



# Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

## Massachusetts College and Career Web Portal

### Background

In 2005, Massachusetts was named one of 10 "honor states" by the National Governors Association, and was awarded a two-year, \$2 million grant to reform high schools and enhance college readiness statewide. This money has been used to launch several critical initiatives at both the K12 and higher education levels, including the development of an Algebra II exam, a P-16 "School-to-College" database, development of a core curriculum to better prepare students for college, and early assessment of college readiness while students are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, \$500,000 was used for a public service advertising campaign designed to encourage high school students to "think again" about going to college and taking the necessary steps to prepare while in high school.

Ads drive viewers to [www.ReadySetGotoCollege.com](http://www.ReadySetGotoCollege.com), an informational website without the functionality envisioned for the web portal. It is our intent is to use ReadySetGotoCollege as the foundation for the Massachusetts College and Career Readiness Web Portal.

### Vision

The Massachusetts College and Career Readiness Web Portal will provide a fully interactive, web-based platform to help students plan for, research and be prepared for college and careers. Access would be free and available to all Massachusetts students beginning as early as middle school, as well as their families, teachers and guidance counselors.

The overall goal is to create a widely-used "one-stop shopping" website, or "portal," to help Massachusetts students complete high school, plan for and be ready for college, and succeed once they get there. The site would provide guidance and support around taking appropriate coursework and tests in middle and high school; thinking early about potential areas of study, careers and professions to pursue; finding the right college; determining potential costs to attend college; and seeking potential sources of financial aid, among other steps. The site would be free and available to all Massachusetts students.

The web portal will help in the state's efforts to improve college and career readiness and ultimately prepare a more educated

workforce – something that all Massachusetts residents would benefit from.

The development and future success of this web portal will depend on the active support and participation of all stakeholders, including K-12 and higher education leaders and institutions, workforce development leaders, organizations working with students on college readiness and financial aid, members of the business community, the legislature and state government.

### Model and Next Steps

The Massachusetts College and Career Web Portal concept has been modeled after a similar, very successful site in North Carolina, [www.CFNC.org](http://www.CFNC.org), which has helped increase the college-going rate by nine percent since its launch five years ago. The Massachusetts web portal would be designed to enhance the ongoing partnership between the Department of Education and the Board of Higher Education to develop a seamless P-16 system of education from pre-school through college. Its ultimate goal would be to help ensure that all Massachusetts students graduate from high school well prepared for college and careers. In some states, such as Rhode Island which is launching a College & Career Web Portal, workforce development agencies have provided significant funding to support the initiative.

The Board of Higher Education is currently working with an outside consultant to put together a business plan around the development of the web portal. Some components of the business plan include the following:

- *Stakeholder buy-in/steering committee*
- *Development of mission/vision/outcomes*
- *Focus groups and surveys (students, parents, superintendents, guidance counselors, higher ed leaders/admissions/financial aid)*
- *Selection of operational model*
- *Technical and staffing requirements*
- *Data collection*
- *Development of preliminary budget, including initial investment and Yr 2 and Yr 3 forecasts*
- *Final business plan*