

# Commissioner's Spotlight

October 1, 2025

# Overview

## A Focus on BHE's Strategic Priorities

- Financial Aid and Student Success:
  - Tuition and Fee Free Programs, SUCCESS, CHEQA
- Economic Mobility
  - New PMRS Indicators will be published this Fall
- Innovation
  - Early college, work-based learning, innovation regulation
- Next Steps
  - Public Good

# DHE Team Members Presenting Today



Michael Dannenberg, J.D.  
Deputy Commissioner for Policy



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Associate Commissioner of Research & Planning

# BHE Strategic Priorities in Service to our Equity Goal

## Equity Goal

To significantly raise the enrollment, attainment and long-term success outcomes among under-represented student populations

## Priorities

1

### **Student Success and Financial Aid:**

Supporting and advancing student access and success through well-designed, sufficiently funded, clear and consistent financial aid and success program funding

2

### **Economic Mobility:**

Increasing the economic mobility benefits of postsecondary participation

3

**Public Good:** Improving alignment between public good outcomes and postsecondary higher education opportunities

4

**Innovation:** Facilitating and fostering high-impact innovation throughout the public higher education system

# Financial Aid & Student Success

# Continuing Tuition & Fee Free Programs

- MA's national ranking on per-student financial aid:
  - 2019: 37th in the Nation at \$429 per FTE
  - 2023: 26th in the Nation at \$835 per FTE
  - 2024: 13th in the Nation at \$1,564 per FTE (does not include MassEducate)
- Overall state financial aid commitment:\*
  - FY23: \$183.9 million
  - FY26: \$394.48 million
- Free tuition and fees for all Pell Grant-eligible students at:
  - All 15 state community colleges, all nine state universities, all four UMass undergraduate campuses
- Free community college regardless of income level
  - 24% community college enrollment increase between fall 2022 and fall 2024

\*These numbers only reflect funding for state financial aid programs. These numbers do not include funding for institutions' allocations, institutional grants, campus infrastructure improvements, and student supports, like the community college and state university SUCCESS programs.

# Continued SUCCESS Funding in FY26

\$28 million in SUCCESS funding for wraparound supports for students, such as mentoring and advising

- \$14 million for community college SUCCESS programming
- \$14 million for state university SUCCESS programming

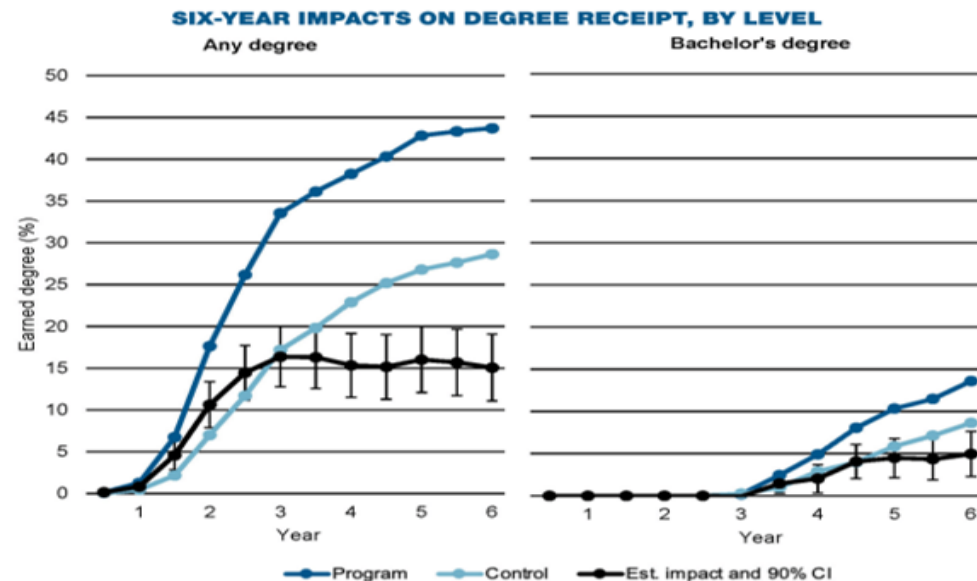
# State University SUCCESS (SU SUCCESS)

## Policy Focused on Two Key Models:

- Georgia State University

	Graduates 2009-2010	Graduates 2019-2020	Numerical Change	Percent Change
Black	1,001	2,199	+1,198	<b>+120%</b>
Pell	1,298	3,554	+2,256	<b>+174%</b>

- City University of New York  
ASAP initiative



SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the National Student Clearinghouse.



# Commission on Higher Education Quality and Affordability (CHEQA)

Work Focused on Three Key Areas

## (1) Financial Aid Expansion

- Main Finding: Unmet Financial Need Beyond Tuition & Fees Reaches Between \$11,000 - \$14,000 Per Year

## (2) Student Success

- Main Finding: Student success programs can boost completion rates by more than 20 percentage points

## (3) Faculty & Staff Recruitment and Retention

- Main Finding: Compensation is Comparable to Peer States, But Lacking When Considering Massachusetts's High Cost of Living

# Economic Mobility

# Guiding Principle of Economic Mobility Priority

Ensuring that Massachusetts public higher education has the highest possible impact on student economic mobility requires establishing measures and harnessing policy and programmatic levers.

# Overview of Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS)

- BHE statutory obligation to “**promote accountability for effective management and stewardship of public funds and to achieve and demonstrate measurable educational outcomes**” ([MGL, Chapter 15a, Section 7a](#)) passed in 1998
- Required key performance metrics measuring affordability, access, success, PK16 alignment, workforce alignment and fiscal efficiency for all state community colleges and state universities
- Current version of the report is available at <https://www.mass.edu/datacenter/pmrs/home.asp> where you can click on each institution and see key indicators, an equity lens, and national comparison

# Key PMRS Indicators and Economic Mobility Measures Being Added this Fall

- First launched in FY2003 since the FY2019 relaunch the PMRS was refined to focus on four areas all framed within an equity lens when applicable
  - Access & Affordability
  - Student Success & Completion
  - Fiscal Stewardship
  - Workforce Alignment
- This fall, Workforce Alignment is rebranding as Economic Mobility
  - Data on post-college earnings for each community college and state university
  - Revised High Demand/High Value Degrees and Certificates Metric aligned with updated Department of Economic Research (DER) methodology

# Innovation

# Guiding Principle of Innovation Priority

*Leveraging innovation to expand opportunity, success and equity*

- **Dedicated Capacity**
- System-Focused
- Enabling Policy and Resources
- **Pilot and Innovation**
- Enhance Impact Through Technology
- **Expert- and Grassroots-Informed**

# Innovation Update

- Early College growth
  - 20 new partnerships launched in recent months, 75 total
  - Almost 10,000 students will be served this academic year
- Work-based learning
  - Discussions have occurred with key stakeholders about co-op programs, apprenticeships, internships, and credentials of value.
- Innovation regulation
  - Engaged in stakeholder vetting over the summer
  - Preparing to bring draft regulation to the BHE at an upcoming meeting (a BHE vote could open the regulation for public comment)



Next Steps

# Next Steps

The DHE in partnership with the DHE and key stakeholders will continue to:

- Develop deliverables pertaining to financial aid, success, and our work pertaining to the public good.
- Adapt its work to the changing social, economic, and political context.
- Advocate for the resources and capacity needed to effectively deliver on the BHE/DHE commitments.

Questions or Comments?