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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MASSACHUSETTS HIGHER ED LEADERS JOIN NATIONAL COALITION MOBILIZING IN SUPPORT OF COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Boston, MA – June 11, 2014 -- Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Richard M. Freeland and a dozen public college and university presidents have joined more than 200 college and university leaders from 30 states in a new coalition, [Higher Ed for Higher Standards](#), to mobilize in support of the Common Core State Standards, the Department of Higher Education announced today.

Postsecondary leaders view the Common Core, with its focus on college and career readiness, as critical for improving student success. In 2010, Massachusetts became the 27<sup>th</sup> state to adopt the internationally benchmarked standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

"I see this as an important opportunity to reaffirm our established support for Common Core," said Commissioner Richard M. Freeland. "Here in the Commonwealth the standards are providing a strong foundation for new assessments and improved collaboration between our high schools and colleges."

Massachusetts public higher education leaders joining the coalition include:

**Robert V. Antonucci**, President, Fitchburg State University  
**Gail Carberry**, President, Quinsigamond Community College  
**Robert Caret**, President, University of Massachusetts  
**Carole A. Cowan**, President, Middlesex Community College  
**John L. Cox**, President, Cape Cod Community College  
**Pam Y. Eddinger**, President, Bunker Hill Community College

**Lane A. Glenn**, President, Northern Essex Community College  
**Ellen Kennedy**, President, Berkshire Community College  
**Robert A. Martin**, Interim President, Framingham State University  
**Patricia Maguire Meservey**, President, Salem State University  
**J. Keith Motley**, Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston  
**Elizabeth Preston**, Interim President, Westfield State University

“A strong K-12 Common Core enables a true alignment of college entry standards,” said Pam Eddinger, President of Bunker Hill Community College. “Our students need an elegant and well-defined curricular path from kindergarten to college graduation. We owe our students that clear guidance.”

Among other policy positions, *Higher Ed for Higher Standards* believes the Common Core standards can help colleges and universities in their efforts to reduce remediation rates and help more students succeed in college.

A major initiative led by the Department and campuses is now underway to overhaul remedial (developmental) education and make expectations for college success much clearer for students. Here in Massachusetts, 65% of community college students place into remedial math coursework which can impact their long-term success in higher education.

The *Higher Ed for Higher Standards* coalition is based on three principles:

1. **Every state should insist on K-12 academic standards that adequately prepare students for college and careers so that every young person has the opportunity to pursue college, or quality training and careers, after high school.** The Common Core State Standards were developed by states to serve this goal and represent a significant improvement over most states’ previous standards.
2. **New assessments aligned to the Common Core standards are equally critical.** States’ current high school tests do not adequately measure whether students have mastered the new, higher standards. More sophisticated assessment instruments are necessary to provide better feedback to teachers, parents and students, and offer more meaningful information to colleges on students’ postsecondary preparation.
3. **Higher education has a clear and compelling stake in this debate.** Effective implementation of the Common Core standards and aligned assessments is an important step toward improving college readiness, reducing remediation rates and improving completion rates in two- and four-year institutions and job-training programs.

Looking ahead, *Higher Ed for Higher Standards* members across the states have committed to helping raise public awareness about the importance of the standards and making their voices heard with state policymakers, urging them to stay the course on career-and-college-readiness expectations.

*Higher Ed for Higher Standards* is a project of the Collaborative for Student Success, a grant-making initiative created with the pooled resources of a diverse group of regional and national education foundations committed to improving public education.

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