

Leadership Team

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Working Groups

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

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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.

May 2017

Reach Higher MA Third Anniversary

At the end of the 2017-18 school year, Reach Higher Massachusetts (RHM) will celebrate its third anniversary. I am absolutely thrilled with what we have been able to accomplish in just three short years, considering we are a completely volunteer organization with zero budget. More importantly, I am excited about where RHM is headed. Many thanks to the members of the Leadership Team (see sidebar), our Work Group Co-Chairs (Helen O'Donnell, Beth Hennessy, Mark Bilotta, Martha Savery, Jan Tkaczyk, Robert Dais and Jackney Joseph) and the over 185 people on our mailing list who support our mission and work.

As the academic year winds down it should mean that RHM is slowing down, but rather it seems like our work is gearing up instead. We have two significant events coming in August and September. On August 9 at Framingham State University RHM will host a full day convening entitled *Reaching Higher in Massachusetts: Exploring College Transition, Persistence and Retention*. Thank you to Christine Luzi and Katie Moulton for coordinating this program. On September 14 RHM in conjunction with NACAC will sponsor a policy summit at the NACAC conference at the Convention Center in Boston. You can read more about these events in the *Save the Date* section of the newsletter below.

In the meantime, I hope you have a relaxing and fun-filled summer and you find time to rest, recharge and rejuvenate. I look forward to seeing you at Framingham State on August 9.

Sincerely,
Bob Bardwell
RHM Team Lead

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Helping Students De-Mystify Financial Aid

This spring, Reach Higher MA was invited to participate in a press conference with Attorney General Maura Healey announcing her Financial Aid Education Campaign for Students Considering College. Through the new campaign, the AG's office hopes to encourage colleges and universities to make the financial aid process more transparent for students and families.



aspire "This is an exciting time of year for students and families who are making important decisions about going to college, but financial aid award letters can be hard to digest," AG Healey said. "This initiative is about better understanding financial aid packages offered by colleges and making an informed decision about where to enroll and what it will cost."

As school counselors we can all agree that we want our students to "reach higher" to pursue

training and education past high school. However, we need to make sure that our students and their families are making educated decisions regarding financial aid, student loan debt, and their ability to pay for post-secondary education.

For information on how to demystify the process for your students and families visit mass.gov/ago/studentawardletter. You might also want to schedule a [MEFA Paying the College Bill](#) Seminar at your school or encourage your student and families to check out the [College Score Card](#).

MA Model 2.0 Endorsed by MASCA Governing Board

It's here! The revised MA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (known as MA Model 2.0) was endorsed by the MASCA Governing Board in March and presented to MASCA membership at the April 2017 spring conference events.

As school counselors help to prepare ALL students to "Reach Higher" and be "Future Ready", the Model continues to promote the delivery of standards-based Tier 1 school counseling curriculum, including Career Development Education and Individual Learning Plans for all students. The MA Model 2.0 can be found at www.masca.wildapricot.org.

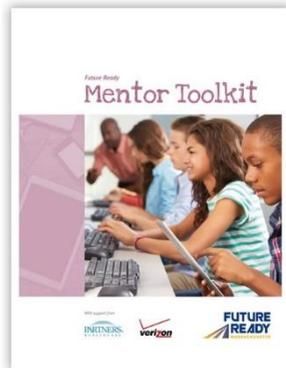
If you have interest in MA Model Training Institutes OR suggestions for training dates and statewide training sites, contact Helen O'Donnell at [helenod\(at\)att.net](mailto:helenod(at)att.net).

New Home for First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher

Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative, an effort to inspire every student in America to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school, is now part of the [Civic Nation family](#) which also includes her Better Make Room initiative. Learn more [here](#).



Future Ready to Provide Toolkit in Spanish and Portuguese



Future Ready Massachusetts, a partner of Reach Higher MA, has found success with its [Mentor Toolkit](#).

Future Ready has reached over 11,000 students, families, mentors, educators and school counselors with the Toolkit and provided guidance through the [Mentor Toolkit webinar](#).

Now, Future Ready is responding to requests for the Toolkit in Spanish and Portuguese. The translated Toolkits can be a useful tool for school counselors and others working with ESL and ELL populations. You can learn more about their efforts [here](#).

Save the Dates!

August 9th | Reaching Higher In MA: Exploring College Transition, Persistence and Retention

On Wednesday August 9th, Reach Higher Massachusetts will host its second Reach Higher convening at Framingham State University. The program will focus on college transition, persistence and retention. We hope that both school counseling and higher education



colleagues will benefit from our efforts. There is no cost to attend. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Christine Luzi at cluzi811(at)gmail.com.

September 14th | Policy Summit sponsored by RHM and NACAC

The goal of the summit is to bring legislators, policy makers, funders, researchers and practitioners together to discuss the current status of affairs dealing with high school graduation, college entrance, college persistence and retention rates.

Data tells us that we have a long way to go to eliminate the achievement, racial, socioeconomic and gender gaps that exist in Massachusetts. Our hope is to provide a deeper understanding of the issues which create some of these gaps and ways we can reduce and/or eliminate them.

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