

Boston, Massachusetts

2022-23 SNAPSHOT

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK

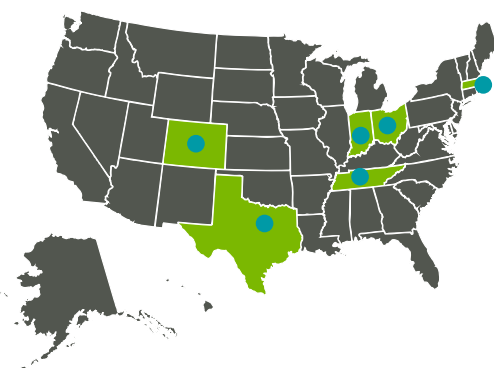
New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity. Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group are working with sites to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways in six US communities.

The six *New Skills ready network* sites are: Boston, Massachusetts; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Nashville, Tennessee. These sites are formulating new partnerships between local school systems, higher education, employers, and government entities to develop pathways and policy recommendations that give underserved students access to higher education and real-world work experiences that lead to high-wage, in-demand jobs.

These snapshots provide an overview of sites' accomplishments in the third year of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, including the development of priority objectives and action steps toward those objectives. Through the *New Skills ready network* initiative JPMorgan Chase is looking to advance the following priority areas to prepare students for good careers and economic mobility:

- Strengthening the alignment and rigor of career pathways;
- Designing, implementing and scaling real-world work experiences;
- Building seamless transitions to support postsecondary success; and
- Closing equity gaps.

Boston, Massachusetts, is one of the six sites participating in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, aims to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways.



NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Indianapolis, Indiana
- Nashville, Tennessee

In the first year of this initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team identified gaps in data capacity to measure career pathway experiences and outcomes, leveraged shared definitions of high-quality college and career pathways and work-based learning, completed a [coronavirus pandemic labor market analysis](#) for the city and began the critical work of understanding equity and cultural wealth frameworks.

In year two of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team optimized and expanded their working group processes to better design the components of the career pathway experience for learners. They increased staff capacity in four focus high schools to plan and implement career pathways, developed [resources to engage employers](#) in work-based learning experiences aligned to career pathways, formalized partnerships for schools, supported cross-institutional efforts around seamless transitions and bolstered dual enrollment program offerings and wraparound supports for learners in career pathways.

Building on the foundation from the previous years of the initiative, in year three the Boston, Massachusetts, team continued to leverage their collaborative partnerships and high-impact work of developing and implementing career pathways with a focus on equity. Within each partner institution and through leadership team presentations, each member of the Boston, Massachusetts, team has worked to ensure that data collection supports the operationalization of the work. Partners also prioritized expanding advising opportunities to learners to ensure that learners can engage in high-quality career pathways to prepare them for their transition into the workforce.

MASSACHUSETTS



LEADERSHIP TEAM PARTNERS

- EdVestors (*site lead*)
- The Boston Foundation
- Boston Private Industry Council
- Boston Public Schools
- Bunker Hill Community College
- City of Boston
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Education
- University of Massachusetts Boston



VISION FOR SUCCESS

The Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team established a vision statement to guide the team's work over the five-year initiative and expand access to high-quality career pathways for all learners.

The Boston, Massachusetts, team believes in a city where all young people can engage in high-quality career learning that supports exploration, informed decision-making, and preparation for the future. New Skills Boston aims to dramatically increase the number of Black, Latinx, special education, and English Learner students who participate in and persist through engaging, relevant, and equitable career pathways and are prepared to enter meaningful careers. New Skills Boston transforms systems to drive equitable education and career outcomes for all students. We value and leverage the cultural wealth that students bring to schools through their knowledge, skills, and abilities to navigate their context despite systemic barriers, including structural racism.

The third year of the initiative marked transitions at nearly every level of Boston, Massachusetts' local and state education systems. Boston welcomed new state and local leaders including a new governor, secretary of education, mayor, local superintendent for Boston Public Schools (BPS) and other city- and state-level cabinet positions. Amid the transitions and acute pressure on partner capacity, the work has moved forward, and partners remained engaged – an accomplishment that demonstrates each partner's commitment to the work and the power of the relationships built among the team. The Boston, Massachusetts, team's consistency has allowed them to translate institutional knowledge into new leadership circles to expand and deepen the work of developing and implementing equitable, high-quality career pathways.

In 2022-23, the Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

- 1 Addressing structural and institutional barriers to equitable career pathways;
- 2 Expanding access to coordinated, holistic and equitable college and career advising; and
- 3 Engaging cross-sector stakeholders as collaborators to deepen the commitment to career pathways development and implementation.

PRIORITY 1

Addressing structural and institutional barriers to equitable career pathways

In the first year of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team began the critical work of understanding equity and cultural wealth frameworks to drive their career pathway development strategies. Building on the foundation laid in year one, in year two of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team supported cross-institutional efforts around seamless learner transitions centering equity and expanded access for BPS learners. As a result, the team identified four focus high schools to plan and develop career pathways. In the third year of this initiative, the team continued its equity work by addressing structural and institutional barriers to equitable career pathways at the postsecondary level.

New Skills Boston postsecondary partners, Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston, completed a case study that provided greater insight into student transfers between the institutions. This case study, conducted collaboratively by UMass Boston and BHCC, brought together key stakeholders at each institution and provided the space for admission and transition systems alignment between the two institutions.

FOCUS SCHOOLS

In year two of the initiative, the following high schools were selected as focus schools and participated in planning new career pathways with support from the *New Skills ready network* initiative. The work of developing and implementing high-quality career pathways continues in these focus high schools in Boston, Massachusetts:

- Brighton High School;
- Charlestown High School;
- Excel High School; and
- Jeremiah E. Burke High School.

These discussions allowed each institution to understand the other's landscape around transfer, which was not previously shared knowledge. The findings from the case study informed strategies to improve the transfer process, enable college completion and ease career development processes as learners transfer from one institution to another – a priority to ensure that learners have equitable access to career pathways.

The shared definition of work-based learning, developed by the Boston, Massachusetts, team in year one of the initiative, has helped the two institutions move forward with the work to ease transfer. The partners refer to this definition often and use the shared definition as a lever to explore systems that generate credits for work-based learning experiences for learners. Providing learners with recognition and credit for their real-world work experiences supports learners in the progression of their career pathway programs and removes barriers that learners frequently experience when their learning and experiences are not captured, counted or portable.

Career development is a critical component of high-quality career pathways that support and guide learners as they navigate their programs. To ease the career development process for learners UMass Boston is developing industry-aligned “career communities” that will assist students in connecting their educational and work-based learning experiences to a variety of career paths. Each community is purposefully designed based on local and national labor market trends to foster exploration in many career pathways, expose students to experiential learning opportunities and connect them with industry professionals. Simultaneously, BHCC is transitioning to guided pathways. Guided pathways are aligned with learners' academic and career interests, goals and aspirations and represent a broad area or field of interest in which similar programs of study are grouped. Learners engaged in guided pathways are connected to resources to support their pathway journeys. As the institutions continue to work together, they are aligning the guided pathways to the career communities so that learners will experience smoother transitions between the institutions.

As the BHCC and UMass Boston partners move forward, they are exploring the creation of a defined joint admissions program including guaranteed admission, sharing of student-level data such as transcripts through a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act release process, curriculum/transfer credit alignment and opportunities for co-curricular engagement. The partners will continue to collaborate around systems and processes to inform a plan for the program in year four of the *New Skills ready network* initiative.

PRIORITY 2

Expanding access to coordinated, holistic and equitable college and career advising

In previous years of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team prioritized seamless and holistic advising by deepening their understanding of the commonwealth's advising frameworks, mapping career exploration activities in grades 7-16 and strategizing around opportunities for coordinated processes among partners. In year three of the initiative, the secondary and postsecondary partners in Boston, Massachusetts, continued their efforts to expand a holistic and seamless advising system to support learners. The secondary partners continued to deepen implementation through [My Career and Academic Plan \(MyCAP\)](#). Through the postsecondary transitions group, all partners collaborated on a working definition of seamless advising and identified four core strategies for operationalization with the aim of coordinated action in one of the areas in year four. The four core strategies include policies, procedures and protocols; training and staff development; case management approach; and information and resource sharing.

At the secondary level, BPS led the rollout of MyCAP in grades 6-12, expanding the primary system and process for multi-year advising to the middle grades. The previous years of the initiative provided lessons learned for the expansion of MyCAP to middle grades. In year three, the BPS team leveraged the experiences from the high school MyCAP implementation and designed a structured [scope and sequence](#) for implementation in the middle grades.

The rollout of MyCAP to the middle grades was designed to center equity and the learner experience. The BPS team approached the expansion with an explicitly anti-racist and cultural wealth lens and centered core learner experiences such as goal-setting and career exploratory components. Operating with an asset-based mindset, the implementation team strives to support learners and the adults leading MyCAP experiences by focusing on anti-bias principles that inform the mentoring and advising process. In addition to focusing on learners' hopes





and dreams for their careers, the MyCAP process centers the learner's identity development and how their background and experiences gained through career pathways can position them to move forward, achieve their goals and contribute to the world. This holistic and equitable approach represents the Boston, Massachusetts, team's commitment to equitable outcomes for learners in both secondary and postsecondary institutions.

To support the rollout of MyCAP across secondary schools including the middle grades, BPS engaged a district-level MyCAP coordinator to provide technical assistance and district-level support to school-level staff. The MyCAP coordinator, in collaboration with the MyCAP team, oversees the implementation and expansion of MyCAP in grades 6-12, meets with counselors and heads of schools to support the use of MyCAP and creates tools and resources to support schools with implementation.

The MyCAP coordinator also builds connections between individual schools and district teams. Providing district-level support includes connecting across systems and developing cross-functional teams that provide learners deeper engagement with MyCAP. When the MyCAP coordinator enters a school and supports its implementation of MyCAP for learners, the coordinator provides presentations and training to school staff and centers MyCAP as a strategy for achieving equity in career pathways.

In year four of the initiative, the BPS team will continue to improve the holistic advising process and deepen the work of advising in the secondary space. The team will continue to focus on the learner experience and develop systems that enhance learners' advising experiences across the grade span. The team will also prioritize secure data access across institutions to make learners' information easily accessible, ensure that learners have open access to opportunities and provide increased supports for learners who engage in career pathway experiences.

HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS



**Biotechnology/
Environmental Science**



Business and Finance



Health Care

PRIORITY 3

Engaging cross-sector stakeholders as collaborators to deepen the commitment to career pathways development and implementation

A significant priority for the Boston, Massachusetts, team in the first two years of the initiative was to build and maintain relationships at multiple levels within partner organizations and agencies. In the third year of the initiative, cross-sector stakeholders collaborated to deepen the commitment to the development and implementation of career pathways, and their efforts resulted in expanded access for learners to engage in dual enrollment and early college courses.

Expanded access to dual enrollment and early college courses is a component of the high-quality career pathways the Boston, Massachusetts, team continues to develop and implement for learners. Both BHCC and UMass Boston are continuing to pursue early college pathway designations with schools in BPS. The early college pathways designation process is articulated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); according to DESE, the [Early College Designated Programs](#) are intentionally designed to empower students traditionally under-represented in higher education. These programs work to blend elements of high school and college, provide learners with the opportunity to experience and complete college-level academic coursework and reduce the time and expense of earning a college credential while increasing the likelihood of completion.

As the team transitions into year four of the initiative, the secondary and postsecondary partners will continue to work together to improve internal processes and the learner experience. BPS staff will focus on deepening pathway and MyCAP implementation across schools, streamlining processes related to dual enrollment and expanding data collection on student internship experiences. BHCC will prioritize improving the target management system for its admissions process. UMass Boston will focus on further collaboration with BHCC and BPS. Areas of focus will be developing a memorandum of understanding for data sharing, advancing seamless transfer pathways and joint admissions, expanding dual credit and early college and increasing opportunities for work-based learning.



LOOKING AHEAD

In the upcoming year, the Boston, Massachusetts, team's focus is on deepening, expanding and scaling the implementation of work accomplished thus far. The team will continue to support the focus high schools in career pathway implementation, continue the expansion of MyCAP and pilot approaches to monitor work-based learning opportunities in school settings.

As the team considers expansion and scale, partners are strategizing how to broker partnerships to facilitate expanded access to high-quality career pathways across all BPS schools. This work includes supporting partners' capacity and staffing, coordinating and strategizing cross-sector efforts and being thoughtful about the multiple opportunities for career pathway models that the commonwealth of Massachusetts provides.