

July 8, 2026

Dr. Stephen Zrike Jr.
Secretary of Education
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Mr. Pedro Martinez, Commissioner
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Dear Secretary Zrike and Commissioner Martinez,

Thank you for your leadership as Co-Chairs of the Statewide Graduation Council and for guiding the Commonwealth toward stronger, more equitable high school experiences for all students. As Massachusetts embarks on new graduation standards and requirements, we see immense opportunity to position our state as a national leader. **We strongly support the Council's final recommendations and urge the State to prioritize Postsecondary Planning and high-quality My Career & Academic Plan (MyCAP) implementation to ensure that the students of today have the opportunity to fully realize their potential as our leaders of tomorrow.**

We represent the Postsecondary Pathways Policy Roundtable (3PR), a coalition of statewide advocacy organizations and Boston-based networks committed to equitable postsecondary access and success. Together, we advance policies and practices that improve student outcomes and bring both a practitioner perspective and understanding of student experience.

Critically Important Strong Foundations for Bright Futures

We support the Council's emphasis on "Strong Foundations," ensuring that students complete the MassCore program of study aligned with higher education admissions, alongside a culminating experience. We also strongly support the recommendation of standardized, state-administered end-of-course assessments, to ensure that students not only complete coursework, but also achieve the mastery necessary to thrive in postsecondary pathways. Thoughtful design, alignment, and implementation of these measures will be essential to ensuring both rigor and trust in the system.

Accelerating Impact & Essential for Equity: Postsecondary Planning & MyCAP

Building on these foundational essentials, our coalition sees the Postsecondary Planning and MyCAP elements of the Council's recommendations as a significant opportunity to elevate practices and standards across districts and improve experiences for all students. As the Council has highlighted, substantial disparities persist across student groups in postsecondary enrollment, persistence, completion and earnings. That reality carries particular urgency in Massachusetts, where in just five short years, three quarters of jobs will require a postsecondary credential.

Postsecondary Planning and MyCAP implementation represent a significant opportunity to improve student outcomes and advance equity statewide. [Studies](#) show that MyCAP completion strengthens students' postsecondary engagement throughout high school, including course selection, participation in Early College and Innovation Pathways, FAFSA completion, and [enrollment in postsecondary education](#) or training. [Research](#) also finds that meaningful future-planning conversations are linked to higher employment and earnings outcomes, particularly for students from lower-income backgrounds and students with disabilities. Through our work with counselors, advisors, and community-based partners, we also see strong support for a more student-centered approach in which every student graduates with a clear plan for their future and the support to pursue it.

Massachusetts' statewide vision reflects this commitment. To realize this vision at scale, implementation must be accompanied by deliberate investments in capacity, equity, and coordination. We urge the Commonwealth to prioritize Postsecondary Planning and MyCAP and consider the following:

- **Expand Equitable Access to Advising, Pathways, and Information:** State investment in student agency and future readiness through MyCAP reflects stakeholders' call for a more student-centered education system, one where pathway selection is informed by students' interests and career aspirations. Delivering on this promise will require expanded access to high-quality advising, alongside sequenced, milestone-based planning experiences beginning in middle school. Students and counselors alike need clear, consistent information about the full range of postsecondary and workforce pathways that lead to careers and family-sustaining wages, as well as the choices and experiences that support success. The Commonwealth should prioritize support for students facing barriers, including multilingual learners, low-income students, and those in under-resourced districts. Higher education institutions, workforce boards, and employers also have an important role to play in aligning expectations, expanding career exploration and exposure, and creating meaningful learning opportunities.
- **Invest in the Conditions for Effective Implementation:** The final report's implementation timeline appropriately emphasizes statewide resource alignment, guidance, tools, professional learning, and technical assistance. We urge the State to take an active role beyond defining MyCAP milestones and scope-and-sequence models by addressing the infrastructure and human capital needed for successful implementation. Just as the Council recognizes educator staffing needs, effective implementation will require adequate counseling and advising capacity, dedicated implementation leadership, ongoing professional development, protected time for planning and student support, and interoperable data systems that enable coordination and continuous improvement. Sustained success will require investment in the core conditions for implementation: people, training, time, and infrastructure.
- **Ensure Statewide Alignment and Cross-Sector Coordination:** We commend the report's emphasis on feedback loops, data, and progress monitoring to inform continuous refinement and targeted support. As the Council recommends for AI and digital literacy, standards and guidance should be regularly reviewed for rigor, relevance, and administrative burden. State frameworks should meaningfully integrate MyCAP, FAFSA completion, assessments, and postsecondary outcomes, with data-informed tracking of access, persistence, and completion beyond high school graduation. Alignment should also extend across K-12, higher education, workforce systems, and community-based partners through shared language, common tools, and coordinated student supports. Investments in systems and communication can help ensure that all adults are working from a shared understanding in service of student success.

Realizing the promise of Postsecondary Planning and MyCAP will require sustained public investment and capacity, both in funding and implementation infrastructure. Massachusetts has many of the foundational pieces already in place. Smartly leveraging these structures, augmenting funding streams, and introducing regulations in anticipation of legislation will bring these promising requirements to fruition in a way that truly lifts all districts and leads to improved outcomes for students. Pilots and incentives are an important way to expand effective practices, but they should complement long-term investments in the capacity districts need to succeed.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with your offices by sharing field-based insights and supporting implementation planning in the months ahead. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to ensuring every Massachusetts student graduates prepared for a meaningful and self-determined future.

Sincerely,

[Postsecondary Pathways Policy Roundtable](#) - Signatories Below

Amanda Seider, Executive Director, OneGoal

Antoniya Marinova, Associate Vice President, Programs, The Boston Foundation

Ayesha Cammaerts, Executive Director, Opportunity Boston, Co-convener Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative

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