



## Guide #1: History and Definitions

### ■ **What is the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (MAICEI) initiative?**

The Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) initiative funds partnerships between local school districts and two- and four-year public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Based on a supported education model (see below), these partnerships offer inclusive postsecondary education options for students ages 18 to 22, identified as having moderate to severe disabilities, including those identified with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those with autism.

The term, “Concurrent Enrollment,” means that participating students are still eligible for special education services, even though they have finished four years of high school. So, they are concurrently enrolled in college while still being eligible for special education services.

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### ■ **Why is MAICEI important?**

First, many students identified with severe disabilities who are eligible for special education services stay in school to work on postsecondary goals until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, while their peers without disabilities typically graduate from high school at the age of 18. These additional years are meant to assist students to prepare to reach their postsecondary goals, but in many cases, transition services often mirror the curriculum they were offered in high school. When staff have the opportunity to expand transition services through the MAICEI partnership, students in their district have increased opportunities to learn new skills in age-appropriate settings. Table 1 compares a traditional school-based transition program with community-based transition services models such as MAICEI.

Comparing transition education curriculum models for students with disabilities 18+		
	Traditional School-Based Transition Model	Community-based transition services model such as Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative
Education	Students enroll in general education high school classes or life skills classes. Students access modified curriculum	Students enroll in college classes that are based on their postsecondary goals. Students learn to use accommodations to access courses.
Employment	Students rotate through unpaid internships for work experience	Students participate in person-centered planning and pursue paid employment based on their postsecondary goals
Independent living	Students work on functional independent living skills at school or at internships	Students work on independent living skills as they learn to manage their own schedules and responsibilities on campus.
Transportation & mobility	Students use school-sponsored transportation to travel to school and to internships	Students learn to use public transportation to travel to college, work, and home. Students learn to navigate college campus as independently as possible.
Social skill development	Students' social skill development is addressed in the high school and internship settings	Students' social skill development is aligned with the expectations of typical college students and addressed in college, community, and work settings.

Second, seeing their fellow students without disabilities go to college often influences students with moderate to severe disabilities to explore the same postsecondary education opportunities to further their education.

Third, and perhaps most important, students with moderate to severe disabilities who attend college are better prepared for competitive employment than those who do not attend college. College participation affords students the opportunity to not only further develop academic skills, but also to learn critical thinking, decision making, and collaboration. These are all skills that employers have indicated are necessary to achieve workplace success.

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 **Are there laws that support higher education access for students with intellectual disabilities?**

Yes. The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (P.L. 110-315), enacted on August 14, 2008, contains a number of important provisions to improve access to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities.

As a result of HEOA, students across the country are attending college through one of the many model demonstration programs called Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs). Many of these programs look to Massachusetts and its MAICEI initiative as a model for inclusive postsecondary education. In fact, the National Coordinating Center for TPSIDs is housed at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

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 **What's the expectation for students with disabilities supported by MAICEI?**

Students supported by MAICEI will be afforded the same opportunities that going to college can give to all students, including:

- Taking credit and non-credit courses alongside their peers without disabilities
- Developing self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- Improving academic, social, and functional skills
- Participating in career planning and vocational skill-building activities
- Securing community-based integrated competitive employment before they leave school
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If you ask one of these students what they do on a typical day, they're likely to tell you that they go to class, eat lunch in the cafeteria, spend time with friends in the student center, and work out at the fitness center--just like any other college student. And like other students, they are also adjusting to their new responsibilities, such as navigating the campus and budgeting their time.

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 **What is supported education?**

Supported education strategies include core services in career planning, academic survival skills, and outreach services and resources.

Supported education is grounded in three principles:

- (1) Increasing individual skills
- (2) Increasing support from the environment

(3) Maximizing the fit between the individual and environment

This fact sheet on supported education and its application to inclusive postsecondary education models may be helpful in program development.

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### **What students are eligible for MAICEI?**

Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative opportunities are for students who are identified as having severe disabilities as defined in Section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Laws, inclusive (<http://1.usa.gov/12Oq683>). These students must also EITHER:

- Be between the ages of 18 to 22, have not passed MCAS, and have an IEP (therefore they are still eligible for special education services)
- OR**
- Be between the ages 20 to 21, have passed MCAS, but are still eligible for special education with an IEP (because of significant functional disabilities, transition needs, etc.)
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### **What staff make up an MAICEI partnership?**

The following staff positions are considered necessary to implement a successful MAICEI program that includes student participation in the academic and social life of the school.

#### **Core Team**

- **Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Program Implementation Specialist**  
He/she acts as the IHE liaison to the participating high schools. The specialist is responsible for convening partnership leadership team meetings for planning and problem solving. This individual also works closely with disability services staff to ensure that college faculty have the necessary skills and supports to accommodate the diverse needs of the students participating in the program.
- **High School Liaison** The person in this role works directly with student participating in the MAICEI program, and must be easily accessible and mobile. The liaison coordinates schedules, communicates with teachers and families and collaborates closely with the IHE implementation specialist.

- **Educational Coach** An educational coach provides direct or indirect services to students. These may include tutoring, assistance with connecting to the disability support office, and homework help. They may also involve classroom support, support with extracurricular and nonacademic activities, help with participation in the college community, and support with community-based employment.
- **Employment Specialist** The employment specialist serves as the career and job development specialist for the partnership. In this role, the employment specialist is:
  - Reviewing students' person-centered plans to assure that their courses and campus activities are aligned with their personal and career goals.
  - Connecting with campus and community career & employment resources.
  - Collaborating with school and community providers to develop paid work experiences that align with student employment goals.
  - Developing work-based learning plans with students and their work supervisor.

### ***Additional Roles***

In the addition to the roles identified above, the MAICEI partners are encouraged to include the following roles in the project design:

- **Parent Consultant** This individual provides outreach to families to ensure maximum family participation. The parent consultant assists families in understanding how to navigate the post-secondary education system and how it is different from the K-12 system.
- **Youth Leader** This person provides outreach and recruitment, peer support, leadership development, and advocacy training to students participating in the program. Ideally, the youth leader should be a young adult. They must be able to work with participating students so that they are fully engaged in the academic and campus life of the school.

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**Are there standards to follow in creating an effective inclusive concurrent enrollment partnership?**

Think College has developed a framework called Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education." IHEs can use these standards to create, expand, or enhance high quality, inclusive postsecondary education to support positive outcomes for individuals with IDD. The standards are aligned with institutional and instructional practices that support a Universal Design for Learning framework as outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

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**How often is funding available to propose new partnerships?**

Each year since 2007, the Massachusetts state legislature has appropriated funds to support existing partnerships and to fund new planning grants to public Massachusetts IHEs that submit a successful proposal. Typically, funding and a Request for Proposals (RFP) are announced by the Executive Office of Education (EOE) with a few weeks of the state budget being approved.

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**Where can I learn more about inclusive postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities?**

Check out the Think College website at <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>. This website offers visitors a wealth of information and resources, including publications, an online database, a listserv to connect with other students, and a college search engine to find initiatives across the country.

