

May 20, 2025

The Honorable Patrick Tutwiler
Massachusetts Secretary of Education
Executive Office of Education
1 Ashburton Pl, Room 1403
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Secretary Tutwiler,

We are writing to express our support for a bold expansion of Early College in Massachusetts and to ask the state to explicitly encourage Early College program models that deeply connect to careers.

As leaders representing employers, social justice organizations, parents and teachers, we are strongly committed to equalizing economic opportunity and addressing growing workforce needs. Early College is the most powerful initiative to help us reach those goals. **It is a mistake to limit our vision for it as simply a college exposure program in which students earn twelve general education credits.**

Instead, the state should seize upon the initiative's tremendous potential to provide student pathways into careers in life sciences, health care, and other leading sectors. Research conducted by MassINC Policy Center over the past several years suggests that deepening career-connected learning is the number one strategy to both increase Early College enrollment and generate stronger outcomes for the students who participate.

The state's 5-year strategic plan for Early College is an important lever that can help ensure the initiative realizes its full potential, therefore we ask that you include key provisions in it.

- Support the goal of enrolling 25,000 students in high quality Early College by October 2030. This is an appropriate, achievable target that moves the state towards eventually serving 45,000 students, which would close a quarter of the college success equity gap by race and income and provide a meaningful boost to the Commonwealth's college-educated workforce. This is critical given MassINC projections that the state's workforce will have 200,000 fewer college-educated working-age members by the end of the decade.
- Explicitly encourage Early College program models that deeply connect to careers – not only through career exposure, but through rich, career-informed course sequences and deep credit counts wherever possible. Remove barriers that currently prevent these types of programs including artificial silos that have been erected between Early College, Innovation Career Pathways, and CTE. Do this through providing models of braided funding for college and career opportunities and model coursework maps, based on leaders in MA and nationally. And enthusiastically message to the community that these are the types of programs that will receive designation when quality applications are submitted. Deep career connections will make the programs more appealing to a wider range of students and accelerate student progress toward careers in leading sectors.

- Revive the stalled STEM Tech Career Academies initiative, modeled after the successful P-TECH high schools, that create pathways to STEM careers, particularly for Black and Latino students who are underrepresented in these fields.

Leaders on the ground are motivated to build career-integrated Early College models, but they need greater clarity and alignment from and across state entities. Now is the time to adopt these core strategies and ensure programs are delivering for students.

And while we ask that these provisions be firmly embraced in the new Early College strategic plan, we also ask that the agencies fully prioritize one of their core administrative functions – distributing funding awarded by the legislature in a timely fashion. Delayed distribution of funds has been an ongoing issue for years and negatively impacts programming.

We appreciate your consideration of our thoughts and ideas and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Ed Lambert
Executive Director
Mass. Business Alliance for Education



JD Chesloff
President and CEO
Massachusetts Business Roundtable



Brooke Thomson
President and CEO
Associated Industries of Mass.



Jay Ash
CEO
Massachusetts Competitive Partnership



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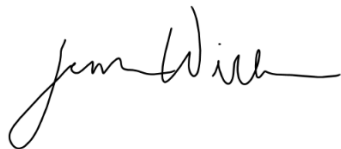
Jorge Fanjul
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Keri Rodrigues
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Cc: Governor Maura Healey, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, Commissioner Noe Ortega, Chris Gabrieli, Katherine Craven, Matt Hills, Bob Lepage, Phylitia Jamerson