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**MASSACHUSETTS
BUSINESS ALLIANCE
FOR EDUCATION**

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Educating a 21st Century Workforce Business Group Issues Call to Action

Boston, MA: All students must graduate from high school with the academic and applied skills necessary for college and career if Massachusetts is to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global economy according to employers convened by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE). The organization issued a report today from its Commission on Educating a 21st Century Workforce that stresses the connection between education and a strong economy and proposes strategies for high school reform.

Stressing the urgency of raising student achievement and increasing graduation rates, the report calls for changes in the way high schools are structured, our curriculum and system of assessments, and the role of business and community in supporting our schools and our students. One member of MBAE's Commission noted that, "like it or not, students are acting like consumers," disengaging from schools when they fail to see connections between what is being taught in the classroom and their own personal goals and postsecondary plans.

MBAE Chairman Robert W. Richardson, East Coast Education Manager at Intel in Hudson, MA, stated that, "Increasing public awareness of 21st century demands – the need for critical thinking, communication and technology skills as well as core knowledge is our first challenge. The business

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community can support efforts by educators to make academic studies relevant to students and to help students develop the skills they need to succeed.”

The report also calls for providing more flexibility in meeting high school graduation requirements, noting that some students would benefit from alternatives to the four-year schedule, calling it “sacrosanct but not meaningful”. According to Linda M. Noonan, Executive Director of MBAE, “Our current education system is outdated when it comes to sustaining a knowledge-based economy. MBAE’s goal is to accelerate progress on high school reform by identifying approaches that have worked and that have promise for improving educational opportunities for all students.”

The report is available at www.mbae.org.

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The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) is committed to a high quality public education system that will prepare all students to engage successfully in a global economy and society. We bring together business and education leaders to promote education policies and practices based on measurable standards of achievement, accountability for performance, and equitable educational opportunities for all students.