

# An Act to Expand the Use of Career and Academic Plans (H. 444)

## Why does MA need to strengthen college and career counseling for all students?

Many MA high school students lack access to high-quality advising supports that would foster career identity and help students chart a course to success in higher education and the workforce. The current lack of counseling prevents more students from understanding what coursework they need to take and competencies they need to develop to be prepared for college success, and from securing good jobs that can support a family. It also contributes to the looming crisis faced by multiple MA industries that are hoping to benefit from a skilled, diverse talent pipeline.


Expanding access to quality guidance counseling and supportive advising networks is pivotal to increasing rates of college-going and job attainment, as research shows that adolescents follow life paths that are closely defined by the information they receive about post-secondary next steps, their budding self-concept, and their sense of self-efficacy<sup>1</sup> This is particularly true for marginalized students, who face a unique set of material and developmental barriers to higher opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

## What would this bill do?

*An Act to Expand the Use of Career and Academic Plans (H. 444)* would require districts to ensure that all high school students use the My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) tool—or an equivalent tool—which encourages students to plan for their higher education and workforce goals. MyCAP is a student-centered planning tool that includes a process—where all educators in a school are empowered to help students set goals based on individual interests and strengths—as well as an electronic platform that allows each student to record and transfer their academic achievements (higher education coursework, work-based learning experiences, AP scores, etc.) as they move into higher education and the workforce. The effective date would be July 1, 2026.

## BY THE NUMBERS

A national survey<sup>3</sup> of students who graduated high school between 2019-2022 found:

 **3/4** said they were **moderately, slightly or not at all prepared to make college or career decisions after graduation.**

**80%** felt they would have been **more engaged** in their learning if they **better understood their own aptitudes and potential career opportunities.**

The resources, planning, and support counselors equip students with to prepare for their academic and professional futures varies across student demographics:<sup>4</sup>

### WHITE STUDENTS

**51.9%** of counselors reported primary goal was **helping them plan and prepare for postsecondary schooling.**

### BLACK STUDENTS

**42.6%** of counselors reported primary goal was **college preparedness.**

### HISPANIC STUDENTS

**41.2%** of counselors reported primary goal was **college preparedness.**

## STUDENT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS COALITION MEMBERS



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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Darreon Greer, S., & Thurman E. Webb, J. (2020). School counselors and african american students: Counseling within the psychology of the black experience. *Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals*, 7(1). [journals.charlotte.edu/urbaned/article/view/1017](https://journals.charlotte.edu/urbaned/article/view/1017)
- 2 *The School Counselor and Cultural Diversity*. (2021). [Schoolcounselor.Org](https://Schoolcounselor.Org); The American School Counselor Association. [schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Cultural-Diversity](https://schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Cultural-Diversity)
- 3 Hornbuckle, M. (2022, November 28). Post-graduation readiness report. *YouScience*. [youscience.com/post-graduation-readiness-report/](https://youscience.com/post-graduation-readiness-report/)
- 4 LoGerfo, L., Christopher, E.M., and Flanagan, K.D. (2011). High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09). A First Look at Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders' Parents, Teachers, School Counselors, and School Administrators (NCES 2011-355). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office