



December 2018

Greetings from Bob Bardwell

Welcome to the December 2018 edition of the Reach Higher Massachusetts (RHM) newsletter. I am excited to share with you updates regarding the Reach Higher initiative here in Massachusetts. We continue to be a strong state team and I feel fortunate to have such a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers willing to continue to participate.

I am thrilled to announce that *the 2019 Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening will be on Monday, August 19 at Bridgewater State University*. Angel Perez Vice President, Enrollment and Student Success at Trinity College, Hartford CT will be the keynote speaker. Look for more details in upcoming newsletters. Please contact Christine Scafidi (scafidic@holliston.k12.ma.us) if interested in helping.

Highlights from our November 29 Reach Higher meeting:

- Apelila Joseph and Anne Dillard from the **Springfield Public Schools** shared several new and exciting initiatives happening in Springfield, including the hiring of seven school based financial aid staff members to provide financial aid counseling to all students and families. They also recently received a grant from the Gates Foundation to provide support to and through college to address college persistence. Other initiatives in Springfield include work on summer melt and undermatching. The district continues to support 100 males to college as well as a girl's college going group. All high schools participate in the College Application Celebration Week. Counselors and students were recently highlighted on WGBY focusing on college applications. [Navigating the College Application Process with Springfield Public Schools](#) .
- We continue to explore options with MASCA to look at hiring a lobbyist to push for legislation that specifically addresses school counseling. MASCA is looking for ways to partner with other groups who have similar interests that could help support legislative efforts moving forward.
- We got **updates from DESE** regarding the College Career Advising workshops being provided this year for 83 schools. The first of three sessions were held in four locations across the state in October. The second round will be in January. The goal is to get 80 more next year and the year after. (see below for more information on these workshops) The layout of EDWIN will look different as of December 13. It is imperative that school counselors have student level access to the data and information in EDWIN. If you do not have such access, please contact your district's data administrator and ask for that access. Finally, FAFSA Completion data will also be updated on December 13 and it is expected to have better student matching this year. A webinar was held on December 11 to give those updates.
- Work Group Updates – All three workgroups continue to work on projects and initiatives that support their mission. Look for more information about their efforts in this newsletter and in future newsletters.

Stay tuned for news alerts and updates on these exciting initiatives. Please contact me at bardwellr@monsonschools.com or 413.267.4589x1109 if you have any questions or want to get involved. Thank you for your continued interest in Reach Higher Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Bob Bardwell
RHM Team Lead



College and Career Advising and MyCAP Workshop Series

The first in a three-workshop series, designed to build district/school capacity to customize and implement high-quality College and Career Advising (CCA) and MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) programs was held in four locations in Massachusetts in October! DESE, in partnership with MASCA, developed these workshops and retained PCG as a consultant.

Workshop 1 introduced district/school teams to the nature and promise of high quality College and Career Advising and MyCAP, using a new CCA Framework based on the three domains found in the state's definition of College and Career Readiness. Eighty-three high school teams from across the state are participating in the workshop series.



Evaluation of Workshop 1

PCG delivered the first of the three workshops in four regions across the state during the month of October. All participants were surveyed, and 60% responded with positive results. A substantial majority agreed that the workshop structure had the right mix of team activities, whole group discussion, and instruction, and that the facilitators were knowledgeable and skillful. A majority of participants also agreed or strongly agreed that the expected workshop outcomes were achieved. When participants were asked, "What part of the workshop did you find most effective and helpful?" the common themes that emerged were: the opportunity to collaborate with their team, the information about the data available to them, the resources provided, and the overview of the online platforms they can use for CCA/MyCAP activities.

Workshop 2 and 3 of the series will take place in the winter and early spring:

Workshop 2: Will give teams time to design a grade level scope and sequence of CCA lessons within the state's new CCA Framework. Participants will integrate use of their district/school online college and career planning systems, and develop plans for MyCAP. They will incorporate social/emotional learning, career development education and college access activities into their CCA program.

Workshop 3: Will focus on helping schools create a plan to successfully implement, and evaluate, their new district/school CCA and MyCAP program. Participants will develop communication materials needed to explain the value of CCA and MyCAP to multiple stakeholders, and design an evaluation strategy for their program.

Participants will be surveyed after the second and third workshops.

There will be another workshop series in FY20, with capacity for at least 80 more high schools



U.S. Dept of Education awards GEAR UP Massachusetts \$29.7M

6300 Students in 7 Urban Districts in MA will get to College with Academic and Financial Support!

The U.S. Department of Education Awarded GEAR UP Massachusetts \$29.7M to continue funding for College Access and Scholarship programs. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a “national initiative to encourage more young people to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard and take the right courses to go to college.” The GEAR UP program, now in its 19th year, provides tutoring, mentoring, and scholarships for middle and high school students in Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester. This grant will allow this work for seven more years!

“GEAR UP has been a proven success in Massachusetts, and I am proud that the Department of Education has been recognized for its achievements,” said U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey.

Read the full press release for this award at: [GEAR UP Awarded \\$29.7M](#) . To learn more about the work of GEAR UP go to [GEAR UP](#) .



Massachusetts Educational
Financing Authority

RHM Financial Aid Committee and MEFA Resources

The Reach Higher Massachusetts Financial Aid Committee continues to be focused on Professional Development for Counselors, especially in the area of increasing comfort level with discussing financial issues. We are revising a presentation about financial topics and will reach back out to colleges that have a graduate program in Guidance Counseling in the hopes that we can provide workshops to aspiring counselors introducing them to these topics.

For this admissions season, here are some resources for students to help them choose a college that is a good financial fit.

- [How to Make a Financially Balanced College List](#) Blog encouraging students and families to make sure they have a financially balanced college list
- [MEFA Pathways](#) Tools within the Paying for College section of MEFA Pathway
 - The *College Cost Calculator* lets students calculate the yearly cost gap based upon grants, scholarships, and other Federal aid awarded.
 - The *Loan Cost Estimator* provides a monthly loan payment and repayment total based about a borrowed loan amount
 - The *Search for Scholarship* feature allows students to search for national and local scholarships to trim down that yearly cost gap and create a list to manage deadlines and awards.

MEFA also has a number of recorded webinars available for counselors to listen to at any time on our Counselors Training and Events page: mefa.org/counselors/training-and-events/

This is a partial list of the recorded webinars:

- [College Financing](#)
- [Understanding the FAFSA®](#)
- [The CSS Profile™](#)
- [Connecting Undocumented Students to College Access Opportunities](#)
- [Introduction to MEFA Pathway's Student Features & Counselor Tools](#)
- [Financial Aid: National Landscape & Regulatory Updates](#)
- [Counseling Families with Unique Circumstances](#)
- [Helping Families Understand Financial Aid Award Letters](#)

Reminder! Data Tool for Tracking FASFA completion

Starting in October the FASFA was available for the 2019-2020 academic year. Don't forget that the FASFA tracking tool is available to counselors through Edwin Analytics. This tool allows counselors to see whether individual students have submitted a completed FASFA to the U.S. Department of Education. Check it out! [Edwin Analytics](#)



Governor Baker signs Civic Education Law Nurturing and Supporting Active Civic Engagement in ALL Students

Massachusetts Gov. Baker signed the ***Civics Education Law*** promoting civic education and a required student-generated, non-partisan civic engagement service project for ALL students. Summarized in a *Republican* editorial (Nov. 13 2018 pg. C4), the law will “encourage hands-on activities that include voter registration and engagement with local officials”, and continues to state that “students need to know how government operates... and encouraged to become participants in democracy”

Reach Higher MA Working subcommittee, *Viable Careers and Citizenship for All*, applauds the final passing into law the mandate to fully integrate civics education into our school curriculum. This education for all students about the local, state and federal government and required civic engagement service projects will educate all student about the civic duties of our democracy, promote civic awareness, inspire authentic student-generated projects to practice community service and civic volunteerism, and promote careers in local, state and national government.

What can school counselors do to encourage and partner in civics education?

School counselors should strengthen the workplace readiness strand of their school counseling curriculum to include exploration of careers opportunities in local, regional, state and national government, inviting speakers to talk about their government careers, plan field trips to visit local officials on the job, reach out to your community for student volunteer and internship opportunities, and partner with school community members on civic engagement projects. Consider joining DESE’s *Connecting Activities* to become aware of ongoing career infusion initiatives happening in state schools. (Contact Shailah Stewart sstewart@doe.mass.edu for more information.

MA Model 2.0 promotes the development of a workplace readiness/career strand of the school counseling core curriculum. MASCA’s *Counselors Notebook* has printed 25 monthly Career Corner Activities columns edited by Dr. Helen O’Donnell. Inspired by K-12 school counselors, the standards-based activities promote K-12 career development. Articles are found in the archived issues of the Counselor’s Notebook at masca.wildapricot.org.

The MASCA MA Model 2.0 committee is also planning 1-day regional K-12 career/workplace readiness curriculum development workshops. Cost is \$25/pp. For information, contact helenod@att.net.



Would you like to host your own College Signing Day? The [Better Make Room Signing Day Toolkit](#) has resources on how to have your own College Signing Day, including information on how to apply for a \$500 grant to support an event at your school! [Better Make Room](#) This website provides information and resources to help youth navigate the process of applying, financing and attending postsecondary education. You can follow Reach Higher Activities on many social media platforms including [Reach Higher Instagram](#) .

Save the Date!

**2019 Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening
Monday, August 19, 2019
Bridgewater State University**

**Reach Higher MA Guiding Coalition Meetings
March 21, 2019
June 25, 2019**