2021 IMPACT REPORT

Key Accomplishments and Driving the Work Ahead
“We cannot meet employers’ workforce needs and diversity goals without strengthening our homegrown talent pipeline.”

ED LAMBERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASSACHUSETTS BUSINESS ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

The challenge
Companies across all sectors struggle to find job candidates with the qualifications needed to sustain and grow their businesses and keep our economy booming, while prioritizing their goals to develop a workforce that looks like and fully represents the communities where they do business. At the same time, education equity and opportunity gaps exacerbated by the pandemic, and a lack of access to career-connected learning hold students back from realizing their dreams and full potential and lead to leaks in our workforce pipeline.

The opportunity
This is a moment of great potential. Heightened public urgency demands we address opportunity, wage, and wealth gaps. Enthusiasm grows among parents, business, policymakers, and community leaders to build stronger connections between education and career opportunities. These factors have combined as we emerge from the pandemic to create significant momentum to ignite innovation and accelerate improvements.
2021 successes

Secured funding to expand student access to career programs. MBAE advocacy led to a $25M allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funds to expand college and career pathways programs and move students off waiting lists and into career vocational technical pathways. We also supported a $100M capital investment appropriation for the state’s vocational schools and programs.

Triggered call for improved district planning for how to use historic education funding. MBAE led a coalition that persuaded the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to seek updated and improved district plans for spending new funds to close gaps, improve outcomes and opportunities for all students, and better prepare them for college and career. MBAE is thankful to our partners in this work.

Introduced a STEM-focused high school model to Massachusetts. The game-changing P-TECH high school model, flourishing in other states, offers students a seamless pathway from high school through college and career and specifically prepares students for technology careers. MBAE is leading the effort to gather and align stakeholders.

Successfully launched MBAE membership model. With 27 new members and counting, MBAE is off to an excellent start on our transition to a new membership business model that more directly amplifies the voice of business in our policy priorities and provides more intentional opportunities for employers to engage with this important work.
Our work ahead

Data confirm what employers already know—that there is much work to be done to improve student opportunity and better connect our education system to the needs of our economy and our workforce. Our policy agenda is grounded in and responsive to this data as well as to the tremendous opportunities to have an impact.

MBAE understands that as business makes equity and diversity their highest priority for investment, we must view all of our work through the lens of equity. MBAE’s newly-formed Equity Committee will guide our ability to recommit to our founding principle of closing outcome and opportunity gaps for all students by identifying and prioritizing key policy levers for achieving better results, especially for our most vulnerable and chronically left-behind students.

Only two out of ten Black, Latino, and low-income students obtain a college degree of any type within 6 years of high school graduation.

Supercharging expansion of Early College

Representing a major priority of businesses across MA, MBAE is the leading voice pushing to increase enrollment in Early College pathways from 4,500 students today to 45,000 in five years. We zealously support funding increases and regulatory changes that are needed to meet this goal. As a founding member of the Massachusetts Alliance for Early College, we are actively engaged with stakeholders across all sectors to give more students the support and opportunity they need to earn the degree the vast majority of jobs require.

Massachusetts could be short over 70,000 college graduates from our workforce due to the pandemic’s dual impact of accelerating retirements and causing students to veer off the path to college completion.

MassINC Analysis
MAKING MASSACHUSETTS A LEADER IN STEM EDUCATION

As our life sciences and high-tech sectors boom, K–12 student participation in STEM coursework lags far behind industry’s talent pipeline demands. MA desperately needs a state policy plan for STEM education in order to meet the needs of industry and students alike. MBAE is launching a STEM Committee to develop this plan, with an emphasis on improving participation among girls, Black, and Latino students.

ALIGNING EDUCATION WITH THE DEMANDS OF OUR ECONOMY

MBAE is developing a roadmap for greatly expanding high school student access to pathways that prepare them for college and careers. In addition to Early College, MBAE supports expanding access to career vocational technical education, Innovation Pathways programs, and other career connected learning opportunities. We continue to build support for pending legislation that will incentivize high schools to provide students opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials that are of value to employers and in high-demand. Every student should graduate high school with a pathway to college and career success.

DEFENDING ACCOUNTABILITY

MBAE will continue to be the primary watchdog and advocate for effective and efficient use of the substantial funds flowing to districts. With enormous challenges created by the pandemic that have deepened inequities in outcomes, this funding represents a historic opportunity that cannot be missed.

Between the three rounds of federal stimulus grants and the first year of funding increases under SOA, districts have received new funding amounts of up to 64% of their regular budget.

The Boston Globe

Why is Massachusetts’ tech sector so lacking in diversity? Take a look inside AP computer science classes

Zipporah Osei, May 17, 2020

LAUNCHING P-TECH

We will galvanize business, philanthropic, and educator support to launch one or more STEM-focused P-TECH high schools here in the Commonwealth. MBAE intends to bring this pioneering high school model—that is flourishing in other states—here to Massachusetts where STEM jobs are going unfilled.

BETWEEN 2018 AND 2028

One of out every three jobs created in the Commonwealth will be in STEM fields.

ONLY 45% of MA ninth graders go on to earn a post-secondary degree or credential that the vast majority of jobs require.
Big change can happen

MBAE defines the role that businesses should play in education policy and innovation. We know that when the business community goes all in, big change can happen.

How we activate and amplify the voice of business in policymaking

- Identifying opportunities for the business community to weigh in on education policy via **access and advocacy to decision makers and leading the conversation** in the public space.
- Representing business on state committees and commissions charged with shaping policy.
- Producing research to **inform debate on key issues** and developing content for companies to demonstrate their commitment to education.
- **Testifying at hearings** and before commissions and inviting our members and affiliates to join us.
- Initiating and **leading discussions on key issues that impact workforce and equity** via events and social media.
- Incorporating leaders who represent the full diversity of our corporate community into **our organizational governance and strategic planning**.

MBAE core principles

- **Education is a critical influence on an individual child’s success and our economy’s overall health and vibrancy.**
- The most impactful changes in education are occurring through policies adopted at the state level.
- Business leaders have a unique and valuable perspective to bring to education policy discussions. There are both economic and moral imperatives to fight for kids and strengthen our education system.
- Lasting systems-change requires active engagement from policymakers, educators, parents, students, community members, and business leaders.
- **The long-term success of our economy, our state’s competitive advantage, and our national security requires improving educational outcomes for all students.**
Affiliate network members

MBAE has built a substantial business coalition, the MBAE Affiliate Network, to present a unified business voice on education policy. These groups from across the Commonwealth have joined with us in response to their own members’ concerns about education and the workforce. They share our commitment to ensuring EVERY student gets the education they need to be successful in college and career. We are grateful for their support and amplification of our goals and priorities.

Statewide partners and affiliates

1Berkshire
Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
Charles River Regional Chamber
Concord Chamber of Commerce
Cranberry Country Chamber of Commerce
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lynn Chamber of Commerce
Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce
MassBio
Massachusetts Competitive Partnership
Massachusetts High Technology Council
Massachusetts Society of CPAs
Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council
Metro South Chamber of Commerce
MetroWest Chamber of Commerce
NAIOP Massachusetts
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
National Federation of Independent Business Massachusetts
Neponset River Regional Chamber
North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce
One SouthCoast Chamber
Orleans Chamber of Commerce
Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce
Quincy Chamber of Commerce
Retailers Association of Massachusetts
Salem Chamber of Commerce
Springfield Business Leaders for Education
Springfield Regional Chamber
Stoneham Chamber of Commerce
Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce
TechNet
United Regional Chamber of Commerce
Western Mass Economic Development Council
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

Representing over 31,000+ employers
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Tony Helies
Mimi LaCamera
Chuck Longfield

Become a member!

MBAE welcomes new members to help shape our agenda and to support our state advocacy for a strong and diverse talent pipeline and positive outcomes for all students. Membership categories accommodate individuals, companies, and organizations of every size and budget. Please consider joining us, or recommend a company or business leader you know, by connecting with Karen Cosmas, Director of Membership, at kcosmas@mbae.org.