



# Boston, Massachusetts

Boston, Massachusetts, is one of the six sites selected to participate in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in 2020, aims to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways.

The Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team began this work by building a systems-change mindset among their cross-sector leadership team and launching several working groups focused on identifying and strategizing about components of systems change to move toward holistic career pathways development.

In the first year of this initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team identified gaps in data capacity to measure career pathway experiences and outcomes, leveraged shared definitions of high-quality college and career pathways (HQCCP) and work-based learning, completed a coronavirus pandemic labor market analysis for the city and began the critical work of understanding equity and cultural wealth frameworks.

Building on the foundation laid in year one, in year two of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team optimized

and expanded their working group processes to better design the components of the career pathway experience for learners. They increased capacity in the four focus high schools to plan and implement career pathways, developed resources to engage employers in work-based learning experiences aligned to career pathways and formalized partnerships for schools, supported cross-institutional efforts around seamless transitions and bolstered dual enrollment program offerings and wraparound supports for learners in career pathways.

In 2021-22, the Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:



Developing high-quality and accessible career pathways in high schools participating in the *New Skills ready network* initiative;

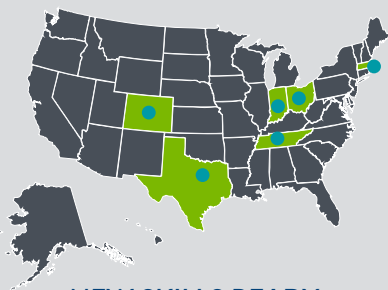


Increasing a shared understanding of, and access to, work-based learning; and



Creating a holistic and seamless advising system to support learners.

## THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK



### NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Indianapolis, Indiana
- Nashville, Tennessee

*New Skills ready network*, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their new \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity. Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group are working with sites to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways in six US communities.

The six *New Skills ready network* sites are: Boston, Massachusetts; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Nashville, Tennessee. These sites are formulating new partnerships between local school systems, higher education, employers, and government entities to develop pathways and policy recommendations that give underserved students

access to higher education and real-world work experiences that lead to high-wage, in-demand jobs.

These snapshots provide an overview of sites' accomplishments in the second year of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, including the development of priority objectives and action steps toward those objectives. Through the *New Skills ready network* initiative JPMorgan Chase is looking to advance the following priority areas to prepare students for good careers and economic mobility:

- Strengthening the alignment and rigor of career pathways;
- Designing, implementing and scaling real-world work experiences;
- Building seamless transitions to support postsecondary success; and
- Closing equity gaps.

## Partners engaged on the leadership team

- EdVestors (site lead)
- The Boston Foundation
- Boston Private Industry Council
- Boston Public Schools
- Bunker Hill Community College
- City of Boston
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Education
- University of Massachusetts Boston

In year two, the following high schools were selected as focus schools and participated in planning new career pathways with support from the *New Skills ready network* initiative:

- Brighton High School
- Charlestown High School
- Excel High School
- Jeremiah E. Burke High School

## VISION FOR SUCCESS

### Boston, Massachusetts

The Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team established a vision statement to guide the team's work over the five-year initiative and expand access to high-quality career pathways for all learners.

Boston aims to become:

- *A city where social, institutional, and systemic barriers to entry and success are removed so that all young people can access quality career learning opportunities that support their exploration, informed decision making, and preparation for their future opportunities and postsecondary paths;*
- *A transformed system that recognizes students of color as “holders and creators of knowledge” and values the cultural wealth they bring to schools through their knowledge, skills, abilities to navigate their context despite systemic barriers, such as structural racism which threatens equitable outcomes;*
- *A learning environment, inclusive of settings from the schoolhouse to the workplace, with connected systems across sectors that employ equity-minded and asset-based strategies and accountability measures that prioritize the inherent strengths of students, their networks, and the community, while also eliminating immediate barriers and addressing systemic inequalities; and*
- *A public-school district where every student can progress through pathways that are engaging and relevant, enhance their community, offer direct connections to postsecondary, and prepare young people to enter meaningful careers.*

## PRIORITY 1



### Developing high-quality and accessible career pathways in high schools participating in the *New Skills ready network* initiative

The foundation of strong partnerships cultivated in year one of the initiative led the Boston, Massachusetts, site to build out its teams to include individuals with national expertise in career pathways, increase the capacity of career pathways coordinators at the secondary level and identify the focus high schools for career pathways development. The career pathways that are being developed by the Boston, Massachusetts, team are aligned to the career pathways designation process articulated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). According to the DESE Innovation Pathway Designation Process, the commonwealth offers its local education agencies and institutions of higher education the opportunity to obtain a formal designation for Innovation Pathways, which offers separate opportunities for grant funding. The Boston, Massachusetts, team has submitted applications to DESE for designation, and the team will know if they are designated in spring 2022.



In preparation for year two of the *New Skills ready network*, the Boston, Massachusetts, team identified four focus high schools for the initiative: Brighton High School, Charlestown High School, Excel High School and Jeremiah E. Burke High School. The selection process for the focus high schools included a review of postsecondary outcomes, completion data and learners' access to career pathways through a racial equity lens. The data analyses included disaggregating learner population data by race, gender, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, disabilities and consideration of any existing learner access to career pathways in the school. The high schools in the district that had the least amount of access to career pathways for learners were eligible for a year of planning for a career pathways program aligned with the DESE HQCCP framework.

The Boston, Massachusetts, team leaned heavily into the planning process and development of career pathways in the focus high schools. Each school received resources for a new staff position that supports career pathways development. Staff in these roles partnered with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Career Technical Education Office and Career Pathways Program manager, a role made possible through the *New Skills ready network*, to walk through the planning process. In addition to bi-weekly planning conversations, the high schools' coordinators formed a professional learning community with staff from schools across the district to share best practices in developing career pathways and career advising. The conversations across the institutions have surfaced templates, thought partnership on program components and insights on how to support schools in career pathways development. The Boston, Massachusetts, team also established a Cross-Sector Pathways working group, which supports the focus schools and identifies areas in which the *New Skills ready network* can strategically support career pathways development in the district.



In BPS, the *New Skills ready network* team facilitated more collaboration and co-development of career pathways to directly support learners with resources that are helpful to their success in those career pathways. As part of the career pathways planning process, secondary schools, BPS, the Boston Private Industry Council, employers and postsecondary institutions developed a partnership to offer career pathways program components. For example, anchor employer partners involved in the career pathways development work are providing internships for learners as well as externships for teachers to create curricula aligned to real-world work to connect the experiences for learners in both contexts. High school educators and postsecondary institutions are partnering to develop early college experiences, including engaging learners through a cohort model, envisioning academic and social/emotional supports and developing culturally relevant course curricula.

The *New Skills ready network* Boston, Massachusetts, team critically evaluates access to the experiences for learners to ensure that they are inclusive and to create sustainable policies and career pathways to meet the needs of learners. The development of the career pathways focuses on recognizing the immense strengths learners bring to the institution that are not typically recognized in traditional academic measurement systems.



## Increasing a shared understanding of, and access to, work-based learning

In year one of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team leveraged their leadership team meetings and working group structures to clearly define work-based learning and share that definition across partners. Focusing on this priority prompted the Boston, Massachusetts, partners to develop a vision for work-based learning to encompass the range of opportunities and inform the design, implementation and scaling of real-world work experiences for learners in career pathways. The [guide](#) depicts a shared work-based learning definition that is aligned with DESE priorities and with Massachusetts' learner-centered, multi-year tool designed to provide learners with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal/social and career success: MyCareer and Academic Plan (MyCAP).

In year two of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team committed to increasing a shared understanding of, and access to, work-based learning opportunities across partners. The Work-Based Learning working group focused on understanding learner experiences through focus groups and leveraging existing research. The Boston Private Industry Council engaged employers and shared lessons learned from summer 2021 internships in a Fall Employer Network meeting. The working group also discussed strategies to develop baseline data about learners participating in work-based learning at the postsecondary level as this information is not centrally collected currently. In addition, the Boston Private Industry Council developed industry profiles that are intended to be learner facing and support making labor market information available to learners. The Cross-Sector Pathways working group also built upon the work-based learning definition by adding an employer engagement menu that supports the development of school-employer partnerships in secondary career pathways.

BPS worked closely with the Boston Private Industry Council and Workforce Investment Board to identify employers for each of the planned Innovation Pathways, including biotechnology, computer science and business finance. The participating high schools, BPS, Boston Private Industry Council and employers partnered to build out work-based learning opportunities from career exploration to career immersion to ensure that they are preparing learners for real-world work and what they will experience when they transition to industry. The participation of employer partners directly with these schools will ensure that learners have increased access to work-based learning opportunities including career exploration workshops, panels and coaching as well as internships. The Boston Private Industry Council will also continue to coordinate the citywide summer jobs effort and directly connect learners with internships each summer.

In postsecondary, Bunker Hill Community College documented its existing work-based learning opportunities to identify overlaps and expand the number of opportunities for learners. Bunker Hill Community College re-evaluated its internship preparation courses to understand how it can support learners to secure additional credit to accelerate their postsecondary education experiences. The University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston is homing in on widespread access to work-based learning opportunities that are experiential and compatible with learners' progress toward general education and liberal arts outcomes to continue to accelerate their postsecondary progress. In the second year of the initiative, UMass Boston also continued the Professional Apprentice Career Experiences (PACE) program, pairing learners with campus-based apprenticeships and wraparound supports. PACE supervisors also received training in equity and cultural wealth to inform supervision of their apprenticeship.



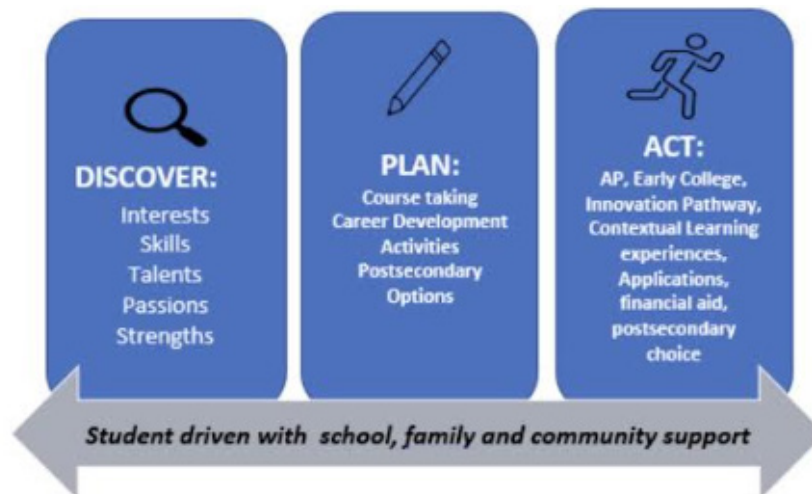


## Creating a holistic and seamless advising system to support learners

The Boston, Massachusetts, team prioritized seamless and holistic advising in year two of the initiative by deepening their understanding of the commonwealth’s advising frameworks, mapping career exploration activities in grades 7 to 16 and strategizing around opportunities for coordinated processes among partners. As the Boston, Massachusetts, team considered advising, they emphasized ensuring that the experiences are holistic and focused on the whole person, while also enabling learners to navigate their career pathways more easily. Within the Postsecondary Transitions working group, partners mapped the advising efforts that a learner may experience in their journey from grade 7 to 16.

The significance of this priority is demonstrated in the individual actions each partner took in the 2021-22 school year to enhance advising within and between their institutions:

- BPS set district-wide goals and expectations for the implementation of high-quality career advising aligned to the commonwealth’s frameworks for MyCAP. The *New Skills ready network* initiative supported partnerships between BPS and the Boston University Center for Future Readiness to develop interactive career lessons for learners in grades 9-12 aligned to the district’s MyCAP scope and sequence. BPS bolstered the implementation of MyCAP by hosting full-day trainings for school staff, launching an educator community of practice for implementation and encouraging learner engagement through the Generation Success campaign. In year three of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, BPS will continue to develop the interactive lessons for grades 6-8 and begin implementing a middle grades career advising sequence in the 2022-23 school year. Boston has emerged as an example for MyCAP at the state level, and its efforts were included in a national report by Advance CTE.
- In year two of the initiative, Bunker Hill Community College and UMass Boston deepened their collaboration by focusing on learners’ experiences during transitions between institutions. The two postsecondary institutions met regularly to map existing support services and share their advising frameworks. Collectively, they identified areas of opportunity to improve communications, align systems and deepen learner awareness of transition resources. Their collective next steps will be to pilot strategies that will enable more seamless advising and transitions between institutions and to investigate strategies to reduce credit transfer loss. In addition, UMass Boston has deepened its understanding of a seamless and holistic framework for advising as an institution. As part of its work in year two of the initiative, UMass Boston brought on additional leadership to oversee deeper connections on advising, including creating career communities at the institution. UMass Boston continues to push forward on advising work for current undergraduates but has also been a longtime partner in advising through its pre-collegiate programs within BPS high schools. In year two of the initiative, staff within the Office of Precollegiate Programs partnered closely with schools to continue their supports around MyCAP implementation and support career pathways development.



## Looking Ahead

In the year ahead, the Boston, Massachusetts, team is looking forward to implementing Innovation Pathways that are flexible and enhance learner progress toward postsecondary and career experiences, strengthening seamless and holistic advising experiences, coordinating employer engagement across secondary and postsecondary and developing and integrating the transferability of learning outcomes and credits for learners across BPS into postsecondary institutions. BPS is prioritizing school-based coordination and added capacity in the pilot high schools to support the career pathways. Bunker Hill Community College and UMass Boston are partnering with schools and focusing on the foundational work for more seamless transitions between their institutions. The Boston Private Industry Council will continue to partner with schools around career exploration, while also working on deepened partnerships that provide stackable work-based learning experiences from secondary through postsecondary. The Boston Foundation, the City of Boston and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education will continue to support the enabling conditions for career pathways by providing insights and connections to resources that support career pathways.

