Building Guided Academic Programs of Study Connected to Careers: Guiding Principles 2 and 4



September 15, 2026

dese

Welcome

to the 2nd Planning Phase Professional Learning session

Please let us know who's here today.

Add your name and Early College program in the chat

Agenda

- Opening and Session Outcomes
- Updates and questions from last session
- Why Guiding Principle 2 & 4 Together
- Establishing Guided Academic Programs of Study (Pathways)
  - What quality looks like
  - *Strategic sequencing and scaffolding*
  - *Scheduling for EC*
  - *Academic Policies*
- Establishing Connections to Careers
- Discussion/Q & A
- Next Steps and Closing

EARLY STARTS.
Endless Possibilities.
COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY. LIFE READY.

FY27 Early College Theme

Session Outcomes



This session, along with the follow-up workshops, support the development of your EC Design Plan.

By the end of the session, you will be able to:

1. Describe how **career connected learning is integrated in Early College** and the key components of an effective MYCAP approach.
2. Describe what **high quality guided academic programs of study** look like.
3. Explain how **schedules enable or create barriers to EC** and characteristics of effective scheduling.
4. Identify key elements of **effective scaffolding through strategic course sequences** and curriculum alignment.
5. Describe **effective course enrollment policies and how to use multiple measures** to expand access to Early College, particularly for underrepresented students.
6. Describe how Early College program will **engage industry partners** to help students connect current academic plans with future academic plans.

We want to hear from you

These sessions are designed to frontload a lot of critical information, and not to workshop specific areas.

Support Workshops will dive into specific areas to unpack details for your Design Plan.

As a result, these agendas are very full. But we want to be sure they meet your program needs. We invite you to



- **Share your voice and unique perspective**
- **Ask questions and clarify as needed**
- **Don’t hesitate to ask for support**

What questions do you have from our previous session?

Integrating Career Learning and Academic Programs

Guiding Principle 2 and 4 belong together.

When connected to careers, guided academic programs of study become meaningful pathways for students to explore and build the foundation for their futures.

Career connected academic programs



Clarify the why for students, and how taking college courses connects to long term potential career choices.



Ensure pathways lead to opportunity by leveraging local workforce data to inform program design and the scope and sequence of student coursework.

Guiding Principle 2: Guided Academic Programs of Study

Guiding Principle 4: Connection to Career

MyCAP


EARLY COLLEGE
PARENT ENGAGEMENT
Guiding Principles to Success!
dese
MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
POWERED BY p2C PATHWAY 2 CAREERS

MyCAP: Holistic Planning

College, Career, and Civic Ready Framework

All Students Will:

- ✓ Gain knowledge, skills and experiences
- ✓ In all three domains: personal/social/mental health, academic: learning and planning, career development
- ✓ To successfully complete a postsecondary pathway
- ✓ To achieve a career in a growing field aligned with personal interests and skills and provides a family sustaining wage
- ✓ Prepared for active participation in civic life



My Career & Academic Plan (MyCAP)

MyCAP Process

- Student-driven (interests, skills,etc.) whole school involved
- Implemented in varied settings: classrooms, seminars, workshops, etc. with teachers and school counselors
- Every student should have at least one adult mentor encouraging them
- Connect academic learning with future plans
- Scope of grade-level learning objectives and sequence of MyCAP lessons

MyCap Platform

- The MyCAP platform documents the learning, planning, goals, objectives, reflections and achievements
- The instrument may act as an ePortfolio capturing artifacts of growth and learning
- The free state recommended platform is MEFA Pathway
  - Or you may use MassCIS, Naviance, Scoir or others

Guided Academic Programs of Study

Guiding Principle 2





Guided Academic Programs of Study

Designated programs are structured around clear, detailed programs of study that support students progressing from secondary to postsecondary education through multiple years of strategic course sequencing and aligned programming beyond the classroom.

- **Programs of study are designed for students to attain at least twelve credits,** and they prioritize general education courses that meet MassCore and are part of the MassTransfer general education foundation.

- ***Programs should at least include critical gateway math and English courses** and all courses should be named as part of an associates to Bachelor's MassTransfer pathway.

- **Early College students are regularly advised on the programs of study** and supported to complete at least the minimum of twelve college credits, roughly equivalent to a semester of college.

- ***Early College programs of study provide on-campus coursework or provide supplementary campus learning opportunities** to ensure students acclimate to college culture.

Design Plan Milestones & Artifacts

Principle	Milestones	Products/Deliverables
Equitable Access	Determine your vision, population served, and enrollment plans.	• Needs Assessment • Enrollment & Scale Plan • Outreach and Recruitment Plan • Enrollment Policy • Student Application/Commitment Form
Guided Academic Programs	Develop strategic course sequences and the schedules and structures to support them.	• Scope & Sequence of Guided Academic Program of Study and Rationale • Plan to Prepare for College Course Taking • College Course Descriptions • Schedules • Transfer Plan and Crosswalks • Course Enrollment Policy • College Application and/or Course Enrollment Forms • Academic Policies
Connection to Career	Refine guided programs of study to intentionally integrate career-connected learning.	• Industry Engagement Plan • MYCAP & Career Development Activities

Guided Programs of Study - What to Include



Course Scope and Sequences

- Name and Chronological order of courses to be offered through the Early College program.
- Should include any specific pre-Early College courses that are designed to prepare students to enter college coursework.

Program(s) of Study Rationale - why this pathway and courses were selected

- Explanation of delivery modalities used and rationale
- How the program addresses technology access and support
- How Program of Study is designed to acclimate students to a college environment

Sequence coursework and other scaffolds to form a staircase of complexity so students can reach new heights.



Scope and Sequence Key Features

Using the template provided, upload the full scope and sequence of college courses in the guided academic program of study.

For each course include

- **MassCore and MassTransfer alignment.**
  https://www.mass.edu/masstransfer/
- **The modality and location of each course.**
  In-person at the high school, hybrid on college campus, etc.
- **The course instructor(s).**
  Whether it will be taught by a high school instructor, college instructor, or both.

Delivery Modalities Up Close

EC programs use a variety of delivery modalities based on scheduling, transportation, instructor availability and more, with careful attention to acclimation to the full college experience.



- **In person instruction from a college instructor on a college campus.**
- **In person instruction from a college instructor on a high school campus.**
- **In person instruction from an IHE-approved high school instructor on a high school campus.**
  - *This model is defined as Concurrent teaching.*
  - *It is approved by the appropriate academic Dean and often supported by a college instructor*

Delivery Modalities Up Close

EC programs use a variety of delivery modalities based on scheduling, transportation, instructor availability and more, with careful attention to acclimation to the full college experience.

- **Synchronous virtual instruction from a college instructor.**
  - *College instructor live streams lesson content and supports student learning through virtual office hours.*
  - *High school staff support students in-person during the live streaming and outside of the course.*

- **Asynchronous virtual instruction from a college instructor.**
  - *College instructor builds the course with pre-recorded lectures and tasks and responds to student questions and holds office hours for support*
  - *Asynchronous is not ideal but if used in a limited way, should be fully supported by a high school instructor*

- **Other (please describe). A prominent example include Hybrid courses** combine in-person classroom sessions at the HS or IHE campus with virtual components.

Taking courses on a college campus and/or with a college instructor increases student likelihood of matriculation compared to courses taught at the high school or with a concurrent model.

Source: Community College Research Center https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/

Scope & Sequence Review Criteria



To be assessed as READY in this area, reviewers will look for Scope and Sequences that meet the following criteria:

- EC program(s) of study **are clearly defined, including any preparatory courses and college coursework.**
- Programs(s) of study **include an entry point, full course sequence leading to 12+ transferable credits, and completion of English Composition 1 and a college-level mathematics course.**
- All courses are aligned to **local graduation requirements, MassCore, MassTransfer, and relevant A2B Pathways,** with confirmed transferability.

Program of Study Rationale



Provide an explanation of the Program(s) of Study for Early College and how the courses will be delivered. Include:

- Why this Program(s) of Study (the academic pathway with its scope of courses in the sequence they are offered) was selected.
- Confirmation that courses count for both high school and college credit, including English Composition I or the equivalent.
- Description of at least one college-level mathematics course aligned to either a STEM or non-STEM pathway or a rationale for why this is not included.

Guided Programs of Study Review Criteria



To be assessed as READY in this area, reviewers will look for Guided Programs of Study that meet the following criteria:

- The plan **clearly explains the delivery mode and staffing approach** for each course, including rationale for decisions.
- The plan demonstrates how the program provides **equitable access to technology and transportation**.
- Example **schedules show when college courses occur during the school day by grade level and illustrate a clear pathway for students to earn 12+ credits,** while incorporating time for students supports and transportation to/from the college, as needed.
- The plan describes coordinated strategies across partners to engage students in **immersive college experiences.**



Scheduling for Early College

Key Scheduling Features



Integrated School Day

- EC coursework is built into the regular high school day.
- Academic supports and college-readiness preparation are scheduled alongside coursework.



Student Centered

- Develop sample schedules with college courses + supports.
- Show how requirements fit within high school schedules.
- Create schedules that support a progression toward college-level coursework.



Flexible Program

- Redesign the school day as needed for EC coursework.
- Use after-school and summer options as supplements.
- Keep additional offerings optional, not required.



Scheduling Compliance & Flexibility

- School day redesign may require a Student Learning Time waiver.
- Include waiver rationale in the final designation application.
- Especially relevant for full-time college coursework.



Academic Policies



Academic Policies

Have course descriptions and all relevant academic policies and EC expectations readily accessible to students and families. Include

Add/Drop & Withdrawal: Clearly communicate deadlines, processes, and potential consequences.

Early Warning System: Identify and notify students who are at risk of failing.

Academic & Financial Impact: Explain how withdrawals or failing grades may affect academic standing and future financial aid eligibility.

Student Support Plan: Provide tutoring, advising, and academic interventions to help students get back on track.

Course Failure Response: Establish clear next steps for students who fail one or multiple college courses.

Alternative Course Placement: Ensure students who withdraw can transition into an appropriate high school course.



Course Enrollment Policy

Written Enrollment Policy: Clearly define how Early College students are placed into college-level courses.

College Readiness: Use a broad definition of readiness that recognizes multiple ways students can demonstrate preparedness.

Multiple (Alternative) Measures:

- Consider GPA, prior coursework, writing samples, statements of interest, assessments, and other evidence.
- Avoid Single Measures: Do not determine readiness solely through GPA, Accuplacer, or another single measure.

Transfer Plan

Credit Transferability: Maximize the transfer of EC credits toward a degree.

Course & Pathway Alignment: Offer courses aligned to established degree pathways.

Student Advising: Guide students in selecting courses that support degree completion.

Mass Transfer/A2B Alignment: Align programs with Mass Transfer and state A2B pathways when applicable.

Transfer Agreements: Use articulation agreements to strengthen credit transfer.

Private College Alignment: Ensure private college agreements mirror state-defined pathways when applicable.



Academic Policies Review Criteria



To be assessed as READY in this area, reviewers will look for Academic Policies that meet the following criteria:

- **Course Descriptions and clear, comprehensive, and aligned academic policies,** including for grading, add/drop, withdrawal, and failure, are in place, clearly communicated, and **include information on early prevention strategies to mitigate withdrawals and failures**.
- Course placement for EC students uses **multiple alternative measures to support access** while maintaining rigor.
- Credit transfer information is comprehensive and includes strategies to maximize students' opportunities for transfer and keep students on a path to a degree (e.g., student advising).

Connection to Careers

Guiding Principle 4



Industry Engagement Plan



Employer Engagement: Build partnerships with area employers

Career Connections: Link employers to students' academic pathways and career exploration

Work-Based Learning: Provide access to internships and career experiences

Community Partnerships: Leverage existing employer and community relationships to expand career opportunities

Career Development

Aligned to MyCAP

1 Grade Level Plan
Career activities mapped by grade

2 Career Awareness
Explore careers and pathways aligned with student interests

3 Career Exploration
Explore careers through real-world experiences

4 Career Immersion
Gain hands-on workplace experience.



5 Labor Market Alignment
Focus on high-demand careers and skills.

6 Academic Pathways
Connect coursework to career opportunities

7 College Partnership
Provide career resources and connections

8 Program Integration
Embed career development throughout Early College

Career development should progress from ***awareness → exploration → immersion***, while connecting students' academic pathways and college coursework to real career opportunities.

Career Review Criteria

To be assessed as READY in this area, reviewers will look for plans that meet the following criteria:

Industry Engagement Plan

- Programs must include a plan to utilize regional labor data that engages area employers in support of the Early College program. Provide reference links to data.

Career Development Activities

- A schedule of activities for career development that are fully integrated into the EC program, including:
  - Career development and learning activities by grade, with a description of the online tool used to implement MyCAP
  - Strategically sequenced experiences for awareness and exploration which may include immersion activities such as internships or capstone courses and when they will take place.
  - How the K-12 and IHE partner(s) will provide resources and contribute to this plan.



Next Steps

Program Action Steps & Key Dates



High School of Commerce, Springfield Public Schools

Team Action Steps Before Next Session



Following our work today, teams should

Gather as a team to review questions and actions needed to develop the Design Plan components for Guided Academic Programs.

Attend the Coaching Support Workshop on September 29th to ask questions, review models and dig into the details on the areas you need.

Participate in additional coaching or Office Hours as is helpful with DESE's OEC, P2C or other supports you have identified.

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Professional Learning & Support Dates

Item	Date
Professional Learning (PL) Session #1: Partnering for Equitable Access (GP 1&5)	Aug 18, 2026
Workshop – coaching support for session #1	**Sep 1, 2026**
PL Session #2: Scaffolded Pathways for Success - Guiding Principles 2 & 4	Sep 15, 2026
Workshop – coaching support for session #2	Sep 29, 2026
PL Session #3: Supporting Every Student (GP 3)	Oct 13, 2026
Workshop – coaching support for session #3	Oct 27, 2026
PL Session #4: Evaluation and Systems for Results (GP 5)	Nov 10, 2026
Workshop – coaching support for session #4	Nov 17, 2026
Webinar: Are you Ready to Submit	Dec 1, 2026
Program Design Plans Due	Jan 8, 2027
Program Design Plan Approvals	**March 2027 (June**

Design Plan DESE Office Hours

Schedule time with DESE for personalized support as you develop your design plan.



Schedule Office Hours with the QR code:

Office Hours Schedule:
All sessions can be scheduled on Thursdays between 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. for 30 minutes.

- **August 27, 2026**
- **September 10, 2026**
- **September 24, 2026**
- **October 8, 2026**
- **October 22, 2026**
- **November 19, 2026**
- **December 10, 2026**
- **December 17, 2026**

Feedback

SURVEY

- **What worked in the session today?**
- **What could be improved?**
- **Which areas of Guided Academic Programs do you need the most support for (or have questions)?**
- **Which areas do you feel most confident/prepared to develop with your team?**




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dakujem vám
ありがとう
ngiyabonga
dziękuję
merci
thank
you
baie dankie
धन्यवाद
molte grazie
suksema
danke
gracias
obrigada
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dank u
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tack så mycket