

Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative

A Report to the Legislature: 2019

Prepared by the Department of Higher Education
Carlos Santiago, Commissioner
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Prepared by Leah Igdalsky, Glenn Gabbard, and Mary Price, Department of Higher Education
Carlos Santiago, PhD
Commissioner

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Letter from the Commissioner

June 2020

Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to submit for your review, “Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative: A Report to the Legislature: 2019.”

Since the Department of Higher Education assumed responsibility for the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) in August 2017, it has continued to expand this network of grant-funded partnerships between schools and public colleges and universities offering inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with severe disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22.

As we celebrate the program’s ten-year anniversary this year, we are proud of the 15 participating partnerships, serving over 200 students during the 2018-2019 academic year. DHE is pleased to support students with intellectual disabilities as they participate in both credit and non-credit courses alongside their non-disabled peers; develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills; improve academic, social, and functional skills; and participate in career planning, vocational skill-building activities, and community-based integrated competitive employment opportunities.

If you have any questions about the program or this report, please feel free to contact Mary Price, State Director of the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative at (617) 994-6905 or via email mprice@dhe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

Carlos Santiago, PhD
Commissioner, Department of Higher Education

Purpose of the Report

This report follows a series of reports issued in April 2009; March 2012; March 2013; and March 2016.

The Department of Higher Education is pleased to submit “Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative: A Report to the Legislature: 2019” pursuant to Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2019, line item 7066-9600 (see full text in Appendix A):

For a discretionary grant program to provide funds to school districts and public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with disabilities, as defined in section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Laws, who are between 18 and 22 years of age, inclusive; provided, that the grant program shall be limited to students who are considered to have severe disabilities and, in the case of students age 18 or 19, shall be limited to students with severe disabilities who have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exam...

The purpose of this grant program is to build partnerships between high schools in public school districts and the state’s public institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with severe disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22. FY19 marked the 10th year of this program. Data used for this report is compiled from the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) program and reports submitted by MAICEI partners.

Authority for the MAICEI Program was shifted from the Executive Office of Education to the Department of Higher Education in August 2017, and program expansion, outreach and public awareness, and quality assurance of existing programs have continued as important priorities. This report is intended to provide information about the growth of the initiative; its impact on participating students; and emerging opportunities and challenges which inform policy development and implementation for inclusive post-secondary opportunities within the Commonwealth.

As a small, state-based grant program, MAICEI is still evolving and learning from program participants who have benefitted over the years. The first cohorts of participating partnerships continue to explore and implement sustainability models that hold promise for bringing their programs to scale and developing the kinds of cross-agency collaborations that will help young people make successful transitions from the public schools to the adult world of community-based employment and lifelong learning opportunities.

Student Spotlights

We will feature stories of MAICEI students across the campuses throughout the report. These stories were submitted by campus coordinators and aim to highlight the unique goals and experiences of the 208 students participating in the initiative across the Commonwealth.

Meet Ned!

Ned is a 21-year-old student residing in Western Massachusetts. He started the MAICEI program at Holyoke Community College in the Fall of 2016, and this is his last semester attending HCC through MAICEI. Ned is a creative thinker and a conscientious student. He enjoys being actively involved in community service projects and advocating for students with disabilities. Ned has immersed himself in HCC's campus community. He has been an active member of the Students on the Autism Spectrum Club, serves lunch to young students at an on-campus meal program, and is one of the first to sign up for community service events. In addition to his work on



campus, Ned is very involved with research and advocacy projects with the Think College Transition Team, based out of UMASS Boston. He recently served as a keynote speaker at the national State of the Art (SOTA) Conference. Ned's transcript includes Public Speaking, Introduction to Communication, Basic Still Photography, Pre-College English I, and Basic Mathematics. A passionate and dedicated learner, Ned has explored career paths in writing and journalism, photography, and has recently decided to pursue a degree in Business and Marketing. Throughout his experiences at HCC, Ned has grown increasingly more dedicated to serving as an advocate for young adults with disabilities. He hopes to make a positive impact on the community, encouraging individuals with disabilities to take risks and become self-determined adults, and to illuminate businesses and organizations on the strengths and qualities of adults with disabilities. Those who know Ned would agree, that he exudes determination, resilience, and an undying curiosity about people and their relationships within their community. Ned plans to matriculate to HCC this fall and pursue an Associate's Degree, continue to work part-time, and spend time with friends.

History of the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative

Nationally, the growth of programs serving students with intellectual disabilities in colleges and universities has increased steadily; currently there are over 250 such programs across the country. Relatively few of these programs serve students who are 18-22 in a dual or concurrent enrollment environment, based on a review of the directory of programs put out by Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion. Recognizing that many students are unable to earn their high school diplomas due to the severity of their intellectual disabilities, the Massachusetts State Legislature included language in its FY 2007 budget supporting the development of a network of grant-funded partnerships between public colleges and universities and school districts to plan, implement, and sustain authentically inclusive academic, social, and career development experiences on college campuses. At age 18, many of these students had remaining academic, social, and career development transition goals that were to be addressed through students' individualized education programs (IEPs). The intent of the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative was to address these outstanding goals by providing access and supports to success in academic, social, and career development experiences for eligible students with intellectual disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers enrolled in the Commonwealth's public two- and four-year colleges and universities.

Because of the growth of the 18-22 age student population with cognitive disabilities with significant needs and the requirement to support their transitions to adult services, many school districts have been challenged by the need to develop inclusive transitional experiences at school sites. An additional challenge was developing such experiences to assure inclusion alongside similarly aged non-disabled peers. By the time they reach 18-22, the majority of both disabled and non-disabled students have completed their high school experiences and moved onto college, work, and other experiences in the adult world. Often, 18-22-year-old students who continued in high school settings where they received transitional supports and services were left isolated from both disabled and non-disabled peers, most of whom had moved on to college or jobs.

Currently, 15 MAICEI programs are providing fully inclusive services and supports to 208 18 to 22-year-old Massachusetts students whose intellectual disabilities have compromised their ability to earn a high school diploma. Since 2007, over 1,200 students have had the opportunity to take part academically and socially in the life of the college, and to:

- discern their own preferences, interests, needs, and strengths through Person-Centered Planning;
- become advocates for their own choices and decisions around academic, social, and work activities;
- acquire career and life skills by taking inclusive college credit and non-credit bearing courses that relate to their career goals and other areas of interest;
- access student support services, as other college students would;
- participate in the life of the college; and
- experience integrated competitive employment opportunities.

In 2017, responsibility for administering the initiative was transferred from the Executive Office of Education to the Department of Higher Education. Legislative budget language (see Appendix A), directs that “the department of higher education shall develop guidelines to ensure that the grant program promotes civic engagement and mentoring of faculty in public institutions of higher education and supports college success, work success, participation in student life of the college community and provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; provided further, that the department of higher education shall develop strategies and procedures to help sustain and replicate the existing inclusive concurrent enrollment programs initiated through the grant program including:

1. providing funds to retain employment specialists;
2. assisting students in meeting integrated competitive employment and other transition-related goals;
3. adopting procedures and funding mechanisms to ensure that new partnerships of public institutions of higher education and school districts providing inclusive concurrent enrollment programs fully utilize the models and expertise developed in existing partnerships;
4. conducting evaluations and research to further identify student outcomes and best practices, and;
5. developing a mechanism to encourage existing and new partnerships to expand the capacity to respond to individual parents that request an opportunity for their children to participate in the inclusive concurrent enrollment initiative.”

Through its MAICEI State Coordinator, DHE:

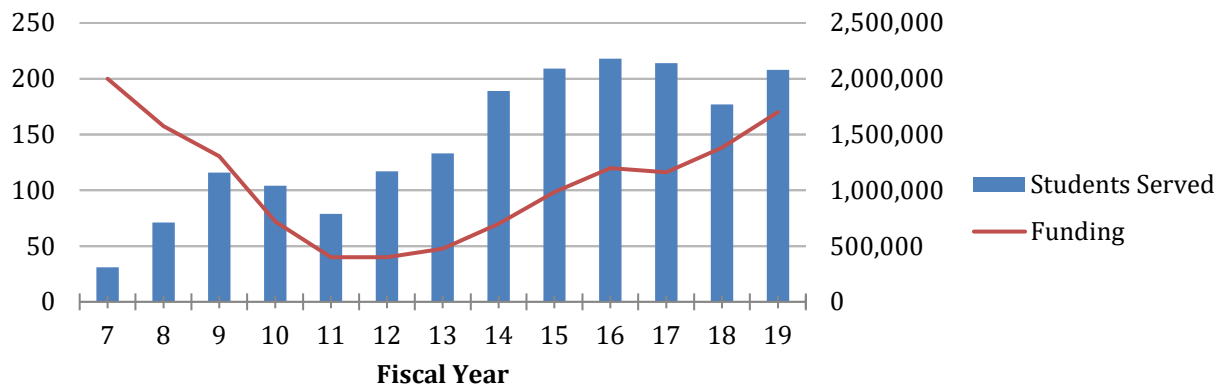
- administers the development and awarding of three types of grants supporting program development, quality assurance and accountability, and sustainability:
 - one-year planning grants for both residence life and non-residence life opportunities of up to \$30,000 per grant;
 - five-year non-residence life implementation grants of up to \$105,000 per grant; and
 - grants designed to support the design and implementation of residence¹ life experiences for program participants;
- coordinates the state advisory committee;
- develops new partnerships;
- assists existing partnerships to create self-sustaining models;
- oversees the development of videos and informational materials;
- designs system-wide evaluation strategies; and,
- designs professional development activities based on practitioner-based research as well as studies conducted through UMass Boston’s Institute for Community Inclusion, an established national leader of the “Think College” movement, a consortium of two and four-year colleges offering post-secondary learning opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities.

¹ The first residential life implementation grant was awarded to Bridgewater State University for Academic Year 2016-2017.

Utilization

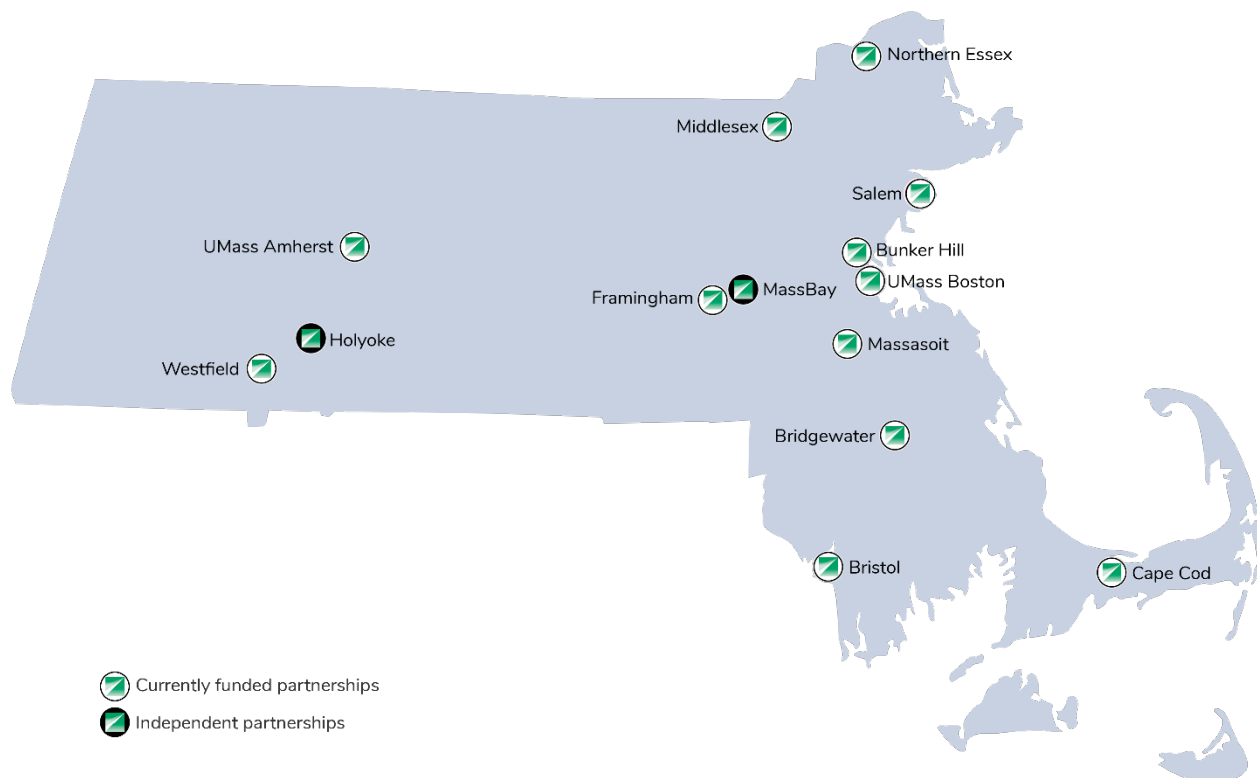
During the 2018-2019 academic year, approximately 2,660 Massachusetts public school students were potential candidates for participation in the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative. MAICEI programs active during that time period served approximately 8% of that total. Some possible reasons why this number is relatively low include the fact that not all districts across the Commonwealth participate in the program, and some regions of the state, including Central Massachusetts, do not have participating campuses.

Number of Students Served and Funding by Fiscal Year



Participating Institutions

MAICEI maintains an active presence on nearly half of the 29 public institutions of higher education in Massachusetts (including the fifteen community colleges, nine state universities, and the five University of Massachusetts campuses). For Academic Year (AY) 2018-2019, there were eight community college campuses with MAICEI programs, four state universities, and two UMass campuses. This count includes the self-sustaining programs at Holyoke Community College and MassBay Community College, which have continued their MAICEI programs after their implementation grant period. During FY16, Bridgewater State University was awarded a first-phase implementation grant to organize and create the administrative and training infrastructure to support residence life opportunities on that campus starting in Fall 2016. Five students were served through their residence life program for the 2017-2018 academic year and eight students were served for the 2018-2019 academic year. Nine students were served for the 2019-2020 academic year.



Campuses:

Bridgewater State University
 Bristol Community College
 Bunker Hill Community College
 Cape Cod Community College
 Framingham State University
 Holyoke Community College
 Massasoit Community College

Mass Bay Community College
 Middlesex Community College
 Northern Essex Community College
 Salem State University
 Westfield State University
 UMass Amherst
 UMass Boston

Sustainability.

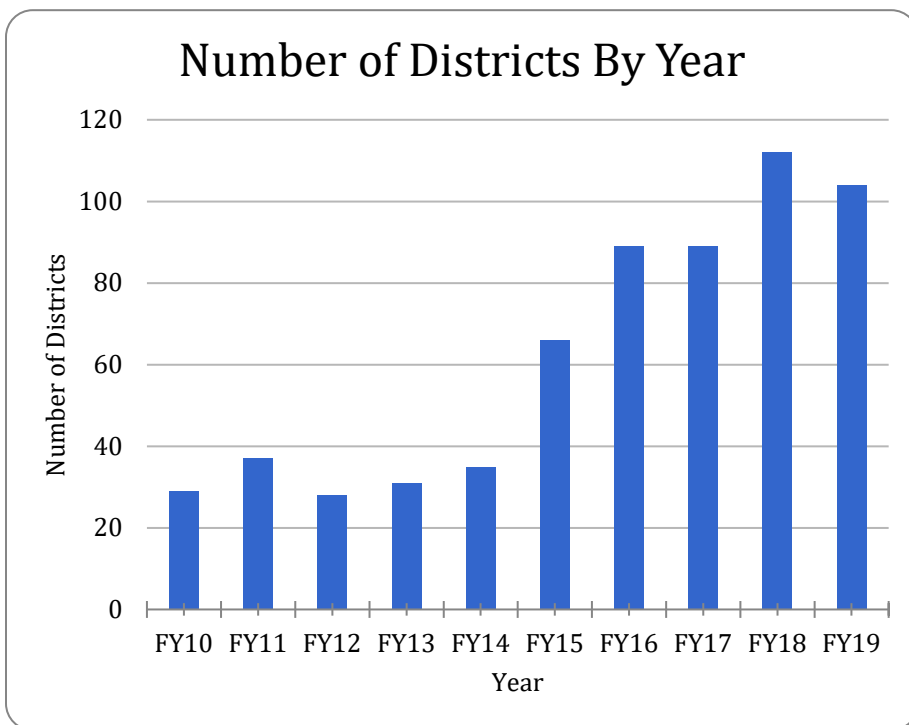
Most partnerships are funded through Initiative grants; two have completed the grant-supported planning and implementation cycle, are no longer receiving Initiative funding, and continue to partner with school districts to offer inclusive concurrent programming on their campuses. Grant-funded participants receive the majority of their operating funds directly through MAICEI; all campuses participate in a planning year before they begin accepting students into their programs. Both Holyoke Community College and Mass Bay Community College have continued program offerings after the end of grant funding from the Initiative. Westfield State University and Bridgewater State University are actively working to finalize their transitions to self-sustaining models.

As part of the grant application procedure, campuses applying for funding are required to include proposals for studying, developing, and implementing plans for transitioning to self-sustaining status. The goal of sustainability of MAICEI programs has been and continues to be a driving force behind campus program innovations. MAICEI began systematically tracking costs to districts for participation in fall 2017. At that time, five campuses were charging districts for

student participation. By the fall of 2019, eleven campuses were charging districts for student participation and two campuses are approaching self-sustaining status.

Participating School Districts

The number of partners a college campus program may have is generally decided in the initial grant-making phase. Campuses are required to identify at least two school districts that have both a need for MAICEI services and students who could take advantage of the program. As MAICEI programs are heavily dependent on collaboration between campus and school district partners, strong leadership at both institutions is needed to ensure that each campus program serves its students as effectively as possible.



School district participation has increased significantly as the successes of MAICEI become more widely recognized; the program has seen growth from 29 active districts participating in FY10 to 104 in FY19. While attesting to the increased appreciation for MAICEI across the state, this trend underlines the importance of developing sustainable models that anticipate increased demand in the future.

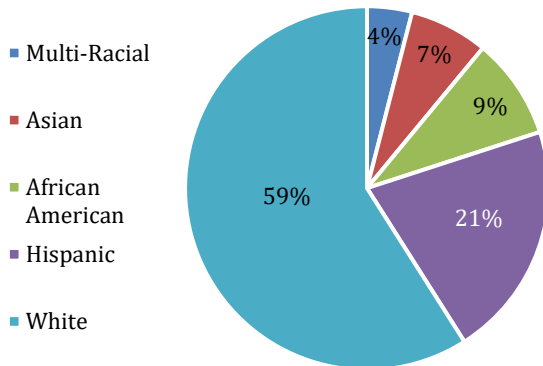
Students Served

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

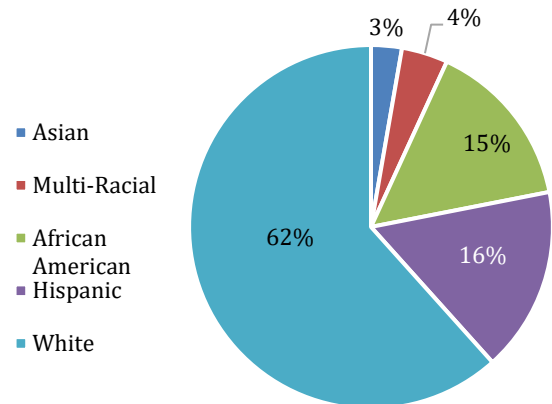
The student population of the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative is generally comparable in diversity to the population of students enrolled in the public schools of the Commonwealth². Black or African-American students made up a larger proportion of MAICEI participants in AY2018-19, compared to overall statewide student demographics. Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx students made up a smaller proportion of MAICEI students than the overall statewide student demographics. As program participation grows and the program matures, it will be important to monitor and evaluate the relationship between the MAICEI population and the broader population from which it is drawn, to ensure equitable access to MAICEI programming for the Commonwealth's diverse student population.

² The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education posts data related to student characteristics at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx>.

MA Student Population
Race and Ethnicity, 2018-2019
School Year



MAICEI Student Population
Race and Ethnicity, 2018-2019
School Year



Classes & Pedagogy

Student participants in MAICEI take a wide variety of classes in different fields and disciplines. In Fall 2018 alone, MAICEI students took 129 discrete classes ranging in topics from Introduction to Forensic Science to Computer Science Principles. Most popular are visual and performing arts classes, which accounted for nearly 35% of all classes taken by MAICEI students.

Although all types of pedagogical styles are represented in class selection, students most frequently selected courses featuring small group learning environments (e.g. Introduction to Business, Critical Thinking, and Human Growth & Development) and applied learning classes (e.g. Wellness Programming, Design Fundamentals, and Human Biology) which link academic work closely to practice. Seventeen percent of MAICEI students' courses involved a practical experience outside the classroom, including attending live artistic performance and conducting observation hours.

Credit & Audit

MAICEI students have the option of taking any class for credit or on an audit basis, just like their non-disabled peers. Variability across campuses is common; some campuses have more students taking classes for credit than others. However, because all MAICEI students are eligible for student services offered to all students at participating colleges and universities, many MAICEI program students use in-class learning resources (peer tutoring, writing/math center supports, etc.) regardless of whether they are taking a class for credit or on an audit basis.

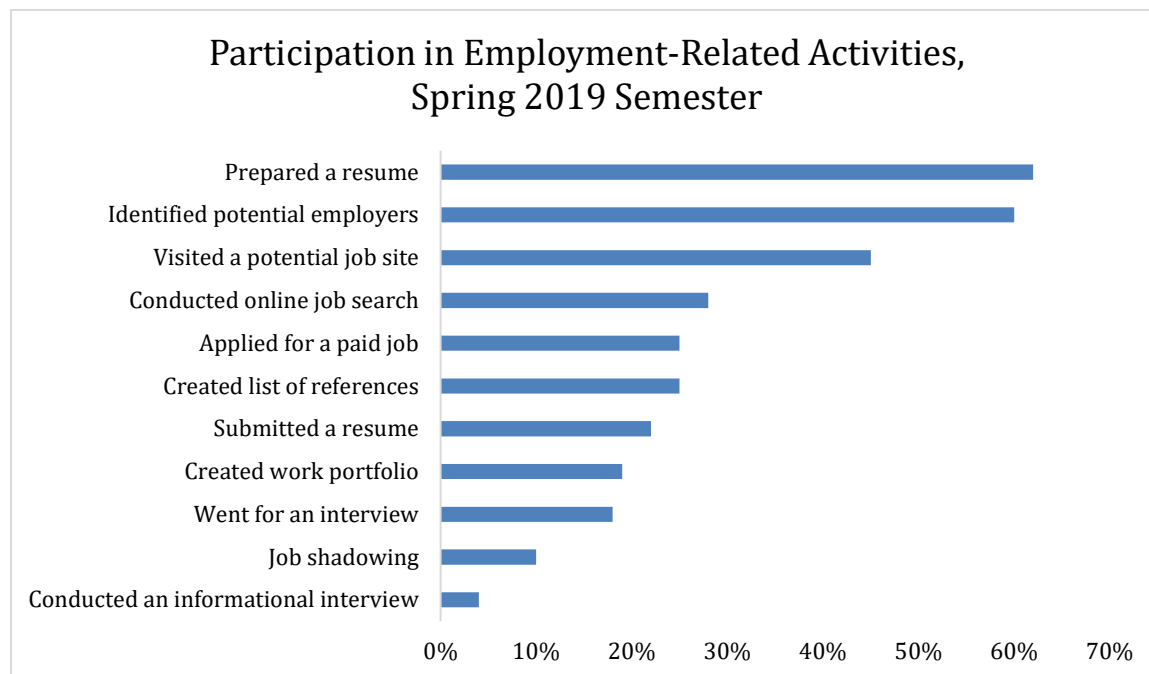
Seventy-four percent of classes taken by MAICEI students are taken on an audit basis, with the other 26% taken for credit.

Student Employment Outcomes

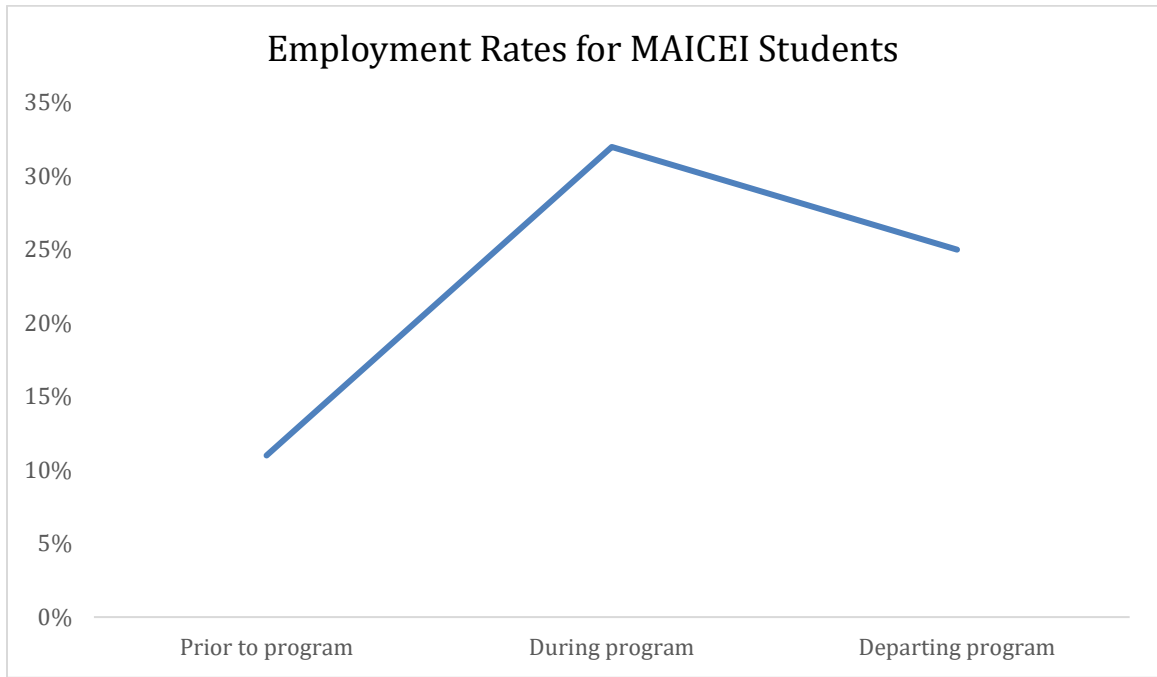
Securing and retaining long-term employment is a stated goal of many MAICEI students and career development is a key objective of the program. This goal shapes much of the person-centered planning process, including course selection, credit/audit choices, and supplemental soft-skills training. Educational coaches, typically hired by the school district partners in each program, are vital to the process of aligning program and campus resources with student needs. Equally important are the career development resources which the college and university provides.

Some MAICEI students have limited employment options based on their geographic locations. Variability in job opportunities between different geographic regions of the state is to be expected; however, preliminary data suggest that significant disparities in employment success of program participants between physically proximate campuses may exist, lending credence to a hypothesis that it is program characteristics, rather than job availability, that determines whether or not MAICEI students find employment during and after enrollment in their respective programs. Capturing post-program employment data is a goal of the initiative's new evaluation system; student follow-up and an analysis of emerging post-enrollment employment data will be crucial to evaluating program impact.

Additionally, MAICEI's new data tracking system has allowed the program to understand rates of participation in employment participation activities, such as creating a work portfolio, job shadowing and more. The chart below highlights participation rates in various employment-related activities during the Spring 2019 semester.



In addition to tracking participation in these activities by program participants across campuses, MAICEI's new data tracking system has also strengthened the program's ability to track employment participation before, during and after participation. Eleven percent of MAICEI participants engaged in the program during the FY18-19 school year were employed prior to entering the MAICEI program, compared to a 32% rate of participation in community competitive employment while engaged in the program. Twenty-five percent of MAICEI students in their last semester of participation had employment lined up immediately after leaving the MAICEI program. As such, participation in MAICEI was associated with higher rates of employment for students both during and after the program. A goal of the program moving forward is to increase the employment rate for departing students to the level for students during MAICEI.



Residence Life

A new and exciting development in the MAICEI program is the development of Residence Life programming. The first Residence Life planning grant was awarded to Bridgewater State University (BSU) for Fiscal Year 2016 when the program supported two students living full-time in a BSU Residence Hall for the 2016-2017 school year. With the introduction of the BSU Residence Life Program, Massachusetts has become the first state to offer residence life opportunities to students receiving transitional special education services through their local school districts while attending a public university. The Bridgewater State Residence Life program grew for the 2017-2018 year, with five students living on campus. Eight students participated for the 2018-2019 academic year, and nine students are participating for 2019-2020.

Meet Sean!

Sean is from Hanover, MA and was one of our first students to participate in our residence life program; he lived on campus during the 2016 – 2017 academic year. Sean is a quiet intelligent young man; he is hardworking and motivated to do well in the program. His love for music and radio programs landed him an internship for Bridgewater State's radio station WBIM-FM. Because of Sean's hard work and perseverance, he now has his own radio show for an hour each week! He also excelled in his video-editing class and the professor thoroughly enjoyed his participation and work. The News & Media Department at the University was also impressed with his work and as a result has offered Sean a part-time paid position.



Systems-Change Outcomes

The Department of Higher Education's role in supporting the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative has centered on:

1. **Public Awareness** through community outreach, public presentations, and media development;
2. **Program Administration** through grant administration and budget oversight for the state appropriated funds;
3. **Technical Assistance and Professional Development** for funded partnerships; and,
4. **Research and Evaluation** supporting work to identify student and program level outcomes which reflect national standards for inclusive post-secondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

Public Awareness Results

- Public presentations at international, national, state, regional, and community meetings, conferences, and televised interviews;

- Transition of MAICEI website from Executive Office of Education site to Department of Higher Education's site, including three marketing videos;
- One-on-one in-person, electronic, and telephone consultation and technical assistance with interested school district personnel; college/university personnel; family members; and adult service organizations;
- Regular information updates to statewide database of policy-makers, providers, legislators, school and higher education personnel, family members, service providers, and community members; and
- Formation and meeting facilitation of statewide advisors group, comprising representatives from participating schools, colleges, funded programs, self-sustaining programs; advocacy groups; technical assistance experts in post-secondary inclusive programs; state legislators; family members; former students; and, representatives of state agencies, including Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Developmental Services. The advisors group meets six times per fiscal year.

Program Administration Results

- Issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that more closely align with national quality indicators for inclusive post-secondary programs;
- Issuance of Request for Proposal (RFP) for a residence-life program which will include students eligible for MAICEI in dormitory life as well as related supports to facilitate the development of essential adult living skills best acquired in community environments that include both non-disabled and disabled peers.
- Availability of technical assistance documents related to submission of proposals in response to RFPs posted on the Initiative website;
- Standardized, revised grant review rubrics, more closely aligned with quality indicators for inclusive post-secondary programs;
- Development of DHE-based grants management system that offers quicker turnaround of funding-level status throughout the grant year, thereby ensuring more efficient and complete use of grant funds to benefit students; and
- Issuance of funding for Quality Enhancement Projects in FY18 and FY19 to support initiatives by campuses to enhance the experience for existing students and to recruit new students and districts.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development Results

- Convened the MAICEI Outcomes Work Group which has facilitated collaboration among coordinators to share best practices and strengthen consistency and quality of program outcome tracking across campuses;
- Conducted site visits to each campus each semester to assure ongoing connection between the DHE and grantees;
- Moderated an online professional development forum for coordinators of all MAICEI programs allowing coordinators to post discussions and queries as well as sharing resources; and,
- Organization of monthly coordinators' meetings and two annual in-person conferences to assure stronger group coherence, communication, and quality assurance across grantees.

Research and Evaluation Results

The Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative has similar evaluation challenges to other medium- and long-term educational and social service programs. Past system-level evaluation efforts—primarily via post-program student success—have been challenging because of the lack of standardized data collection procedures, lack of awareness of the importance of evaluation & student follow-up, and inconsistent campus participation.

The Department of Higher Education has been working to improve the consistency and quality of its data collection. The program began using an online survey tool in 2017, providing coordinators with standard surveys each semester to track their data. Each semester, the coordinators fill out multiple surveys on the site. Current survey topics include the following:

- Student Employment and Career
- Student Snapshot
- Program Information
- Student Person-Centered Planning
- Course Enrollments

The new survey system has proven effective in standardizing the data tracked and presented across campuses. By tracking this data all in one place, coordinators can provide the information in a more streamlined process, and DHE staff can analyze statistics and trends across campus more easily. The system has now been used for two semesters, and MAICEI plans to analyze trends over time in a more thorough manner as more data is collected.

Program Staffing

Each of the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative grant-funded programs follows roughly the same staffing structure, including a program coordinator, half-time employment specialist, and supplemental support, if needed, for education coaches.

Educational coaches are crucial to the success of the program and its students. School district partners typically pay salary and benefits for educational coaches. The educational coaches have the most day-to-day contact with MAICEI students and, as such, carry a wide range of responsibilities, including implementing IEP goals and recommendations, and aligning student goals with available campus resources.

Several campuses have instituted innovative peer mentoring and coaching strategies in addition to, and in concert with, educational coaches. These strategies are designed to augment their already successful programs. Of particular note is the peer mentor program at Westfield State University, which links interested and motivated students to MAICEI students both individually and in groups.

Campus administrators, parents, and students have praised these evolving strategies. The Department of Higher Education continues to explore new ways to bring these strategies—and their creative motivations—to other campuses and believes they represent promising opportunities to expand program utility while acknowledging financial constraints on program development.

	Average Percent of Total Grant	Average Funding Level
Coordinator	27%	\$27,218.29
Other Campus Staff (including coaches)	23%	\$23,157.85
Student/Course Fees	17%	\$16,636.86
Fringe	14%	\$13,963.89
Consultants	6%	\$6,302.71
Indirect	8%	\$7,910.55
Student Transportation	0%	\$528.57
Supplies/Materials	4%	\$3,660.14
Campus Staff Travel	1%	\$603.07

Approximately one-half of grant funds covers salaries for program coordinators, coaches, and support staff. Some coordinators work full-time, while some coordinators whose programs do not run in the summer work part-time (about 80% time). Coordinators are responsible for day-to-day operations of the programs, including convening the Project Leadership Team, facilitating Person Centered Planning for students, consulting with educational coaches and high school liaisons, and meeting with participating and interested students and families. Additionally, 17% of grant funding was spent on student/course fees, which vary widely across campuses and generally increase on an annual basis.

Future Directions

Now in its tenth year of funding, the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative has become a widely accepted option for students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking inclusive academic, social, and career development opportunities in the Commonwealth’s public colleges and universities. The network of funded partnerships are developing capacity to sustain itself through institutionalization of cost sharing between school and college/university partners; colleges and universities have also incorporated key program positions into their institutional budgets and integrated program staff into their campus faculty and staff cohorts. Nationwide, MAICEI continues to be one of the few authentically inclusive models of support to young adults with intellectual disabilities before they complete their secondary schooling experiences.

A number of key influences inform the immediate future of the initiative:

- Through its outreach efforts to non-participating college and university campuses, it has become clear that there is a specific need to better document the numbers and experiences of students with all types of disabilities benefitting from higher education in the Commonwealth. Unlike recent data collection documenting efforts to narrow achievement gaps for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, very little data exist about achievement gaps among disabled students; how successful these students are; and the array and costs of institutional supports being provided which support this success. Organized efforts at more formally documenting the experiences of all students with disabilities will contribute to understanding how the unique sub-population of students eligible for MAICEI will best be served.

- National efforts to improve the success of historically underrepresented populations of students in higher education has emphasized the importance of educating both families and school-aged students of the critical importance of attending college. Expanding the existing conversations about equity in higher education based on race and income to students with disabilities (many of whom are also already categorized by race and income) is important.
- According to MAICEI alumni, their families, and teachers, the Initiative has made dramatic differences in the lives of students, particularly in terms of individual self-determination and social growth. Concerted efforts to document measurable outcomes in each of the four areas of support provided by MAICEI are critical to the ongoing expansion of the program and in demonstrating the benefits of authentically inclusive learning environments.

Appendix A: FY2019 Budget Language

Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2018, line item 7009-9600

For a discretionary grant program to provide funds to school districts and public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with disabilities, as defined in section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Laws, who are between 18 and 22 years of age, inclusive; provided, that the grant program shall be limited to students who are considered to have severe disabilities and, in the case of students age 18 or 19, shall be limited to students with severe disabilities who have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exam; provided further, that such students with disabilities shall be offered enrollment in credit and noncredit courses that include students without disabilities, including enrollment in noncredit and credit-bearing courses in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites and requirements; provided further, that the partnering school districts shall provide supports, services and accommodations necessary to facilitate a student's enrollment; provided further, that the department of higher education shall develop guidelines to ensure that the grant program promotes civic engagement and mentoring of faculty in public institutions of higher education and supports college success, work success, participation in student life of the college community and provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; provided further, that the department of higher education shall develop strategies and procedures to help sustain and replicate the existing inclusive concurrent enrollment programs initiated through the grant program including, but not limited to: (a) providing funds to retain employment specialists; (b) assisting students in meeting integrated competitive employment and other transition-related goals; (c) adopting procedures and funding mechanisms to ensure that new partnerships of public institutions of higher education and school districts providing inclusive concurrent enrollment programs fully utilize the models and expertise developed in existing partnerships; and (d) conducting evaluations and research to further identify student outcomes and best practices; provided further, that the department of higher education shall develop a mechanism to encourage existing and new partnerships to expand the capacity to respond to individual parents and schools in underserved areas that request an opportunity for their children to participate in the inclusive concurrent enrollment initiative; provided further, that tuition for courses shall be waived by the state institutions of higher education for students enrolled through this grant program; provided further, that the department of higher education shall maintain the position of inclusive concurrent enrollment coordinator who shall be responsible for administering the grant program, coordinating the advisory committee, developing new partnerships, assisting existing partnerships in creating self-sustaining models and overseeing the development of videos and informational materials as well as evaluation and research through the institute for community inclusion to assist new colleges and school districts; provided further, that the department of higher education shall select grant recipients not later than July 18, 2018; provided further, that the department of higher education, in consultation with the department of elementary and secondary education, shall report on student outcomes to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education and the joint committee on higher education on the discretionary grant program not later than January 31, 2019; and provided further, that for the purpose of this item, appropriated funds may be expended for programs or activities during the summer months.

Appendix B: Brief Literature Review

The continued success of transition-age adolescents has much to do with future opportunity under the best of circumstances; youth with intellectual and cognitive disabilities are significantly more vulnerable during these crucial years and often face additional challenges which until recently remained unaddressed by both social and educational services. These challenges include but are not limited to un-employability, social maladjustment, and emotional disturbance. (Osgood, 2010; Mohanty, 2015)

In order to address disparate outcomes, over the past 30 years public education classrooms have seen increasing emphasis on inclusive educational environments for children and adolescents with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. Emphasis on inclusive education has been growing. Policy and programmatic changes have often arisen as a result of legislative action. Regardless of how they are implemented, these improvements to classroom practice—and the superior outcomes they provide students—have been well-documented. (Shea, 2006)

Additional research has shown that the more time students with disabilities spent in regular, inclusive classroom environments, the more they achieved as adults both in terms of employment and in continuing education (Ferguson, 1989). The United States Department of Education notes that across all their analyses, those students with intellectual disabilities who spend more time in regular, inclusive educational settings experience better post-secondary results (DOE, 1997). Long-term outcomes are also drastically affected by inclusive practices. A 1988 study by Affleck et al. determined that students with intellectual disabilities who were educated in inclusive settings had a 20% higher employment rate than those from segregated programs after 15 years.

Clark (1994), Wehman (1993), and the WHO (1997)—among others—have firmly established that students with intellectual and cognitive disabilities require training in self-advocacy and job & life skills, adult agency referrals, family involvement, and ongoing job training in order to succeed; ideally, a comprehensive educational foundation during high school and throughout transition should be implemented. (Mohanty, 2015)

Inclusive educational environments also benefit the non-disabled student population. Inclusive classroom interactions can lead to genuine friendships among students with and without disabilities; further, inclusive classes can not only lead to greater comfort for non-disabled students as they interact with students with intellectual disabilities, but also enhance their learning generally. Students who had social contact with classmates with disabilities had significantly higher scores on measures of emotional understanding and acceptance of individuals with disabilities than did students who had contact only with typically developing classmates. (Casale-Giannola, 2006; Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Costello, 1991; Diamond, 2001; Hamill, 2003)

Aside from the obvious and firmly established interpersonal benefits of inclusive education to students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, inclusive practices reflect democratic values insofar as they exemplify the participatory ideals of our society. This emerging inclusive perspective involves a fundamental shift in the way society views these vulnerable populations; the conversation ceases to hinge on difficulties or limitations and begins to revolve around their treatment by society.

From this perspective, policy and programmatic goals no longer need to be structured around improvements in quality of life for youth with intellectual and cognitive disabilities; rather, the focus shifts to supporting these young people to continually expand their capacity to contribute fully to community life—and as a result, to explore how this inclusive and participant-driven treatment benefits all of us. (Osgood, 2010)

In response to the increasingly inclusive environment of our public schools, there are a growing number of postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities in colleges and universities nationally. Currently, there are 268 postsecondary programs across the United States, serving over 5,000 students with intellectual disabilities. In comparison, there were 149 such programs in 2009. (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012)

There is a growing body of literature highlighting the benefits of participation in a postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities. Butler and colleagues (2016) surveyed 19 students with intellectual disabilities who had participated in college programs in the state of Kentucky for two years using questions from the National Core Indicators. This study found that students with intellectual disabilities who attended college were more likely to have exercised in the past month, to be in “good” or “excellent” health, to have friends to do things with, and to be employed. (Butler et al., 2016) A 2004 study found that students who participated in postsecondary programs had higher rates of competitive, independent employment than their peers who did not participate in these programs. (Zafft, Hart and Zimbrich, 2004) A 2016 analysis of national data from the Rehabilitation Services Administration found that participation in a postsecondary education program increases the odds of employment for students with intellectual disabilities to more than twice that of students with disabilities who do not participate in postsecondary programming. (Sannicandro, 2016)

Still, not all postsecondary programs are the same. Instead, they vary across organizational, admissions, support and pedagogical domains. (McEathron et al., 2013) MAICEI is unique because it follows a dual-enrollment structure and is also fully inclusive. Dual enrollment is a promising practice in services for high school students with intellectual disabilities because it provides an opportunity for students to receive their transition services in a community-based setting with the rest of their peers, rather than remaining in the high school. (Grigal, Paiewonsky, & Hart, 2017) As of 2018, there are approximately 100 programs nationally that offer postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities following a dual enrollment structure. (Think College, 2018) MAICEI’s dual enrollment program is fully inclusive. All MAICEI students take courses along with their non-disabled peers, which is not the case for many other postsecondary programs. Most programs offer a segregated cohort model, with all students with disabilities taking their courses together in a group, separate from the larger student population.

Appendix C: District Partners for Academic Year 2019-2020

Agawam- *Holyoke Community College*
Amherst-Pelham Regional- *UMass Amherst, Westfield State University*
Andover- *Northern Essex Community College*
Assabet Valley Collaborative- *Framingham State University*
Attleboro- *Bridgewater State University*
Barnstable- *Cape Cod Community College*
Bedford- *Middlesex Community College*
Belchertown- *Holyoke Community College*
Bourne- *Cape Cod Community College*
Boston- *Bunker Hill Community College, UMass Boston*
Boston Collegiate- *UMass Boston*
Braintree- *Massasoit Community College, UMass Boston*
Bridgewater-Raynham Regional- *Bridgewater State University*
Brockton- *Bridgewater State University, Massasoit Community College*
Brookline- *MassBay Community College*
Cambridge- *MassBay Community College*
Cape Cod Collaborative- *Cape Cod Community College*
Carver- *Bridgewater State University*
Chelsea- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Chicopee- *Westfield State University*
Dennis-Yarmouth- *Cape Cod Community College*
Duxbury- *Bridgewater State University*
East Longmeadow- *Holyoke Community College*
Easton- *Bridgewater State University*
Everett- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Fall River- *Bristol Community College*
Franklin- *Massasoit Community College*
Freetown-Lakeville Regional- *Bridgewater State University*
Frontier Regional- *UMass Amherst*
Gateway Regional- *Westfield State University*
Hampden Charter School for Science- *Westfield State University*

Hampden Wilbraham- *Westfield State University, Holyoke Community College*
Hampshire Regional- *Holyoke Community College*
Hanover- *Bridgewater State University*
Holbrook- *Bridgewater State University*
Holliston- *Framingham State University*
Holyoke- *UMass Amherst*
Hopkins Academy- *UMass Amherst*
Hopkinton- *Framingham State University*
Ipswich- *Salem State University*
KIPP Academy Lynn- *Salem State University*
LABBB Collaborative- *Middlesex Community College*
Lawrence- *Northern Essex Community College*
The League School- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Lee- *Westfield State University*
Longmeadow- *Westfield State University*
Ludlow- *Westfield State University*
Malden- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Lynnfield- *Salem State University*
Manchester-Essex Regional- *Salem State University*
Marlborough- *Framingham State University*
Marshfield- *Bridgewater State University*
Mashpee- *Cape Cod Community College*
MATCH Academy- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Methuen- *Northern Essex Community College*
Monomoy- *Bridgewater State University, Cape Cod Community College*
Nantucket- *Cape Cod Community College*
Natick- *Framingham State University*
Needham- *MassBay Community College*
Newburyport- *Northern Essex Community College*
Newton- *MassBay Community College*
Northampton- *UMass Amherst*
North Andover- *Northern Essex Community College*

North Attleboro- *Bridgewater State University*
Northborough/Southborough- *Framingham State University*
North Shore Education Consortium- *Salem State University*
Norton- *Bridgewater State University*
Old Rochester Regional- *Bridgewater State University, Bristol Community College*
Pembroke- *Bridgewater State University, Massasoit Community College*
Pilgrim Area Collaborative- *Bridgewater State University*
Plymouth- *Cape Cod Community College*
Quincy- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Revere- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Rockport- *Salem State University*
SEEM Collaborative- *Salem State University*
Shore Educational Collaborative- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Silver Lake Regional- *Bridgewater State University*
Somerset-Berkley Regional- *Bridgewater State University, Bristol Community College*

Somerville- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Southeastern Regional- *Bridgewater State University*
South Hadley- *Holyoke Community College*
Southwick/Tolland Regional- *UMass Amherst, Westfield State University*
Springfield- *Westfield State University*
Swampscott- *Salem State University*
Swansea- *Bristol Community College*
Wakefield- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Ware- *Holyoke Community College*
Watertown- *Bunker Hill Community College*
Wayland- *Framingham State University, MassBay Community College*
Westborough- *Framingham State University*
Westfield- *Westfield State University, Holyoke Community College*
West Springfield- *Westfield State University, Holyoke Community College*
Weymouth- *Bridgewater State University, Bunker Hill Community College*
Whitman-Hanson Regional- *Bridgewater State University*

Appendix D: Advisory Board Membership

Phoebe Bustamante

Coordinator, Transitional Scholars Program
MassBay Community College

Glenn Gabbard

Former Director, MA Inclusive Concurrent
Enrollment Initiative
Department of Higher Education

Representative Sean Garballey

Vice-Chair, Joint Committee on Higher
Education

Amanda Green

Educational Specialist, Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education

Debra Hart

Educational Coordinator, Institute for
Community Inclusion, UMass Boston

Victor Hernandez

Deputy Assistant Commissioner,
Department of Developmental Services

Francesco Joseph

MAICEI Alumnus

Julia Landau

Senior Project Director, Disability
Education Justice Initiative, Massachusetts
Advocates for Children

Dianne Lescinkas

Manager of Program Development, Autism
Commission

Nancy Mader

Kathleen Meagher

High School Contact, Shore Educational
Collaborative

Lyndsey Nunes

Coordinator, Inclusive Concurrent
Enrollment Initiative
Westfield State University
Director of Transition Projects, Federation
for Children

Patricia Marshall

Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs
& Student Success, Department of Higher
Education

Maximo Pimental

MAICEI Alumnus

Mary Price

Director, MA Inclusive Concurrent
Enrollment Initiative
Department of Higher Education

Jennifer Stewart

Statewide Transition Director,
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Charlotte "Dee" Spinkston

Adjunct Professor, Endicott College

Zachary Tsetsos

Legislative and Policy Advisor, Office of
Senator Michael Moore

Margaret Van Gelder

Statewide Director of Family Support,
Department of Developmental Services

Meet Emely!

Emely is in her second semester as a student in the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) at Northern Essex Community College (NECC). Emely is also a student at Lawrence High School where she participates in the LIFE 2 program. She is truly enjoying her classes and experience at NECC. When asked about the MAICEI program, Emely responded, “I feel excited about going to college. I like my art class and feel inspired by the art work that I do.”

Emely has interest in Art and Dancing; she enjoys drawing animals and is involved in a local Anime Club and Dance Club. In her first semester, Emely audited an Art class, Drawing I. Drawing I is an introduction to the problems, techniques, and materials of drawing. According to Emely’s Drawing I professor, “It has been a pleasure having Emely in my class and I look forward to having more students from your program.”

Emely has been utilizing the campus resources at NECC such as accessing the Bentley Library and working with the Learning Accommodations Center. Emely has had a variety of internships in her community. Emely has interned at Ironstone Farm in Andover where she brushes, saddles and prepares the horses to be mounted for students with disabilities in hippotherapy. She also sidewalks with the horses to ensure the safety of the rider. Emely has interned at the Lawrence Senior Center where she plates and serves meals to visiting seniors during lunch and at the Lazarus House Family Shelter where she prepared fifty bagged lunches for distribution to the homeless. In the future, Emely plans to work in her community.

