



# Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

## School-to-College Database and Reports

### Background

In 2005, Massachusetts was one of ten states selected to receive a National Governors Association (NGA) Honor States Grant to increase high school graduation rates and improve college readiness.

As part of this initiative and with additional funding from the Nellie Mae Foundation, the MA Board of Higher Education (BHE) and MA Dept of Education (DOE) worked together to build a data management system to allow the Commonwealth to track the performance of public high school graduates who enroll in Massachusetts public postsecondary institutions.

This streamlined and novel approach to education data systems will enable the Commonwealth to measure the progress of Massachusetts students and the effectiveness of education policies, that will ultimately promote the college and career readiness and success for every public high school graduate.

### Details

The *School-to-College Database* is the result of merging two public education data systems – the DOE public K12 system (SIMS) and the BHE public higher education system (HEIRS).

The *School-to-College Report* will be drawn from the database. An overall state report will be produced, as well as individual reports for each public high school in the Commonwealth that enrolls ten or more students in a Massachusetts college or university, detailing their graduates' performance within the system of public higher education. The main purpose of both the state and individual high school reports is to assess the variables that influence student progress toward earning a postsecondary degree and to promote discussion and action—statewide, within regions, and at high schools—about the academic preparation and performance of the Commonwealth's public school students.

The *School-to-College Report* will include data on the following:

- Enrollment
- Enrollment in developmental coursework<sup>1</sup>
- First-to-second year persistence rates<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Development coursework prepares students for college-level work and does not count towards degree completion.

- Post-secondary institutions where graduates attend
- College GPA and credits earned

Data will be broken down by race/ethnicity, gender, students' performance on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Exam tests and other variables, such as low income status.

### Next Steps

The BHE/DOE team will generate the state report and the individual reports for public high schools during the winter of 2008. The state report will be posted on both the DOE and the BHE websites in February 2008. The individual reports will be delivered via a secure portal from the DOE in February 2008, and will later be posted on the DOE website for the public.

The BHE and DOE have organized a series of regional workshops for the spring of 2008 that will bring together high schools and postsecondary institutions to discuss the Report's findings and develop partnerships committed to improving college readiness. Dr. David Conley, nationally renowned for his work on college readiness, and his staff at the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) at the University of Oregon have been selected to conduct the workshops and will provide specific strategies to increase college readiness and alignment between high schools and colleges. High schools enrolling high percentages of low-income students will be given priority for participation.

In the coming years, the team plans to enhance the *School-to-College Database* by including a more extensive set of variables. In the near future, the *School-to-College Report* will include information on student majors, college graduation rates, MassCore completion rates and trends over time.

The work of the BHE/DOE team will have a significant influence on the quality of preparation for Massachusetts' students as they enter college and the workforce. This team has been regarded nationally as a role model for the coordination of interagency data sharing, reporting and assessment efforts.

<sup>2</sup> Persistence is the rate of students who enroll in a post-secondary institution in the fall and returned the following fall for a second year.