

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education**



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

**Early College Program Designation
Application Companion
Spring 2021**

For applicants seeking Designation in Spring 2021 for school year 2021-2022 enrollment

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Document Rationale

This companion document is designed to provide important information on the Designation process and requirements, as well as context for the criteria to be met under each of the five Guiding Principles. The Designation Criteria that form the basis of the application stem from the original [Massachusetts Early College Designation Criteria \(2017\)](#), approved by both the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as the Board of Higher Education. This companion document is not meant to replace the framework or general scope and sequence of the Guiding Principles, but does provide updated alignment of, and clarification for, the requirements of the most current Designation application, available online (as a survey instrument supported by Alchemer). For a more in-depth history of the development of the Designation and application process, please refer to the 2017 document.

Current Working Definition of Massachusetts Early College (2021)

Massachusetts Early College provides a structured program of study and supports that increases college success and career readiness; prioritizing students historically underserved in higher education.

As part of Early College, cohorts of students:

- Take at least 12 credits of strategically sequenced college courses during their regular (or intentionally redesigned and integrated) high school day, at no cost to themselves or their families
- Receive enhanced academic and non-academic guidance and support prior to the beginning of, and during, college coursework to ensure that they successfully complete rigorous courses and thrive in the college environment
- Learn how their academic pathways are related and connected to career opportunities
- Benefit from being part of an Early College community that eases the transition from high school to college
- Graduate high school with a significant number of college credits, habits, and skills needed to be successful in college and career, increasing the likelihood they will continue with college after high school and reducing the cost and time to degree completion.

The Concept of Early College

The original concept of Early College, developed in the 1960's, was a means to re-engage high-achieving high school students in their learning by challenging them with college coursework. However, it was the "turning inside out" of this model in the early 2000's which truly brought out the transformative power of Early College as a way to rethink high school and college for traditionally underserved students. By restructuring the model, to prioritize students the least prepared for college, Early College became a highly effective method to broadly and deeply impact the trajectories of high school graduates who may not otherwise have successfully completed a college degree.

In 2002, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Early College High School Initiative, redefining the concept of Early College programs as full high schools situated on college campuses for students who traditionally lacked access to college and were projected to be underprepared to pursue college-level coursework upon graduation of high school. The underlying belief behind the initiative was that if these students were provided access to

rigorous learning experiences similar to those offered in higher education but while still in high school with intentional support and additional preparation, they could successfully complete college coursework and gain the confidence needed to continue the pursuit of higher education after high school. To significantly upend social-economic barriers to postsecondary education, these programs typically covered the cost of the college coursework reducing the overall cost to degree completion. Over time, the success of these programs demonstrated that underserved students were able to thrive in an Early College environment and earn postsecondary degrees at a higher rate than their peers.

In time, Early College has become one of the most successful ways to rethink high school, college, and the pathway through both, facilitating growth and development for tens of thousands of students. According to a report by the American Institutes for Research, students who attended Early College were significantly more likely than a matched control group to enroll in college and earn a college degree within six years after expected high school graduation. In fact, more than 3 out of 5 Early College students enrolled in college by the end of high school.¹

Early College High Schools, and later adaptations of that model which included Early College programs within schools and districts, generally consist of several components considered essential for the success of providing underprepared students the tools they needed to accelerate their learning to include college coursework. These components include:

- Intentional recruitment and enrollment strategies that inform and encourage traditionally underserved students and families to participate
- The development of individualized student plans to outline articulated academic pathways and help students understand the purpose of their coursework and how it connects to future career opportunities.
- Wraparound academic and social supports aimed at providing timely and tiered support to encourage EC students' intrinsic worth and amplify their confidence to succeed at the postsecondary level
- The connection of academic courses to career choice through exploration and immersion opportunities
- Intentional and structured access to partnering college campuses as part of the overall strategy to motivate first-generation to college students.,

For the reasons above, both free-standing "Wall to Wall" Early College high schools in which all students participate, as well as Early College programs built within a high school, demand significant investment in redesign, school programming, and curriculum and support alignment. The investment in reimagining learning models for students is worthwhile and seeks to bridge achievement gaps as well as increase higher education degree attainment for historically underrepresented groups.

¹ American Institute for Research, *Early College, Continued Success: Longer Term Impact of Early College High Schools*, September 2019

The Context of the Early College Initiative in Massachusetts

While the Gates Foundation did not fund individual high schools in Massachusetts, the Commonwealth took notice of the impact of these programs across the country. In 2016, the Barr Foundation partnered with the Commonwealth to sponsor an independent report, "[Breaking Down Silos to Put Students on the Path to Success](#)."² The report confirmed that Early College is a promising model which could be a critically important way to narrow educational opportunity gaps across groups of students; that aligning state policy goals with the promotion of Early College could have a deeply meaningful impact on scaling improved outcomes in postsecondary completion; and that existing Early College programs within community colleges and high schools in Massachusetts were a powerful base from which to build a broader statewide Early College initiative. The report also suggested that this initiative in turn could have a profound impact on the Commonwealth's economy.

Based on the national research, the report prioritized five essential elements of successful Early College programs that were ultimately adopted as the framework for the Massachusetts Designation Criteria for Early College programs. These five guiding principles are:

- Principle 1: Equitable Access
- Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways
- Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support
- Principle 4: Connection to Career
- Principle 5: Effective Partnerships

In January 2017, the Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education jointly approved the establishment of a Massachusetts Early College initiative based on the five principles. In order to develop and evolve the initiative, the Boards also created an Early College Joint Committee.³ The ECJC was charged with developing an Early College Designation process for the Commonwealth based on the five identified principles and catalyzing the successful growth of high-quality Early College programs in Massachusetts. The ECJC meets regularly and issues final approvals for all Early College Program Designation in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Early College Program Designation

The purpose of Designation for Massachusetts Early College programs is three-fold: 1) To identify current models that are aligned with the five guiding principles and support their work, 2) to promote the development of new Early College programs and to establish coherent, and unifying expectations for these programs, and 3) most importantly, to prioritize efforts to increase equity in postsecondary access and completion by promulgating the Early College model to alleviate many of the barriers preventing underserved students from realizing their full educational potential in Massachusetts.

² Parthenon-EY, *Breaking down silos to put students on the path to success: The promise of early college in Massachusetts*, December 2016.

³ A five person joint committee of both boards, which includes the Chair of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Chair of the Board of Higher Education, one additional member from each board, and the Secretary of Education and on which the Commissioners of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Education serve as non-voting members as well.

The Designated Early College programs also fit into a wider initiative of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education to promote high quality college and career pathways. These pathways include Innovation Pathways and Chapter 74 (vocational training) programs. As a collective, these pathways provide participating students in the Commonwealth with supportive, rigorous academic experiences and career development education relevant to their next steps after high school. State agencies work collaboratively with schools and districts to provide students with equitable access to a pathway deemed a strong individualized fit, with on and off ramps across different pathways throughout high school, to ensure that they graduate with a well-designed post-secondary plan, and a robust knowledge of Massachusetts' workforce opportunities with realities for employment.

Designation Overview and Process

To support the preparation of an Early College Designation Application, an [Early College Readiness Checklist](#) is available in Appendix A as a reference guide as to whether a program is ready to pursue a Designation. In addition, a copy of the latest version of the Part A Application is available for reference in Appendix D.

In order to receive Designation as a Massachusetts Early College program, applicants must demonstrate, with evidence, a capability to effectively implement all five of the guiding principles. Implicit within this framework are the tactical components of a Massachusetts high quality career pathway more broadly: advising, work-based learning, postsecondary linkages, integrated instruction, credential attainment, and alignment with labor market data. Applicants will note that these components are embedded within the implementation of the five guiding principles. Furthermore, it is essential that programs implement strategies specifically aimed at increasing and supporting the inclusion of traditionally underserved students. These strategies include increasing awareness of Early College opportunities, developing a community of practice, supporting the alignment of high school curricula to existing postsecondary pathways, designing appropriate staffing, and funding supports for scaling up programs as well as sustainable funding for students. In 2019, the Rennie Center published an [EC Blueprint](#) to assist in planning an Early College program for Designation in Massachusetts. Since 2020, NS4Ed has been providing technical assistance to support the development of Early College programs on behalf of the Commonwealth. For more information, please contact Dr. Joseph Goins, jgoins@ns4ed.com or Kristin Hunt, Kristin.e.hunt@mass.gov

The Designation process will typically be offered in two stages—Part A and Part B. Early College programs wishing to seek an official Designation from the Commonwealth first apply for Designation through Part A of the application.

Part A

- State recognizes an Early College Program applicant for having completed sufficient planning and design in alignment with the Preliminary Criteria as framed by the Guiding Principles.*

**An applicant may not be considered for Part B of the application process if Part A has not been approved.*

Part B

- Requires that the applicant has fulfilled essential elements of the Early College program design and has provided sufficient evidence that the program has enrolled students as

defined by the Designation Criteria or that the applicant has developed all necessary infrastructure to begin enrolling students upon Designation.

Upon submission of the Part B application, an interview will be scheduled with program staff and department staff to provide an opportunity to answer questions and elaborate on program design. Upon approval of Part B of the Designation application, the Early College Program Director will make recommendations for Designation status to the Early College Joint Committee.

Once the ECJC has approved Designation, programs will be notified and the expectation of five-year performance contracts will commence, with annual reporting obligations and a review/check-in after the first three years. Designation status will be approved for a five-year period which will be renewable if programs have demonstrated they are able to maintain the criteria during this time. Each year, programs will receive an individual workbook of Data Dashboards and submit an annual report. In addition, there will be at least one formal site visit, typically scheduled in the third year of Designation.

The goal of the Early College Designation process is to simultaneously promote innovation in the development of Early College programs while providing clear, coherent, and unifying expectations through priority indicators and benchmarks as to the most effective structures for Early College. Furthermore, the intention of this Designation process is to support and facilitate collaboration among Early College programs across the state, and among the Departments themselves. This will ensure that as Early College within Massachusetts expands, programs will benefit from successful local and national models. Finally, the Early College Designation process is intended to be the mechanism by which the Commonwealth directs and prioritizes state level financial investment in this field.

Applicant Criteria

Applicants for designation must be structured partnerships between one 2 year and/or 4 year institution(s) of higher education (IHE) and one K-12 partner, and both/all partners must apply jointly under the signature of the college president and the district superintendent/charter school leader. Applicant partners must be a Massachusetts public high school, a Massachusetts public institution of higher education, or an independent institution of higher education, provided that such an institution is based in Massachusetts and has degree granting authority in Massachusetts. A formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the applicant partners will be required as a component of the Part B Designation Application process. Applicants may apply for a cohort program within a larger school, or an entire early college high school. The Commonwealth aims to build programming that serves larger cohorts of students in order to build strong and efficient pathways for student groups who may have been traditionally underserved in higher education.

Based on research, the most effective early college models are those that are either a self-contained school, or those with a critical mass cohort size, to allow for growth and exploration of students and prioritization of program priorities within respective institutions. One aim of this initiative, therefore, is to support this larger cohort model as well as the expansion of existing programs. That said, at this stage of Early College growth in Massachusetts, we appreciate that some programs are in nascent and startup stages, and in other cases, expansion is challenged by concerns about feasibility. Therefore, while there are no minimum initial cohort size

requirements for applicants, the ECJC is likely to prioritize proposals with critical mass and may defer approval for plans it judges unlikely to be sustainable or cost-effective.

II. Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are the framework of the Massachusetts Early College Designation Criteria so they must be fully addressed as part of the Designation application. Below is a description of each Principle, as well as the criteria used in each part of the application to determine whether that criteria has been met.

Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access

Designated programs should prioritize students underrepresented in education enrollment and completion. To facilitate this, programs should be structured to eliminate barriers to student participation. Design might therefore include, but not be limited to, tuition-free participation, open enrollment without regard to prior academic performance, student supports to promote success, scalability, multiple entry points for students, and student supports to prepare students for entry into the program.

The Designation Criteria pursuant to this guiding principle are focused on the goal of closing achievement gaps and offering educational models to leverage students' own personal assets and help them thrive. Research of early college models nationally has demonstrated the effectiveness of designing early college to ensure equitable access. As such, the Massachusetts Early College designation is designed with the goal of broadening access to college through this model.

Therefore, this principle aimed towards keeping entry into early college pathways as open as possible, particularly with regard to not using prior academic performance to exclude students from participating. It is also focused on prioritizing program design and enrollments for students who have historically been underrepresented in higher education. Therefore, designation applicants are encouraged to make real, targeted, and thoughtful efforts to aggressively recruit students who may be the first in their family to go to college, who are part of demographic groups historically underrepresented in higher education, who may be English language learners, or who may otherwise not yet possess a perception that they may be a college going student.

Planning Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access

Part A

1. Analysis of school data to demonstrate need

Data is used to analyze school demographics with a focus on students who are less represented in both advanced coursework opportunities and postsecondary education. Programs should provide an explanation of how this data analysis will be used to identify and prioritize students for recruitment on which students are less represented in postsecondary education, as well as in any current advanced coursework opportunities. *At a minimum, students in the Early College program should reflect the demographic make-up of the underserved student population in the school's overall student body.* Programs are also encouraged to utilize the postsecondary Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) to identify students who may be at risk of not attending college and could be supported through the Early College program.

2. Initial plan for program scale

Building off the analysis of school demographic data, program has outlined a proposed plan for scaling the Early College program.

3. Outreach and recruitment plan

The program has identified an initial plan for outreach and recruitment of students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education and would benefit from Early College, including students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and students who are first generation to attend college.

- a. If applicable, the program should identify how they might leverage existing college access programming at their schools to identify and support students who would benefit from the program. In doing so, they may need to expand the current enrollment requirements of their existing programs to be more inclusive of all students.

4. Enrollment policy

Program design includes an enrollment policy that is as inclusive as possible and enables underrepresented students to participate in Early College programming and be supported so they can successfully earn a minimum of 12 college credits during their high school career.

- a. Program enrollment policies should be as broad as possible. *Students should not be excluded from participation based on prior or current GPA, test scores, or placement scores.*
- b. Enrollments should not rely solely on teacher recommendations or other highly subjective processes. Whenever possible, students should not be excluded based on prior disciplinary records.
- c. From the start, programs should plan to incorporate necessary academic preparation and supports to ensure participants are able to meet multiple measures of college readiness by 11th grade.
- d. Enrollment policy is subject to and may account for appropriate processes to address suitability for special populations of students, such as those with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Programs may also be designed to require students to meet reasonable benchmarks of attendance, engagement, and performance to continue participation.
- e. If the number of student applicants exceeds program capacity, participation will be determined by a lottery among applicants to ensure

equitable access to the program while prioritizing traditionally underserved students.

Demonstrating Principle 1: Equitable Access Part B

1. Full description of program scale

Program provides projections on long-term design that reflect a reasonable plan to enroll students at a significant scale relative to school/school district size and to the proportion of historically underserved students. While there is no specific definition of appropriate scale, the program should be of significant size to positively affect a college-going culture. A general recommendation is the Early College program should be at least 15% of the impacted grade levels. Additionally, the program should be structured to be financially sustainable. These programs require intensive supports and without scale, it is difficult to maintain the level of resources needed if affecting small numbers of total students. Projections on long-term design should include:

- a. Longitudinal data showing at least five years of projected student enrollment trends within the program.
- b. Needs assessment data demonstrating potential district need for such a program in the district or region. A needs assessment could include: high school graduation rates, postsecondary entry/persistence/completion rates, skills gaps within the regional labor force, economic trends, community support, etc.

2. Finalized outreach and recruitment plans

Program provides a fully developed written outreach and recruitment plan, including a timeline of recruitment and enrollment events, and recruitment materials for distribution at feeder schools and other appropriate locations in the community (e.g., recruitment schedule).

- a. Written communication plan for targeting identified audiences, parents, community members, school board, higher education personnel, business, and industry partners, etc.
- b. Materials used for outreach and recruitment, including but not limited to, brochures and marketing in English as well as Spanish and/or relevant second language(s).
- c. Calendar of family/parent outreach events and other opportunities to educate students, counselors, principals, parents, the school board, business and industry partners, and community members on the Early College program.

3. Finalized enrollment policy

Program has a fully developed written enrollment policy that includes:

- a. Information on how to apply and enroll in the Early College program, including any minimal enrollment requirements.

- b. Clear information on what the student and family commitment will entail over the course of the student's high school career.
- c. Clear information on the academic pathways available for EC students and the multiple entry points into college course-taking.
- d. Information on how a student would exit the program, so the student will be able to seamlessly transition out of the program and back into the traditional or a different high school program.
- e. Description of potential lottery process if Early College applications exceed enrollment capacity.

Guiding Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways

Designated programs should be structured around clear and detailed student academic pathways from secondary to post-secondary education with regard to coursework, sequencing, and experiences beyond the classroom. Prior to students choosing a pathway, programs should offer students substantive exposure to career opportunities, allowing them to make an informed decision about which pathway to pursue. Within these pathways, students should be expected to complete at least twelve college credits that are transferable and count towards an associate or bachelor's degree pathways. Students should also be exposed to the authentic experience and academic rigor of postsecondary education. This would require validating that courses are as rigorous as college level courses offered on campuses. Further, programs should prioritize allowing students to take at least one or more courses on college and university campuses where possible, and otherwise offer experiences intended to acculturate students to the postsecondary experience.

Description

The Designated Early College program design should include clearly articulated, thoughtfully designed, and fully integrated pathway(s) for students. Guided academic pathways should be broad enough to ensure that students experience flexibility in their exploration of options, as well as provide coherence, clarity, and connection within their pathway choice. Early College pathways are meant to build upon the work of post-secondary institutions to develop an associate or bachelor's degree pathways, particularly between the public two- and four- year institutions.⁴ Applicants should, at

⁴ The Department of Higher Education, in collaboration with the three segments of public higher education, has developed "A2B Mapped" degrees in specific disciplines and metamajors that seek to create a seamless transition from two-year to four-year institutions. To the extent possible, high school pathways and course offerings should be aligned with the "A2B" mapped degrees, and these pathways should be an essential part of the consideration of any Early College program design process.

the program design phase, think deeply about the how they plan to on-ramp students in need of additional academic and nonacademic supports prior to college coursework, as well as the curriculum alignment and support that will be needed during college coursework and embed that into the Early College experience. The college courses and credits offered to Early College students should be carefully chosen in terms of their flexibility and transferability to degree programs. Courses should meet both MassCore high school requirements, as well as MassTransfer college requirements to ensure maximum credit attainment towards an associate and/or a bachelor's degree.

While Early College Designation does not require that an academic pathway be specifically related to a field of study or career, it is often helpful structurally to have meta-majors associated with pathways (i.e. STEM, Business, Liberal Arts, etc.). In order to ensure maximum credit transferability, it is recommended that Early College pathways not be built around specific technical programs but rather focus more on the obtainment of general education requirements which serve as the foundation of multiple degree programs. While short-term credentials are a possibility as part of a guided pathway, the overall goal of Designation is to support the obtainment of associate and/or bachelor's degrees. Therefore, credits associated with short term credentials that either do not apply to a degree program or are not transferable beyond the awarding institution, should not be included. Early College Designation expectations do require that through guided academic pathways, students will, at a minimum, be educated as to their postsecondary education and career options and the connection between both.

Planning Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways Part A

1. **Outline of comprehensive guided Early College pathway plan**

Outline of program design that has academic pathway(s) start as early as possible for high school students. When creating outline, programs should consider the following

- a. By 10th grade, students will formally enroll in a cohorted Early College, program and begin structured preparatory and/or credit-bearing academic work.
- b. Program provides students and their families with the scope and sequence of the high school and college coursework that allows them to both meet the requirements of MassCore and earn a minimum of 12 credits of college credits that also meet the requirements of the MassTransfer program.
- c. Program identifies any high school credits that academically prepare students or serve as prerequisites to on-ramp to college coursework.
- d. Early College students will participate in MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) through the incorporation and integration of an online tool used for college and career counseling (e.g., Naviance or MEFA Your Plan for the Future) that is recognized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.⁵ Students will be guided through the MyCAP process so that

⁵ Applicants for EC Designation are required to complete MYCAP training and implement the MyCAP process for their Early College participants (and ideally their school population as a whole).

they develop the social, emotional and academic skills necessary to be a successful college students, build a clear understanding of the postsecondary pathways available to them, and develop an understanding of how their courses of study support and facilitate their career aspirations.

2. Initial course schedules for Early College participants

Program outlines scheduling plans that would ensure the program takes place during the school day and that all students in the program would have the opportunity to pursue at least 12 college credits.

3. Description of delivery of college coursework and related requirements

The program includes a description of when and where college coursework will be completed and how it is articulated with a high school's graduation requirements. The minimum of twelve required college credits should take place during the secondary school day.⁶ If a program relies on hybrid delivery of college credits, students should not be required to miss any high school instructional time in order to complete requirements of college credits. Programs should also think carefully about how they will address digital equity for online courses.

4. College experience

Description of plans to acculturate Early College participants to the partner college student experience.

**Demonstrating Principle 2: Enhanced Academic Pathways
Part B**

1. Finalized comprehensive guided pathway plan

Program is designed so that academic pathway(s) start as early as possible for high school students and include a comprehensive plan for all of the high school. Plan will address the following:

- a. Plan demonstrates that by 10th grade, students will formally enroll in a cohorted Early College, program and begin structured preparatory and/or credit-bearing academic work.
- b. Crosswalk for students and families with the scope and sequence of the high school and college coursework that allows them to meet the requirements of MassCore, meet high school graduation requirements and earn a minimum of 12 credits of transferable college credit
- c. List of high school credits that academically prepare students or serve as prerequisites to on-ramp to college coursework.
- d. Sample MyCAP plan to demonstrate how Early College students will participate in MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) through the incorporation and integration of an online tool used for college and career counseling (e.g., Naviance or MEFA Your Plan for the Future) that is recognized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.⁷ Students will be guided through the MyCAP process so that they develop the social, emotional and academic skills necessary to be a

⁶ Programming can occur outside of the typical secondary school day hours if the EC partnership asks for an extended day commitment AND the school provides all of the services needed for students to equitably access the full programming (including transportation, tuition costs, textbooks, required technology etc.)

⁷ Applicants for EC Designation are required to complete MYCAP training and implement the MyCAP process for their Early College participants (and ideally their school population as a whole).

successful college students, build a clear understanding of the postsecondary pathways available to them, and develop an understanding of how their courses of study support and facilitate their career aspirations.

2. Policy on college course placement

The program should have a written policy for placement of students into college courses that includes strategies for assuring student preparedness. Early College partners are strongly encouraged to explore multiple measures beyond Accuplacer to determine student placement.

3. Scope and sequence

The program should develop and provide a scope and sequence evidencing a course of study allowing for all students who complete the program as designed to graduate with at least 12 college credits.

- a. It is strongly encouraged, that at a minimum, students complete English Composition I or the equivalent and a college-level mathematics course prior to completion of the Early College program. Students should be identified as more interested in a STEM or non-STEM pathway for the purposes of completing a math course that will be appropriate for their field of study.
- b. Program design should reflect an effort to ensure that student course taking aligns with MassTransfer Pathways. As such, it is recommended that the remaining course sequence be mapped with major requirements for a particular A2B Mapped Degree Pathways or with the MassTransfer GenEd Foundation.
- c. Program design should also reflect a pathway that allows a student to complete either a two-year or four-year degree, should they wish. As such, it is strongly recommended that program design reflect course sequencing aligned with admissions requirements for the Massachusetts public four-year institutions and that the program is designed such that students complete MassCore. If, for some reason, program design does not align, applicants must articulate the rationale.

4. Finalized course and program schedules

students' schedules, including college coursework, must take place during the high school day. *If the structure of the program requires a Student Learning Time waiver, the explanation for that waiver should be included in the application for final Designation. This may be needed if the programs calls for 12th graders to be enrolled full-time in college coursework.*

5. Evidence of curriculum alignment

The program must provide evidence of curricular alignment between high school and college courses.

6. Early College program description

The program must provide the Early College descriptions within the high school course catalogs or the additions to existing catalogs, including program outlines and course descriptions and syllabi when available.

Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support

Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.

Early College should be designed not as a boutique program, but should reflect a holistic program design in contemplation of the lived experiences of the prioritized student populations. Specifically, programs are encouraged to develop student support in consideration of a whole student, in contemplation of student development broadly, development of academic proficiency and support related to barriers faced both externally and with regard to academic course taking.

Planning for Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support Part A

1. **Identification of academic and nonacademic challenges**

The program plan identifies potential academic and nonacademic challenges for potential student participants.

2. **Outline of academic and non-academic supports**

Program design includes an outline of supports for academic, nonacademic, and career development. Plans should include, but not be limited to academic supports such as tutoring, counseling/advising, and career exploration and activities. Supports should be differentiated to meet the specific needs of all students participating in the programming and incorporate evidence-based strategies.

3. **Outline of support staff plan for both academic and nonacademic supports.**

Application includes a name of an appropriate contact at each institution for student support. Contact information for this individual is provided, along with a description of the role. If the role requires staff to be hired, a proposed job description is included.

Demonstrating Principle 3: Enhanced Student Supports Part B

1. **Comprehensive plan of academic and non-academic supports**

The Early College program must have a developed plan for ongoing academic and non-academic support for students on an Early College pathway. The plan must specifically address intentional differentiated supports for English Language Learners, students with disabilities as needed, as well as any other intentional supports for students historically underrepresented in higher education to address potential inequities in access. Plans should be integrated between secondary and post-secondary partners to offer Early College students seamless support and it should be clearly stated which institution will be responsible for which aspects of support. The comprehensive plan should include:

- a. A detailed master calendar (with location/mode of delivery referenced) of academic and non-academic support activities for students, including tutoring, application assistance, financial aid counseling, and college and career advising.
- b. Examples of Early College student schedules indicating time for academic supports including tutoring, advising/guidance time, college preparation support time, and time for career development. These schedules should include when and where students are able to access support. Programs should avoid situations where students are expected to only access supports on their own accord or outside of their daily schedule. Program should clearly delineate how supports are specifically designed or employed to support Early College work. In addition, they may address appropriate expectations around behavior, health, and safety procedures for students on college campuses and the supports available to ensure these procedures are met.
- c. Confirm staffing for both academic and non-academic support.

2. Communication policy

The program has a written communication policy on program and course requirements and supports for students at risk of failing dual enrollment course, this would include information on supports for helping the student get back on track, and actions that may be taken if a student fails a course or multiple courses.

Guiding Principle 4: Connection to Career

Designated programs should expose students to a variety of career opportunities including greater depth in careers relevant to their selected pathway, for example, by providing opportunities for targeted workforce and career skills development, career counseling, and elements of experiential and workplace learning.

This guiding principle dictates that Designated Early College programs should be designed to support college and career readiness such that students are expected to develop awareness of their educational growth and development while understanding the manner in which their educational path is connected to career opportunities. This connection should be framed broadly, to allow students to explore career possibilities and to more generally develop foundational employability skills necessary to thrive in any work environment. To review the components of a high-quality career immersion experience, Appendix D is available as reference.

Planning for Principle 4: Connections to Careers Part A

1. Outline of college and career counseling plan

Program is designed to incorporate in depth and comprehensive college and career counseling that aligns to the necessary elements of MyCAP plans (as defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). The program design incorporates inclusion of early career development and career and postsecondary education exploration, and is grounded in employability skills and labor market information. Students have the opportunity to participate in career awareness, exploration and immersion activities.

2. List of possible area employer partners

Program seeks to engage area employers when relevant to support connections between education and career.

Demonstrating Principle 4: Connections to Careers
Part B

1. Plan for college and career counseling and career development activities

The program design should include career development education activities for Early College students, by grade level, that includes awareness, exploration, and/or immersion (internships, proposed career pathways) that consider labor market information. The provided plan for these activities must include evidence of incorporation and integration of an online tool for use in college and career counseling (e.g., Naviance or MEFA Your Plan for the Future) that is recognized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in supporting the MyCAP process.

a. Description of higher education partner involvement

The plan for career activities for Early College students should include identification of the higher education partner's commitment and resources to help support connections between education and career.

2. Final list of employer partner contacts

The plan for career activities for Early College students should include any relevant specific employer contacts in order to demonstrate a commitment of community businesses and other partners, with the goal of exposing students to a variety of career options and internship opportunities.

Guiding Principle 5: Effective Partnerships

Designated programs should be a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and one public secondary school and/or district, and may include one or more employers. Partnerships should present evidence that the program is consistent with collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding detailing the nature of governance, budget, sustainability, scheduling, respective responsibilities, and performance measures. Programs should be sufficient in size to capture economies of scale goals and to ensure long-term sustainability.

Fundamentally, an effective and sustainable Early College program necessitates a fully integrated partnership between the school, district, and postsecondary institution. Tacit agreement to collaborate is not sufficient—deep commitment to partnership and continued full collaboration on both sides is imperative. While designation purposes therefore require substantive evidence of these partnerships in the form of a MOU, what will be most important to maintain these partnerships will be clear and respected relationships between instructors and leadership at both institutions.

Planning for Principle 5: Effective Partnerships Part A

1. **Preliminary partnership plan**

Plan will indicate that the K-12 school, and postsecondary institution will be fully integrated partners in the program work. Roles and responsibilities of each partner during the planning process are clearly identified.

2. **Identification of Early College leadership**

Application details the leadership at each partner institution empowered to make decisions around Early College at the individual K-12 institution, the K-12 district, the higher education institution, and any other major stakeholder. Each partner has identified personnel empowered with the authority to enter memoranda of understanding discussions.

3. **Identification of key costs**

Plan will detail initial proposals identifying key costs associated with the program for both institutions, including—but not limited to—per credit student support and student transportation. Applicant partners must have a realistic plan to sustainably support a high-quality program across all partners and have identified a necessary funding structure to achieve that goal for the initial three years.

4. **Outline of logistics of pathway plans**

Application provides an outline of the logistics of the Early College pathways regarding graduation requirements, course taking requirements, and pathways to credentials.

5. **Outline of plans for collective bargaining discussions**

The proposal outlines plan to hold discussions concerning collective bargaining agreements, at both the K-12 and higher education level, as needed. Where there is a requirement for local bargaining relating to any aspect of the pathway, local requirements must be followed.

Demonstrating Principle 5: Effective Partnerships
Part B

1. **Joint vision statement**

The program should provide a common vision statement agreed upon by partners, and affirmation of the value of the program to each partner.

2. **MOU**

Programs should provide a current, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines an active partnership between the school district and the institution of higher education (IHE) and that reference topics including, but not limited to:

- a. the location, mode of delivery, and proposed faculty of the dual credit courses offered in the Early College program
- b. the anticipated costs and planned funding sources for all instructional costs and for all support, logistical, administrative, and other activities, including but not limited to costs for tuition, fees, technology, and textbooks
- c. program coordination
- d. student support plans
- e. faculty support plans
- f. college and career advising and activity plans
- g. grading periods and policies
- h. courses of study and curriculum alignment
- i. instructional materials and instructional calendar
- j. student program enrollment and attendance policies; course enrollments by semester
- k. provisions for discontinuing Early College operation in the event that becomes necessary
- l. provisions and processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing student and teacher/instructor data to assess the progress of the Early College program
- m. policy for advising students on the transferability of all college credits offered and earned
- n. professional development for Early College faculty (including both district and IHE faculty/staff)

- o. policy to ensure the IHE transcripts college credit earned through dual credit in the same semester that credit is earned
- p. policy addressing the role of each partner in the resolution of students' issues (including conduct, investigative procedures, consequences); and
- q. indication of how often the MOU will be reviewed.

3. Performance measures and goals

A detailed plan (referenced in the MOU) on performance measure goals must be provided by the program. DESE and DHE will provide annual data reports to programs to inform their progress on these measures. Those measures should include but not be limited to the following:

- a. general enrollment and retention rates of participating students disaggregated by subgroup⁸
- b. percentage of high school participants who persist in program and course completion during high school career
- c. percentage of students that participate in MyCAP on an annual basis
- d. number of pathway activities and percentage of students who participate
- e. high school graduation rate of participating students
- f. percentage of 12th grade students completing FAFSA application and MassCore requirements
- g. percentage of participating students who gain postsecondary credits per grade level and percentage of 12th grade students that attain a minimum of 12 credits
- h. percentage of Early College graduates who enroll in a 2- or 4-year institution within 6 months of high school graduation
- i. percentage of high school graduates who persist in college on an annual basis
- j. percentage of participating students who achieve an associate or bachelor's degree within three or six years of high school graduation

3. Aggregated program information

The program's submitted application should also include the following for the program in the aggregate:

⁸ Expectation that program participation should minimally mirror the school demographics and demonstrate a prioritization of historically underserved students

- a. budgets, including estimates of both start-up costs as well as per student ongoing costs to sustain the program (with reference to the cost estimates described in the Parthenon study). Budget must outline the funding responsibilities for each institution
- b. staffing plans
- c. faculty and teacher qualifications and assignments
- d. job descriptions for individuals supporting the ECHS Program
- e. training or professional development and support plans
- f. if relevant, student mentor program plans

Appendix A: Early College Readiness Checklist

The Early College Readiness Checklist is a resource for partners to use in their planning during Part A of the designation process. Each item on the Readiness Checklist will be required in the Part B application for the designation process. Additionally, each item is closely tied to the 5 guiding principles that are essential to a successful High Quality College and Career Pathway.

	Yes	No
Have the partners had a preliminary conversation between partners with regard to making the Early College program free to all students? Guiding Principle 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the partners had a preliminary conversation with regard to an admissions process to the Early College program that promotes equitable access to all students, particularly students underserved in higher education? Have they discussed particular strategies for supporting Black and Latinx students? Guiding Principle 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the secondary institution consulted with families and students to determine interest in the proposed program? Guiding Principle 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the partners discussed which guided academic pathways they'd like to offer? Guiding Principle 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the secondary institution already use an online platform such as Naviance or MEFA Pathways that is integrated into the advising program at the school? (Aligned career and college counseling is a required piece of the Early College designation, including the guided use of MyCAP beginning in 9th grade.) Guiding Principle 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the partners had preliminary conversations about scheduling Early College students? Guiding Principle 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the partners have the ability to design schedules to allow for participation in college-credited courses without students having to miss high school class time or other HW related activities? Guiding Principle 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Have the partners discussed a preliminary plan for wrap around supports for Early College students? Guiding Principle 3</p>	[]	[]
<p>Have the partners had preliminary conversations with regard to exposing students to a variety of career pathways (i.e. internships, captstones, etc.)? Guiding Principle 4</p>	[]	[]
<p>Have the partners held preliminary conversations with employers for potential career pathways opportunities? Guiding Principle 4</p>	[]	[]
<p>Have the partners discussed designated staff for the Early College program? Guiding Principle 5</p>	[]	[]
<p>Does the IHE have the physical space available to accommodate Early College students? Guiding Principle 5</p>	[]	[]
<p>Have the partners discussed a preliminary transportation plan for Early College students to attend events, advising, and college coursework at the IHE? Guiding Principle 5</p>	[]	[]
<p>Have both partners had initial conversations with their collective bargaining representatives regarding Early College plans? Guiding Principle 5</p>	[]	[]

Appendix B: Six Core Components of a High Quality College & Career Pathway



ADVISING



LABOR MARKET DEMAND



INTEGRATED INSTRUCTION



WORK-BASED LEARNING









CREDENTIAL PREPARATION



POSTSECONDARY LINKAGES

Definition	Advising	Labor Market Demand	Integrated Instruction	Work-Based Learning	Credential Preparation	Postsecondary Linkages
	Students complete a college and career plan that identifies areas of aptitude and interest, explores career opportunities, and establishes a transition path to college, apprenticeship, and/or employment training.	Students engage in curriculum that develops both career alignment strategies and awareness of job growth opportunities across the Commonwealth. Pathway programs vary based on the specificity of the alignment to an industry sector.	Students participate in a carefully designed sequence of integrated, rigorous instructional courses aligned to the student's college and career plan.	Students participate in structured career readiness activities and career development education (CDE).	Students have the opportunity to progress towards and/or earn an industry-recognized credential and college credits toward a Certificate, Associates, or Baccalaureate degree.	Students participate in a wide range of college, apprenticeship, and employment training awareness, engagement, and preparation activities.

Component	Characteristics Distinct to IP
 Advising	Students participate in a multi-year process of college and career planning starting no later than 9th grade that is guided by counselors, uses an on-line platform to maintain the student's career and college plan, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic guidance • career awareness and exploration • college search and the development of a post-secondary plan • planning for non-academic challenges that may arise
 Labor Market Demand	Align with career opportunities in a broad sector category with high employer demand, based on regional priorities of the Workforce Skills Cabinet or other quantifiable labor market needs, including endorsements by local employers and/or the local Workforce Investment Board. A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines an active partnership between the school district(s) and one or more local employers in the applicable sector, including language that outlines the role of the employer(s) in curriculum development, career exploration, mentorship and/or work-based learning.
 Integrated Instruction	Must include a scope and sequence of a minimum of 4 courses with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 2 of the 4 courses must be technical courses related to the pathway's industry sector concentration, and; • A minimum of 2 of the 4 courses must provide the student an opportunity to gain college credits through dual-enrollment or AP/IB exams. The 2 technical courses may not overlap with the required 2 college-level courses, so long as there is a 4-course sequence. Students must complete Mass Core requirements by graduation, with the same flexibility afforded students enrolled in CTE programs.
 Work-Based Learning	Students participate in structured work readiness activities and work-based learning experiences. Students will complete 100 hours of a career immersion experience in either an internship or capstone class prior to graduation, based on MOUs with local employers.
 Credential Preparation	Students progress towards earning an industry-recognized credential or certificate relevant to foundational skills in the applicable sector. Program design should reflect an effort to align with an A2B Mapped Degree Pathway or with the MassTransfer GenEd Foundation.
 Post-Secondary Linkages	Students participate in a wide range of college and career awareness and engagement activities and develop concrete plans for post-secondary employment and/or education. A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one or more institutions of higher education, outlining student access to dual enrollment opportunities and articulation of post-secondary pathways that included stackable credentials.

Appendix C: College and Career Advising Framework

Massachusetts CCA Professional Development Series

Scope and Sequence Competencies

College and Career Readiness & MyCAP – 9th Grade

CCA PROGRAM			MyCAP
Domain	What a Student Should Know, Understand, and Be Able to Do in 9 th Grade NOTE: Statements below are adapted from CDE benchmarks, SEL competencies, and/or ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.	Implementation Strategies and Activities NOTE: Some of the strategies and activities presented here will benefit from the support of external partners, e.g., institutions of higher education, employers, and/or the state’s Connecting Activities intermediary system.	MyCAP Process and Documentation NOTE: Journal entries refer to reflections recorded in the journal section of the online platform; if your platform does NOT have this feature, students should complete reflections in Word or Google Docs and upload to their platform account.
Personal Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and personal awareness of their individual talents, interests, hopes, dreams, and passions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory activity where students identify their skills “Possible Selves” unit [to explore hopes, dreams, strengths, weaknesses, etc.] Introductory lesson orienting students to online platform Students complete online surveys Students write reflections about their results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills journal entry Possible Selves artifact Document extracurricular activities
Career Development Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of career clusters. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and informed decision-making skills to match their skills and abilities to particular career interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the concept of career clusters Using online platform, have students analyze career clusters in relation to survey results Create an activity where students apply cluster analysis to self-identified interests, values, and skills Have students attend career fair and/or listen to guest speakers and/or interview someone in a career of interest Introduce the concepts of Work Based Learning [e.g., job shadow, volunteer work, community service] and the term “employability skills” Have students complete culminating project (TBD by educator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save careers of interest Upload final project Document work and/or community service
Academic College and Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand graduation requirements, MassCore requirements, AP options, and early college options. Students will create a four-year course-taking plan connected to identified career interests Students will understand any available high school pathways and the variety of postsecondary options. Students will be able to write a personal postsecondary goal and career goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District-developed freshman seminar District developed course planning activity Post-secondary options lesson created using online tool resources [emphasis on post-secondary vocabulary] Online college search activity Have students prepare for, participate in and reflect about a college fair and/or a college tour Introduce any career pathway or early college options at your school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete four-year plan [using online platform, if possible] Complete goal statements [using online platform] Save college search results with journal entry Journal reflections about college fair and/or tour

College and Career Readiness & MyCAP – 10th Grade

CCA PROGRAM			MyCAP
Domain	What a Student Should Know, Understand, and Be Able to Do in 10 th Grade NOTE: Statements below are adapted from CDE benchmarks, SEL competencies, and/or ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.	Implementation Strategies and Activities NOTE: Some of the strategies and activities presented here will benefit from the support of external partners, e.g., institutions of higher education, employers, and/or the state's Connecting Activities intermediary system.	MyCAP Process and Documentation NOTE: Journal entries refer to reflections recorded in the journal section of the online platform; if your platform does NOT have this feature, students should complete reflections in Word or Google Docs and upload to their platform account.
Personal Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand the concept of “growth mindset” and its importance relative to future planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Growth mindset” lessons, activities, and final product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload “Growth Mindset” final product Update extracurricular activities
Career Development Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will develop skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information Students will understand how to access and understand labor market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach students how to navigate your online platform to conduct career research [ensure understanding of vocabulary] Introductory lesson on Labor Market Information Have students conduct research into one career of interest including labor market information (LMI) and educational requirements Have students prepare for, participate in, and reflect about a Work Based Learning experience at the exploration level (if possible with employer participants) Introduce students to resume feature on your online platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save a minimum of 3 careers with journal entries about what they learned from exploring them online. Upload research product [LMI and Ed requirements] Reflection on WBL experience Update volunteer, work and/or community service Preliminary work on resume
Academic College and Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand the importance of high school course and/or program performance in relation to their personal academic and career aspirations Students will develop skills to research postsecondary options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach students how to research career options using online platform and other resources Teach students how to navigate the online platform to conduct college research aligned with personal interests Have students create a personal “career pathway” poster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload a picture of their “Career Pathway” poster Save a minimum of 3 postsecondary options with journal entries about their impressions of each Update the 4-year course-taking plan and reflection regarding any updates Update goal statements

College and Career Readiness & MyCAP – 11th Grade

CCA PROGRAM			MyCAP
Domain	What a Student Should Know, Understand and Be Able to Do in 11 th Grade NOTE: Statements below are adapted from CDE benchmarks, SEL competencies, and/or ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.	Implementation Strategies and Activities NOTE: Some of the strategies and activities presented here will benefit from the support of external partners, e.g., institutions of higher education, employers, and the state’s Connecting Activities intermediary system.	MyCAP Process and Documentation NOTE: Journal entries refer to reflections recorded in the journal section of the online platform; if your platform does NOT have this feature, students should complete reflections in Word or Google Docs and upload to their platform account.
Personal Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand the importance of perseverance to achieve long and short-term goals Students will understand the importance of resilience in facing academic or work-related challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance and resilience lessons, activities, and personal reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry or upload/link personal reflections on perseverance and resilience Update extracurricular activities
Career Development Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will complete a resume Students will understand the differences between entry level, intermediate level, and advanced job opportunities within an industry sector of personal interest Students will understand the difference between occupations and industries, and will know where to find data about them at national and state level Students will identify labor market trends in Massachusetts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update/complete a resume on online platform; peer editing; final product suitable for employers, teacher recommendations, scholarships, etc. Use online platform resources to teach concepts associated with “career ladders”; have students research and create a possible personal career ladder within an industry sector or occupational cluster of personal interest Teach students about labor market trends; have students research LMI trends in an industry sector or occupational cluster of personal interest Immersive work-based learning experience or capstone project that demonstrates learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save or upload/link to a resume. Upload/link to career ladder project [photo?] Journal entry about labor market trends in a personally selected industry sector Update volunteer, internship, community service or paid work experiences
Academic College and Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand the concepts of reach, safety, and fit regarding post-secondary options and identify personal examples of each Students will understand Mass Transfer and other opportunities available at MA public colleges and universities Students will identify connections between LMI and programs available at MA public colleges and universities Students will be able to recognize financial aid vocabulary and know what options are available to pay for different post-secondary choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach “reach, safety, fit” concepts and have students conduct research to identify one personal example of each Using Mass Transfer website, teach students about opportunities available at MA public colleges and universities; teach students how to connect labor market information to offerings at MA public institutions Offer introductory Financial Aid lesson Have students complete a culminating project [TBD by educator] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry identifying reach, safety, and fit options [at least one of each] Upload or link to culminating project Update the 4-year course-taking plan and reflection regarding any updates Update goal statements

College and Career Readiness & MyCAP – 12th Grade

CCA PROGRAM			MyCAP
Domain	What a Student Should Know, Understand and Be Able to Do in 12 th Grade NOTE: Statements below are adapted from CDE benchmarks, SEL competencies, and/or ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.	Implementation Strategies and Activities NOTE: Some of the strategies and activities presented here will benefit from the support of external partners, e.g., institutions of higher education, employers, and the state’s Connecting Activities intermediary system.	MyCAP Process and Documentation NOTE: Journal entries refer to reflections recorded in the journal section of the online platform; if your platform does NOT have this feature, students should complete reflections in Word or Google Docs and upload to their platform account.
Personal Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate personal responsibility Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate and listen effectively in academic and work-related settings. Students will demonstrate self-advocacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students conduct a credit review and identify exactly what they need to do to be eligible to graduate on time Have students write and present a personal statement [make connections to college essay, cover letters] Have other students use a rubric to provide feedback after presentations Teach students the process for requesting transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry summarizing credit review Upload/link to college essay and/or cover letter Upload/link to letters of recommendation Update extracurricular activities, awards, honors, etc.
Career Development Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student will demonstrate knowledge of key employability skills, and of the relationship between careers and required post-secondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersive work-based learning experience or capstone project that demonstrates learning Revisit career interests based on more recent experiences and document any changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In connection with immersive experience, completion of MA Work-Based Learning Plan Upload reflection on work experience including identification of key employability skills Upload supervisor’s evaluation and letters of reference
Academic College and Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate the ability to navigate and use a variety of technology tools in order to select their career and college options Students will complete the application process for their postsecondary choice[s] Students will demonstrate an understanding of FASFA, have access to it, and complete it with other financial aid applications related to their individual post-secondary goals Students will identify and justify their postsecondary plan and develop a financial plan/budget to support it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students create a list of safety, reach and fit schools, OR a list of possible employers, OR a different postsecondary option with a rationale for whatever their choices are. Have students complete a senior post-secondary timeline Provide a variety of workshops for students to be taught the specific information relative to their post-secondary choice[s] [e.g., <i>Common App, FASFA, military, job corps, community college, scholarships, understanding financial aid packages</i>] Provide structured time [with adult supports available] for students to work on materials required for their postsecondary applications and financial planning Have students identify their final post-secondary plan and provide feedback on the supports they have received to help them develop the plan 	<p>By Sept 15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry with preliminary post-secondary plan [lists] and rationale Upload/link to their personalized senior timeline <p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and track applications using online platform [if that feature is available] OR on a spreadsheet that is uploaded or linked to their online account. Update their senior timeline monthly <p>By one week prior to graduation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry describing their post-secondary plan and their financial plan/budget to support it Update resume Complete senior survey

Appendix D: Current Part A Designation Application

Early College Designation Part A Application - Due August 27, 2021

For parties seeking designation in Spring 2021 for SY2022-23 enrollment.

Welcome to the SY22 Early College Part A Designation Application

Below are the required questions to complete Part of the Early College Designation application due **August 27th, 2021**. As you prepare your responses, please plan to consult the EC 2021 Designation Application Companion Document. Here you will find extensive information on the Designation process and requirements. The Companion Document also provides important information in regards to the criteria to be met under each of the five Guiding Principles. The scoring rubric for the MA Early College Part A Designation Application will be aligned with both this survey, and the specified criteria within the Companion Document.

Primary Contacts

Kristin Hunt, Early College Director, Kristin.E.Hunt@mass.gov (781) 661-8257
Rebekah Barr, Early College Specialist, Rebekah.Barr@mass.gov (781) 338-3195

Applicant Information

Application Instructions

This application may be completed in multiple sessions. You may save and return to this electronic application by providing your email address via the "save and continue later" button (see the grey "pull-down" in the top right corner.)

For technical assistance or for a MSWord version of the application for reference, please contact Rebekah Barr at Rebekah.Barr@mass.gov

K-12 Partner Applicant Contact Information*

District Name*: _____

High School Name*: _____

K-12 Lead Contact Person - First Name*:

K-12 Lead Contact Person - Last Name*:

K-12 Lead Contact Person - Title (e.g., Principal, Head of School, Executive Director)*:

K-12 Lead Contact Person - E-mail*:

K-12 Lead Contact Person - Phone Number:

Institution of Higher Education Partner Applicant Contact Information*

Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Name*:

IHE Lead Contact Person - First Name*:

IHE Lead Contact Person - Last Name*:

IHE Lead Contact Person - Title*: _____

IHE Lead Contact Person - E-mail*:

IHE Lead Contact Person - Phone Number:

1. For the K-12 Applicant: is this Designation application for an entirely new Early College program or enhancing a currently existing program to qualify for designation status?

2. For the K-12 Applicant: Do you have other Designated High Quality College and Career Pathways (i.e Early College, Innovation Pathways, CVTE?). If so, please name.

3. For the IHE: Do you have any other Designated Early College partnerships? If so, please name.

4. Do the partners already have any current agreements involving dual enrollment?

Yes

No

5. Designated programs are expected to enroll students within an Early College program no later than beginning of 10th grade, so that students participate in at least 3 years of pathway activities, courses and supports (Note: students can be enrolled in program but still be preparing to participate in college coursework). Please indicate here what grade level your program will start.

9th Grade

10th Grade

Other: _____

6. Because MYCAP is a requirement for all Early College programs, applicants are expected to participate in DESE's MyCAP training, concurrently with their participation in the Early

College designation process. The training will equip them to fulfill Early College expectations for high quality college and career advising and MyCAP development embedded in the pathway. Please confirm whether you have participated in this training or are planning to do so.

- The K-12 applicant high school has already completed MyCAP training.
- The K-12 applicant high school will register and participate in the College and Career Advising Workshop Series in FY20.

If completed, when did the applicant complete MyCAP training? (Note month and year.)

If completed, would applicant high school be interested in a refresher training or sending a new team for training?

- Yes
- No

Introduction

1. Please provide an introductory narrative describing the partnership, the mission and vision for this Early College program, and desired impact of the program. Describe the importance of the proposed Early College program for your students, your school and campus, and your region. Explain how the Early College Designation is integral to the development of your program. Discuss any anticipated challenges the program might face in implementation and preliminary solutions for addressing those challenges. **Field limited to 1,000 words.***

2. Provide the targeted total student enrollment for the first year of the program (or, current enrollment for existing programs). List by grade level if easier to explain.

	Current Number of Students (enrolled in previous year)	Projected Number of New Students	Total Students
Fall 2021 (if existing program)			
Fall 2022			
Fall 2023			
Fall 2023			
Fall 2025			

Adherence to Guiding Principles

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1 - EQUITABLE ACCESS

Designated programs should prioritize students underrepresented in education enrollment and completion. To facilitate this, programs should be structured to eliminate barriers to student participation. Design might therefore include, but not be limited to, tuition-free participation, open enrollment without regard to prior academic performance, student supports to promote success, scalability, multiple entry points for students, and student supports to prepare students for entry into the program.

1A. Please upload high school partner demographic data in an Excel document. Please disaggregate data by race and ethnicity, economic status, ELL status, disability status, and if possible, first generation to college. Indicate which students in your school population are less represented in both advanced coursework opportunities and postsecondary education.

1B. Explain how program will use data to identify and prioritize students for recruitment. Please note that at a minimum, students in the Early College program should reflect the demographic make-up of the underserved student population in the school's overall student body. Programs are also encouraged to utilize the postsecondary Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) to identify students who may be at risk of not attending college but could be supported through the Early College program.

2. Please describe the program's initial plan for outreach and prioritized recruitment of students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. How would your outreach and recruitment strategies reach these populations and strongly encourage participation?

3A. Please describe the program’s proposed enrollment policy with details on how it as inclusive as possible and enable underrepresented students to participate in Early College programming and successfully earn a minimum of 12 college credits during their high school career.

Please refer to the Designation Criteria Companion Document for additional guidance regarding enrollment components.

3B. Because Early College has the ability to broaden both opportunities and success for underserved students in higher education, it is important that students are not excluded from participation based on prior or current GPA, test scores, or placement scores. Describe how the Early College program will determine students’ admission into the program without this regard to past academic performance.

4. Please describe how the program is designed and funded to be offered free for all student participants and their families—including tuition, fees, and other related expenses, such as textbooks, transportation, technology, other student resources etc.

Upload any additional supporting documents for Guiding Principle 1 - Equitable Access here.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 - GUIDED ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Guided academic pathways ensure that students experience coherence, clarity and connection as to their path, but flexibility as to their exploration. And these pathways also ensure that young people develop identities as college going students. As a corollary, we hope for a similar combination of innovation and structure with regards to early college program design itself. Early College Designation will not require that a pathway be in a specific field (nor is such specificity precluded), although designation expectations require that students will, at a minimum, be educated as to their postsecondary education and career options and the connection between both.

1.A Please outline your academic plan for Early College participants. Provide the name of any Early College pathways being offered, indicate program entry points, and how MyCAP will support student planning.

Please refer to the Designation Criteria Companion Document for additional guidance regarding Guided Academic Pathways.

1B. Please upload your program's preliminary course and sequence and indicate how the college coursework meets MassCore/high school graduation requirements, and reflect MassTransfer courses.

2. Please outline scheduling plans that ensure the program takes place during the school day and students will have the opportunity to pursue at least 12 college credits.

3. Please provide an initial description of where and how courses will be delivered to students by grade level. Indicate who (college approved high school faculty, college faculty, or a combination) will be teaching each course.

4. Please describe plans to acculturate Early College participants to the partner college experience.

Upload any additional supporting documents for Guiding Principle 2 - Guided Academic Pathways here.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3 - ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORTS

Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.

1. Identify the academic and nonacademic challenges that may arise for students in the proposed Early College program. Share how you determined these and what data collections may inform this work moving forward.

2. Describe a plan to address the challenges you have specified in question 1. Provide an outline of intentional academic and non-academic supports, naming both those that exist and those that need to be developed.

Please refer to the Designation Criteria Companion Document for additional guidance regarding Student Supports.

3. List the contact information for the individual(s) responsible for student supports at both partnering entities. If the role requires staff to be hired you can leave blank.

K-12 Student Support Staff Contact Information:

IHE Student Support Staff Contact Information:

Please provide a description of roles for support personnel. If the position is to be hired, you can upload the job descriptions. Up to 5 files may be uploaded.

Upload any additional supporting documents for Guiding Principle 3 - Enhanced Student Supports here.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4 - CONNECTION TO CAREER

Designated programs should expose students to a variety of career opportunities including greater depth in careers relevant to their selected pathway, for example, by providing opportunities for targeted workforce and career skills development, career counseling, and elements of experiential and workplace learning.

1. Please describe plans to connect Early college coursework to students' career development and how MyCAP will be used to guide this connection.

2. Describe how the program seeks to engage area employers when relevant to support connections between education and career.

Upload any additional supporting documents for Guiding Principle 4 - Connection to Career here.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 - EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Designated programs should be a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and one public secondary school and/or district, and may include one or more employers. Partnerships should present evidence that the program is consistent with collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding detailing the nature of governance, budget, sustainability, scheduling, respective responsibilities, and performance measures. Programs should be sufficient in size to capture economies of scale goals and to ensure long-term sustainability.

1. Please describe plan on how the K-12 school, and postsecondary institution will be fully integrated partners in the program work. Please identify roles and responsibilities of each partner during the planning process.

2. Please provide details on the leadership at each partner institution who are empowered to make decisions around Early College at the individual K-12 institution, the K-12 district, the higher education institution, and any other major stakeholder. Identify which personnel are empowered with the authority to enter memoranda of understanding discussions.

3. Please identify key costs associated with the Early College program for both institutions and preliminary funding plans.

4. Please provide an outline of the logistics of the Early College pathways regarding graduation requirements, course taking requirements, and pathways to credentials.

5. Outline the proposed plan to hold discussions concerning collective bargaining agreements, at both the K-12 and higher education level, as needed. Please note: where there is a requirement for local bargaining relating to any aspect of the pathway, local requirements must be followed.

Upload any additional supporting documents for Guiding Principle 5 - Effective Partnerships here.

Thank You!

Thank you for indicating your interest in applying for a Massachusetts Early College Designation. Your response has been recorded. We look forward to working with you!
