

New Bedford one of several cities to receive funds from state for early college programs

University of Massachusetts receives grant to launch new statewide Early College program with online classes.

The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded more than \$2 million to high schools and colleges, including the University of Massachusetts, that are developing new early college pilot programs aimed at significantly increasing the number of underrepresented students taking college courses while still in high school.

“Early College programs provide students with an invaluable learning experience that supports their successful future in and out of the classroom,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “We are pleased that UMass will now be among the higher education institution partners, and we are grateful for their commitment to expanding access to college courses for high school students across the Commonwealth.”

“Students from every community in the Commonwealth will now have even more opportunities to build a bridge to college through these innovative new models,” Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said. “Congratulations to each of the grant recipients for proposing ways in which we can make Early College opportunities more widely available.”

“We’re proud to make these grants available to programs who are thinking critically about how to expand access to college courses for more high school students,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “All students, and particularly those who have been historically underrepresented in higher

education, deserve the opportunity to prepare for postsecondary education. These early college models will help more students have this opportunity.”

“These grants will accelerate innovation, build capacity, and strengthen quality in early college programs across Massachusetts,” said UMass President Marty Meehan. “UMass is grateful for the confidence that the Baker-Polito Administration is showing in our initiatives on the South Coast and in the Merrimack Valley. With our colleagues at UMass Dartmouth and UMass Lowell, we look forward to working with our partner high schools to open new higher education pathways for their students.”

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) received \$940,000 to launch its first early college program and support seven partnerships with high schools surrounding its Dartmouth and Lowell campuses. Known as Commonwealth Collegiate Academy, UMass will offer live course instruction delivered remotely by its faculty to students in multiple high schools during the school day. High school instructors will partner with their UMass colleagues to provide face-to-face support for labs, discussion sections and team-based projects. UMass anticipates receiving official designation status from the state in the future, and these startup early college programs will be able to request additional state funding next year to work toward their designations.

Since its launch in 2017, the Baker-Polito Administration has undertaken a statewide effort to expand Early College to substantially increase the number of high school students who take college courses and earn credits at no cost before they graduate high school. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget signed by the Governor included a significant increase to Early College funding to bring the total annual investment to more than \$19 million.

Currently, there are approximately 5,400 students enrolled in

Early College courses at 50 high schools across the Commonwealth. The Executive Office of Education anticipates that approximately 8,700 students will be enrolled in Early College programs by the 2024-2025 school year. About half of the Commonwealth's Gateway Cities have Early College programs at their high schools, and nearly 60 percent of students enrolled in Early College come from low-income backgrounds.

Students who participate in Early College programs enroll in college at significantly higher rates than their high school peers, and it boosts college completion rates for low-income, minority and first-generation college students. In 2019, approximately 76 percent of Early College students enrolled in college after graduation compared to 55 percent of their peers who did not participate in Early College.

The following applicants received grants:

- Boston Public Schools partnered with Roxbury Community College – \$120,000
- Brockton Public Schools partnered with Massasoit Community College and UMass Dartmouth – \$200,000 – Brockton High School is partnering with Massasoit Community College and UMass Dartmouth to launch a district-wide Early College program that enrolls several hundred students. The program will begin recruiting middle school students and provide college coursework and support to high school students in the district.
- Digital Ready partnering with Revere Public Schools and Boston Public Schools – \$120,000
- Franklin County Public Schools partnered with Greenfield Community College – \$200,000- Franklin County Public Schools and Greenfield Community College are partnering to develop a rural delivery model pilot of Early College. The college will launch a pilot this fall with Mohawk Trail Regional High School.
- South Shore Consortium partnered with King Philip Public School District – \$100,000

- Lynn Public Schools partnered with North Shore Community College – \$200,000 – Lynn Public Schools is working with North Shore Community College to open an on-campus Early College high school this fall starting with a 9th grade class.
- Merrimack College – \$120,000
- University of Massachusetts President's Office with Billerica, Brockton, Dracut, Fall River, Methuen, New Bedford, and Taunton public schools- \$940,000