



## Leadership Team

**Bob Bardwell**  
Monson HS

**Mark Bilotta**  
Mass EdCo

**Ruth Carrigan**  
Whitman-Hanson  
RHS

**Laura Dziorny**  
Rennie Center

**Jackney Joseph**  
MA Business Alliance  
for Education

**Tim Poynton**  
UMASS Boston

**Scott Solberg**  
Boston University

**Keith Westrich**  
MA DESE

## Working Groups

- Careers & Citizenship
- Financing Post-secondary Education
- Post-secondary Access, Completion & Persistence
- Marketing & Communications

## Contact RHM

[ReachHigherMA@gmail.com](mailto:ReachHigherMA@gmail.com)  
[m](#)

**Through effective school counseling programming and strategic partnerships, Reach Higher Massachusetts will inspire every student to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school.**

**February 2017**

## Reach Higher MA Initiative Still Strong and Active

Welcome to the third edition of the Reach Higher Massachusetts (RHM) newsletter. Even though the Obama administration has left office, the Reach Higher initiative is still strong and active, particularly here in Massachusetts. Currently we only know that the national Reach Higher initiative will continue under Mrs. Obama's leadership and we expect hear more details in the coming months. Stay tuned.

In this newsletter you will read about other initiatives in Massachusetts and the many great programs and opportunities for students and schools to achieve the Reach Higher mission. Among the items that the Leadership Team is working on behind the scenes, we are:

- Providing FAFSA completion data to all school counselors in Massachusetts
- Organizing a Senior Signing Day on Beacon Hill in late April
- Partnering with DESE on the recently awarded \$1.95 million grant to improve career development in the state, early college high school initiative and the ongoing College and Career Data Usage Certificate offered through DESE and MASCA
- Advocating for more support and resources for school counselors with policy makers and legislators
- Working with like-minded organizations to conduct research on the return on investment (ROI) for savings if schools had more school counselors
- Organizing a state-wide Reach Higher Convening for late summer/early fall 2017 in the Boston area to continue the efforts to educate and provide valuable resources for all of those dedicated to helping students graduate from high school and continue their education

Stay tuned for news alerts and updates on these exciting initiatives.

Please contact me at [bardwellr@monsonschools.com](mailto:bardwellr@monsonschools.com) or 413.267.4589 x1109 if you have any questions or want to get involved. Thank you for your continued interest in RHM.

Sincerely,  
Bob Bardwell  
RHM Team Lead

[Sign up for RHM email updates](#)

**Massachusetts College Application Celebration!**



Read the latest [Reach Higher Progress Report!](#)



Massachusetts College Application Celebration! (MCAC) encourages students to take a significant step toward college by providing assistance and building excitement for the college application process. The application process can be daunting, even for students surrounded by a support system of caring adults. Too often, high school seniors begin the college application process and get stuck or simply procrastinate on completing the requirements,

resulting in the application never being completed or submitted. MCAC is designed to provide the guidance and support needed by students in addition to harnessing the positive peer pressure of a week of events culminating in the submission of a completed college application.

MCAC is part of the American College Application Campaign initiative sponsored by the [American Council on Education \(ACE\)](#). It is sponsored by GEAR UP Massachusetts, and administered through the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. It began in North Carolina as College Application Day at a single high school in 2005 as a pilot effort of the GEAR UP program and has since grown to a nation-wide effort.

Massachusetts held its first MCAC in 2012 at Lowell high school and 225 applications were completed. In 2016 we hosted [35 MCAC events throughout the Commonwealth](#) where 3,700 students completed over 10,000 applications! Every year we are looking to continue expanding the program outside of our GEAR UP high schools.

	2015	2016
Number of Schools	20	35
Number of Students	1,857	3,701
Number of Applications	4,494	10,043
Number of On the Spot Acceptances	1,078	2,474
Amount of Scholarships Offered	\$3,429,300	\$12,402,000

If you are interested in bringing MCAC to your high school contact Krista Cosco at [KCosco@osfa.mass.edu](mailto:KCosco@osfa.mass.edu).



## 2017 Spring Conference

Reach Higher colleagues are invited to be part of the 2017 Massachusetts School Counselors Association Annual Conference.

The conference will be held at the Regency Conference Center in Boxborough, MA. A preconference Workshop will be held on Monday afternoon, April 3, and the full day conference will be held on Tuesday, April 4.

Over 25 program sessions will offer exciting programming regarding persona/social, academic, and college and career planning. We are pleased to announce that a Reach Higher session track will be available

For more information, please check out the conference webpage ([2017 MASCA Conference](#)).

*We hope to see many of you in April!*

*mefa*

[Training  
&  
Events](#)



through  
**MASS**  
TRANSFER

## Commonwealth Commitment

[Governor Baker has a message for graduating high school seniors and their families:](#) The state will help them save an average of 40 percent off the cost of a

traditional bachelor's degree if students can attend college full-time and graduate within four and a half years.

Through the [Commonwealth Commitment](#), students start at one of Massachusetts' 15 community colleges, then transfer to a state university or UMass campus and continue full time. Students who enroll receive a 10 percent per-semester rebate, a tuition credit worth an average of \$1,200, and a freeze on mandatory fees — leading to an associate degree and a bachelor's degree at an [average cost of \\$28,618](#) before financial aid.

[\*Help spread the word!\*](#)

[Forward this message to a friend](#)