

# An Act to Create and Expand Student Pathways to Success (S.256/H.592)

## Why does MA need to strengthen and scale college and career pathways?

Massachusetts faces three converging challenges that threaten the state's economic competitiveness:

- There is a growing shortage of diverse, skilled workers that will be able to fill the jobs of tomorrow;
- Too many students, particularly those from under-resourced and traditionally marginalized communities, graduate from high school unprepared for college and careers that could provide upward economic mobility; and
- Wage and wealth inequality in the Commonwealth persists.

We can reverse these trends, expand access to economic opportunity, and promote a more equitable Commonwealth by implementing state policies that create stronger connections between what students are learning in high school and the opportunities that await them when they graduate. When fully implemented, these policies expand access to a meaningful and relevant high school experience for all students; one that puts them on a path to college and career success.

## What would this bill do?

*An Act to Create and Expand Student Pathways to Success (S.256/H.592)* would address these issues by:

- Codifying the Workforce Skills Cabinet as a permanent governance body that includes state policymakers, business leaders, and community members who work to oversee the state's workforce development strategies, particularly when it comes to growing college and career pathways for high school students. The legislation charges the Cabinet with key responsibilities, including:
  - Adopting a north star goal to universalize access to college and career pathway programs;
  - Conducting a biennial review of all college and career pathway programs to analyze both equity of access for all students and alignment with labor market need; and
  - Producing an annual report that forecasts upcoming workforce needs.
- Facilitating data linkages and new public-facing data tools with information on pathways.
- Expanding access to high-quality career pathway programs by making it easier

## BY THE NUMBERS

By 2030, the state's working-age, college-educated labor force will **drop by 192,000 workers**.<sup>1</sup>

Only **44%** of MA ninth graders go on to **earn a degree or certificate within six years** of graduating high school.<sup>2</sup>



Under **30%** of MA high school students are **currently enrolled in a college or career pathway program** that is designed to prepare them for success after high school.<sup>3</sup>

for more high schools to start Chapter 74 occupational training coursework, expanding access to the CTE After Dark program, and conducting a study on barriers to work-based learning partnerships.

- Creating a financial incentive for high schools to help more students earn industry-recognized credentials that have value in the Massachusetts job market.
- Ensuring that every high school student is able to access at least one computer science course that teaches the foundational math and science concepts necessary to enter STEM fields.
- Requiring high schools to develop plans for ensuring that all students complete the MassCore curriculum, which includes rigorous coursework aligned with college admissions standards.
- Ensuring that all high school students are able to participate in MyCAP—a system of dedicated college and career counseling that allows students to develop individualized pathways—by the 2026-27 school year.
- Creating a stable funding mechanism (in Chapter 70) to support the expansion of Early College, Innovation Pathways, and STEM Tech Career Academy programs.

## STUDENT PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS COALITION MEMBERS



### CONTACT US

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## ENDNOTES

1 MassINC

2 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

3 DESE