Status: OEC has developed a fiscal analysis report that includes a historical description of EC financing, options for other funding models, and current action steps. The report recommends maintaining the current funding model for now but also suggests further analysis of a strategic trust fund option.			
	Ownership: Fiscal Policy working group			
	By September 2024	By December 2024	By March 2025	By June 2025
		Collection of baseline budget data (including program costs and average distribution of state vs. local funding).	Final draft of recommended funding structure for FY26.	Draft of funding elements and format for budget statement.

		Discussion of potential differentiation of funding.		
GOVERNANCE and STAFFING	Recommendation: Clarify and codify the roles and responsibilities of various Early College agencies and bodies (EOE, DHE, DESE, Office of Early College at DESE, ECJC) with regards to key processes / decisions			
	Current Status: Review and consultation regarding governance.			
	Owner: Governance and Staffing working group (led by EOE)			
	By September 2024	By December 2024	By March 2025	By June 2025
			Overview of current roles and responsibilities and discussion of potential changes.	
DESIGNATION/ REDESIGNATION	Recommendation: Develop a proposal that provides a streamlined designation application process / timeline and finalizes the redesignation process.			
	Current Status: OEC working on potential recommendations for streamlining application process and reviewing criteria. OEC is also currently working with AIR to develop a process for redesignation.			
	Owner: Designation/Redesignation working group			
	By September 2024	By December 2024	By March 2025	By June 2025
			Draft evaluation process to determine redesignation. Discussion of program variations in adherence to the designation criteria (e.g., mode of course delivery, credit accumulation, partnership structure, pathways).	Revised and streamlined designation trajectory and application process.