

College Success Research Forum



The College Success Research Forum

Crafting an integrated policy and research agenda for improving college readiness and success for all students

A summary of key themes, ideas, and strategies emerging from the 2014 College Success Research Forum

Mass Insight Education



Mass Insight Education, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Boston, MA, was founded in 1997. Its launch reflected the high priority that business, government, and education leaders placed at that time on the success of Massachusetts' nascent standards-based reform drive, set in motion by the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1993. It is the sister organization of [Mass Insight Global Partnerships](#), which has worked since 1989 to keep Massachusetts and its businesses and institutions globally competitive. Mass Insight's national work focuses on district and state strategies to turn around low performing schools.



The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, New England's largest public charity focused solely on education, has worked for over 20 years to help our region prosper by preparing all of its learners for success.

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The Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL, LLC) is an education research and consulting firm that works with educational organizations, state education agencies, districts, and schools to promote meaningful improvements to our system of public education.

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Introduction

By 2020, more than three-quarters of jobs in Massachusetts and across the New England region will require higher education beyond high school. Unfortunately, too many students leave high school without the academic skills needed to succeed in college. It is imperative that stakeholders across the K-20 educational landscape work together to ensure that all students have the opportunity and skills needed to thrive in college and to be prepared to enter the workforce. While there is a growing urgency—among educators and policymakers alike—to improve college success for all students, how we go about increasing college success remains an open question. What are the policies that need to be in place to accelerate improvement across the K-20 continuum, and among various stakeholders? Which strategies or programs work and are most cost effective? How can we go about measuring and setting performance goals consistently and reliably, to promote shared accountability among the many organizations and groups working on college readiness and success? It is within this context that Mass Insight Education and Nellie Mae Education Foundation partnered to convene the 2014 College Success Research Forum.

The **2014 College Success Research Forum**, held September 30th and October 1st in Boston, Mass., brought together leading researchers, policy actors, K-12 and higher education leaders, and advocacy and support organizations focused on improving college success for all students. The **Research Forum** provided dedicated time and space for educational leaders and advocates to engage in conversations, debates, and collective thinking around efforts to dramatically improve students' readiness for, and success in, college.

The goal of the Forum was to prompt dialogue among diverse stakeholders and to develop the foundation for an integrated policy and research agenda for college readiness and success that would serve as the basis for developing and implementing strategies, studying and measuring the impact of efforts to improve college success, and subsequently improve strategies to increase college success.

Organization of the Forum

The forum was organized as a two-day event, with day one focused on research (The Research Conversation) and day two focused on policy (The Policy and Advocacy Conversation). During day one, researchers participated in working groups to clarify what college success means for different stakeholders, to identify what research says about the core issues impacting students' readiness for, and ability to persist in college, and to share how college readiness and success is currently being measured (e.g., leading and lagging indicators, key metrics). During day two, a larger group of researchers, advocacy organizations, and policy leaders¹ explored ways in which organizations can better work together to develop and implement cross-boundary strategies, and how policy can be used to accelerate efforts to improve college readiness and success. Day two included a panel discussion among key educational leaders² to share current approaches to college readiness and success.

The following pages provide an **executive summary** of key ideas and recommendations for developing an integrated Research and Policy Agenda for College Success, followed by summaries of the **Research Conversation** and the **Policy and Advocacy Conversation**. Supplemental materials used during the Research Forum are provided as appendices and include: (a) a listing of attendees and contributors; (b) a summary list of organizations and initiatives with College Readiness and Success Goals; (c) a *Summary of Research on College Success in Massachusetts: Benchmarks, Challenges, Policies, and Recommendations*; (d) additional Forum materials, including the agenda and links to key resource documents, and (e) selected references and literature used by session participants.

¹ See Appendix A for a listing of attendees and contributors.

² Moderator: Michael Contompasis, Mass Insight Education; Panelists: Commissioner Richard M. Freeland, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education; Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Chancellor Marty Meehan, University of Massachusetts – Lowell; President Daniel Asquino, Mount Wachusett Community College; Superintendent John McDonough, Boston Public Schools.

Executive Summary

Developing An Integrated Research and Policy Agenda for College Success

Out of the rich and varied conversations over the course of the two-day event, there emerged a strong consensus that research, policies, and strategies related to college readiness and success **were not** as aligned as needed to dramatically improve college success rates for all students. Participants spoke to the critical importance of an **integrated research and policy agenda** that would guide how research and data is used to **directly inform policies, to develop and implement complementary and effective strategies, and to incentivize partnerships among stakeholders.**

**Alignment
Research – Policy – Strategies**

The following recommendations are directed toward researchers, advocacy organizations, state leaders, institutes of higher education, and policymakers.

Recommendations for Researchers and Advocacy Organizations

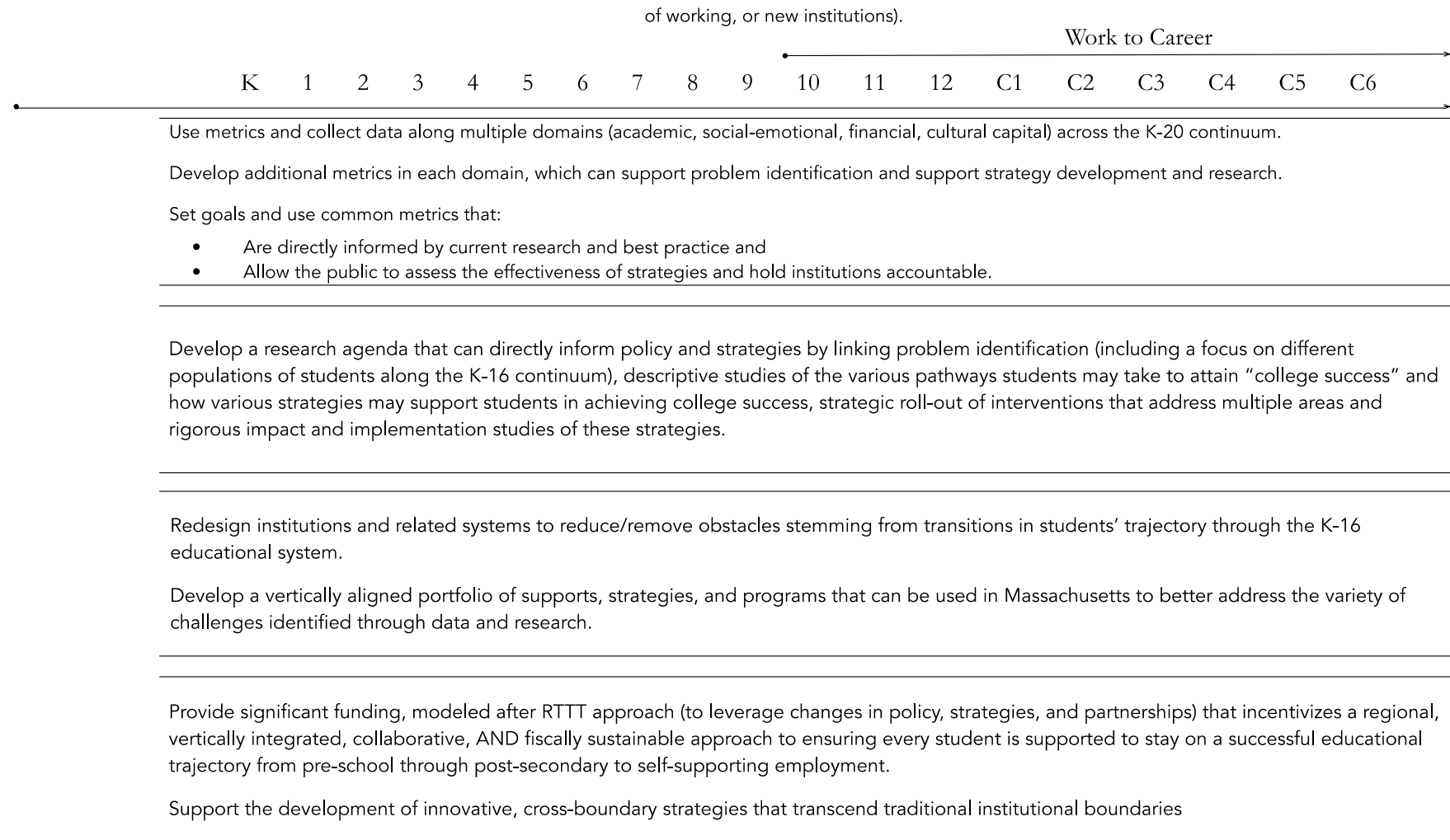
- **Develop and adopt a research agenda that can directly inform policy development and the use of effective strategies.** Specifically, link problem identification (e.g., challenges to students' readiness for and success in college), descriptive studies of the various pathways students may take to succeed in college and how various strategies support students in achieving college success, strategic roll-out of interventions that address multiple areas and rigorous impact and implementation studies of these strategies.
- **Use an analytic framework (how we understand and measure how students progress and the challenges they face) that is vertically aligned (K-20) and horizontally inclusive of multiple domains of data (e.g., academic, fiscal, social-emotional, cultural).** In particular, link academic and non-academic metrics as they relate to goal setting and problem definition.

Recommendations for State Leaders, Institutes of Higher Education, and Policymakers

- **Develop policies and strategies that aim to prepare all students for success in a four-year college while ensuring that there are viable and equally valued options for non-college-going students.** Ensure that such options are known, easily accessible, and made available by all IHEs and related systems for support and guidance.
- **Convene an advisory committee, composed of stakeholders from IHEs, the state department of education, districts, and others to develop and propose how institutions and related systems can be redesigned** to reduce/remove obstacles stemming from transitions in students' trajectory through the K-20 educational system.
- **Develop a vertically aligned portfolio of supports, strategies, and programs** that can be used to better address the variety of challenges identified through data and research.
- **State leaders should propose and support policies that provide significant funding to leverage changes in policy, strategies, and partnerships** that incentivize a regional, vertically integrated, collaborative, and fiscally sustainable approach to ensuring every student is supported from pre-school through post-secondary to self-supporting employment.
- **Support the development of innovative, cross-boundary strategies that transcend traditional institutional boundaries** (e.g., First-in-the-World federal funding, develop Ptech models providing both secondary and post-secondary opportunities meeting the needs of the local economy).

Figure 1, *Crafting an Integrated Research and Policy Agenda for College Success* (on the following page) provides additional detail related to the recommendations within four domains (goals and metrics, research, strategies, and policy) and is intended to serve as a guide for future conversations.

Figure 1. Crafting an Integrated Research and Policy Agenda for College Success



Key Themes from the Research Conversation

Expand our use and understanding of data

Participants emphasized the importance of academic and non-academic data across the K-20 continuum. While we have an abundance of quantitative data in areas such as high school and post-secondary persistence as well as some correlational data (e.g., doing well in algebra and graduating from high school), there is scant quantitative or qualitative data that explains why some students are not persisting on a successful trajectory from K-12 through post-secondary opportunities.

- There are multiple types/domains of data that can be used to help us understand how students progress: academic, social-emotional, fiscal, and social and cultural capital.
- Research and existing data systems provide detailed academic and fiscal data that highlight student achievement benchmarks at points along the K-20 trajectory that are indicators of success and show that students' trajectory can be altered;
- However, data is lacking in other areas, such as students' social-emotional skills or their ability to navigate the educational system, which in turn limits our ability to pinpoint exactly why students may not succeed (e.g., milestone research is descriptive, not causal).

Guiding Questions for Researchers

- What do we mean by "college success"?
- What are the core issues and challenges to increasing college readiness and success?
- What are key levers for change and high impact strategies?
- How are we measuring college readiness and success?

Frame College Success so that it is meaningful and relevant to all students

Participants recognized and acknowledged that there are, and should be, various pathways to college and career success, and there needs to be much greater emphasis on ensuring that particular challenges (such as knowing how to apply to college or facing personal challenges such as finances) do not disrupt students' pursuit of post-secondary opportunities. Research and data provide evidence that particular events or challenges often derail students from a successful trajectory.

It is important to ensure that research and policy incorporates a more nuanced and representative depiction of students' trajectory into and through post-secondary education that (a) highlights the importance of a two- or four-year degree while (b) valuing and mapping out alternative pathways to college and career success.

- There is a productive tension around what "college success" means for various stakeholders. While the achievement of a four-year degree stands as a signature goal, it is important to acknowledge and value different pathways that will lead to postsecondary and career success.
- Transitions in K-12 and in college (e.g., eighth to ninth grade, ninth to 10th, into college, persisting in college, obtaining a year's worth of credits and "stackable" credits) are important benchmarks and predictable times when students struggle. These transitions provide ways to identify students needing support and avenues for providing support and guidance to students. Similarly, students face unpredictable challenges, and we need to have systems in place to respond to these challenges.

Key Recommendations for Strengthening a College Success Research Agenda

- Develop and adopt an **integrated research agenda that can directly inform policy and strategies**. An integrated research agenda will link **problem identification, descriptive studies, and strategic roll-out of interventions** that address multiple areas with **rigorous impact and implementation studies** of these strategies.
- Develop an **analytic framework that is vertically aligned and horizontally inclusive of multiple domains of data** so that we can broaden the collection of data and enhance our understanding of students' trajectories through the K-20 education system.
- Explicitly **link academic and non-academic metrics** as they relate to **goal setting** and **problem definition**.
- **Embed non-academic measures and indicators** into new research and evaluations.

Key Themes from the Policy and Advocacy Conversation

Developing an integrated approach to policy, advocacy, and strategies

Integrated Supports and Strategies

Participants spoke of the need to involve multiple partners and institutions in efforts to improve college success, with such partnerships having the following key characteristics/elements.

- **Regional:** Formalize regional partnerships to maximize and leverage resources and create shared ownership of the issue and solution.
- **Scalable:** Focus development efforts and funds on supports and strategies that are scalable to multiple sites (e.g., schools, districts, IHEs).
- **Partnerships:** Leverage public, private, and non-profit partnerships in an integrated and collaborative fashion when developing supports and strategies.
- **Accountability:** Build in accountability among all partners, linked to common goals and metrics for performance that allow the public to assess the effectiveness of strategies and make decisions, ensuring institutions cannot rest on their laurels.
- **Quality:** Strive to implement high quality programs (e.g., research-based) and work towards a shared understanding of quality and effectiveness in a way that is linked to accountability.

Guiding Questions for the Policy Conversation

- How can we generate consensus on high leverage and high impact issues and strategies?
- How might the joint research, policy, and advocacy community generate public focus and urgency to accelerate movement in reaching goals?
- How can community leadership, university and community college presidents, and school superintendents use data to initiate a local campaign for College Success?

The importance of Competitive and Collaborative Partnerships among state offices, IHEs, districts, and national and regional support organizations. In particular, participants emphasized the importance of finding ways to incentivize collaboration among partners that would leverage resources and address the following issues:

- **Reduce existing silos:** Cultivating and incentivizing partnerships will reduce existing silos—information and programmatic—at multiple levels of the education system that tend to deter collaboration, meaningful partnerships and collective action.
- **Minimize turf issues:** Partnerships will also minimize potential “turf” issues (e.g., presumed ownership of a particular region or population of students) that often keep people from working together or sharing information. Similarly, partnerships will expand collective responsibility for students’ success (e.g., between districts and higher education), so that strategies and solutions are jointly developed and implemented.
- **Create shared accountability for performance:** Formalizing partnerships and shared performance agreements among existing institutions (e.g., districts, community colleges, and universities) for the performance of students will strengthen shared accountability. Likewise, developing shared performance goals among service providers and between service providers and IHEs will promote joint action.

Core Recommendations for an integrated Research, Policy, and Advocacy Agenda

- **Develop and actively share a vertically aligned portfolio of supports, strategies, and/or programs** that can be used in Massachusetts to better address the challenges identified through data and research.
- **Provide significant funding**, modeled after RTTT approach (to leverage changes in policy, strategies, and partnerships) **that incentivizes a regional, vertically integrated, collaborative, and fiscally sustainable approach** to ensuring every student is far better supported to persist in a successful trajectory from public school, through post-secondary, towards gainful employment.
- **Support the development of innovative strategies** that transcend traditional institutional

Appendix A: Attendees and Contributors

Mass Insight Education

William Guenther, CEO and Founder
Justin Cohen, President, Mass Insight Education

Research Advisory Group

William Corrin, Deputy Director, K-12 Policy Area, MDRC
Jonathan Cowan, Chief Research, Design and Innovation Officer, KIPP
Ronald Ferguson, Harvard University
Jane Hannaway, Director, CALDER at AIR
Margaret (Macke) Raymond, Director, CREDO, Stanford University

Forum Planning, Facilitation, and Documentation

Brett Lane, INSTLL
Chris Unger, INSTLL
Lilian Wu, Mass Insight Education
Carol Relph, Mass Insight Education

Speakers and Panelists

Day Two Panel: Embracing a Goal and Building Public Support for College Success

Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Commissioner Richard M. Freeland, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
Chancellor Marty Meehan, University of Massachusetts – Lowell
President Daniel Asquino, Mount Wachusett Community College
Superintendent John McDonough, Boston Public Schools.

Opening Remarks: Setting Goals for College Success

Steven Colón, Vice President, College Board

Research Forum (Day One and Two Participants)

Joan Becker, University of Massachusetts-Boston
Ann Coles, uAspire
Eve Goldberg, Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Glendean Hamilton, Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Clarisse Haxton, American Institutes for Research
Matt Holsapple, Consortium on Chicago School Research
Jessica Howell, College Board
Laura Knapp, RTI International
Yolanda Kodrzycki, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Stig Leschly, MATCH Charter School
Gina Mandracchia, Flamboyan Foundation
Kristin McSwain, Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Tom Mortenson, Pell Institute
Stafford Peat, New England Board of Higher Education
Janet Phlegar, Board Member, Nellie Mae Foundation
Kate Sandel, Massachusetts Department of Education
Sara Stoutland, Stoutland Consulting
Neil Sullivan, Boston Private Industry Council
Joel Vargas, Jobs for the Future
Rebecca Vichniac, KIPP
Mamie Voight, Institute for Higher Education Policy
Orlando Watkins, Match Charter Public High School

Research Forum (Day One and Two Participants)

Dale Allen, Quinsigamond Community College
Ines Ariceta, Summer Search Boston
Andrew Balson
Bridgit Brown, Nellie Mae Foundation
Michael Contompasis, Mass Insight Education
Pia Durkin, Superintendent, New Bedford Public Schools
Andrew Gallagher, Posse Foundation
Bob Giannino-Racine, uAspire
Jessica Howell, College Board
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Charlie Toulmin, Nellie Mae Foundation

Appendix B: The Landscape of College Success Goals

A Summary of Organizations and Initiatives with College Success and College Readiness Goals

Organizations with Measurable Goals	Goal	Source
Mass Insight Education: College Success Campaign	By 2024: To double the number of low-income students graduating college . To double the number of Massachusetts students graduating college with a degree in science, technology, engineering, or math .	http://www.massinsight.org/
Nellie Mae Education Foundation: College and Career Readiness Goal	80 percent of New England students , especially and essentially those who are underserved, are college and career ready by 2030 .	http://www.nmefoundation.org/
UAspire	To provide direct financial aid advising services to 15,000 Massachusetts students and to 75,000 students nationally (annually) to help them find an affordable path to - and through - a postsecondary education with a reasonable level of debt; To provide training and technical support to more than 1,000 community and school-based practitioners who will counsel over 250,000 students each year on finding a path to achieve a postsecondary degree with a reasonable level of debt.	http://www.uaspire.org/
College Board's Access to Opportunity Program	To ensure that 100 percent of African American, Latino, and Native American students with AP Potential™ are enrolled in at least one AP course .	https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/access-to-opportunity
College Completion Agenda	To increase the proportion of 25-to-34-year-olds who hold an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by the year 2025 .	http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/national_initiatives.aspx
Complete College America	By 2020, six out of 10 young adults in our country will have a college degree or credential of value.	http://completecollege.org/
Education Trust: Access to Success Initiative	To cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015 .	http://www.edtrust.org/issue/higher-education/access-to-success
Excelencia in Education	Degree Attainment Goal: For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the work for college degree attainment, Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million more degrees by 2020 .	http://www.edexcelencia.org/
Lumina: Goal 2025	To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality college degrees, certificates or other credentials to 60 percent by 2025 : http://moveed.org/	http://www.luminafoundation.org/goal_2025.html
National College Access Network	THE BIG GOAL: To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025 .	http://www.collegeaccess.org/
New Visions for Public Schools	80 percent of students in New Visions schools will graduate from high school and succeed in college.	http://www.newvisions.org/
Southern Regional Education Board: College Completion	To increase significantly the numbers of students who complete associate's and bachelor's degrees and postsecondary career certificates of value, so that 60 percent of each state's adults ages 25 to 64 will have one of these credentials by 2025 .	http://www.sreb.org/page/1073/college_and_career_readiness.html
The United Negro College Fund	UNCF's North Star is to increase the total annual number of African American college graduates by focusing on activities that ensure more students are college-ready, enroll in college and persist.	http://www.uncf.org/
Dallas ISD: Destination 2020	80 percent of our students [will] enter college, the military, or a 'career-ready job' straight from high school.	http://www.dallasisd.org/destination2020

Organizations with Mission Based Goals	Goal	Source
KIPP: KIPP Through College	Our work at KIPP is built on the most basic of beliefs: that all students will learn and achieve. We aspire for 75 percent of our students to earn four-year degrees and all of our students to have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college if they so choose.	http://www.kipp.org/our-approach/kipp-through-college
The College Board's Access to Opportunity Program	To significantly increase the number of students – especially low-income, college-ready students – who apply to four or more colleges . To identify and break down barriers that prevent students — particularly low-income, first generation, and underrepresented minority students — from applying to and enrolling in colleges that are the best academic, social, and financial fit.	https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/access-to-opportunity
Achieving the Dream	To lead the most comprehensive, evidence-based reform movement for community college student success in higher education history , resulting in significantly improved lives and greater global economic competitiveness for the United States.	http://www.achievingthedream.org/
American Council on Education: National Commission of Education Attainment	To chart a course for greatly improving college retention and attainment and, in turn, restore the nation's higher education preeminence . On January 23, 2013, the commission released An Open Letter to College and University Leaders: College Completion Must Be Our Priority to call upon their colleagues to make retention and completion a critical campus priority to stem the unacceptable loss of human potential represented by the number of students who never make it to graduation.	http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/National-Commission-on-Higher-Education-Attainment.aspx
Complete College American	To significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of value and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations	http://completecollege.org/
National Governors Association: Complete to Compete	To raise national awareness about the need to increase college completion and productivity , and the consequences of inaction; create a set of common higher education completion and productivity measures that governors can use to monitor state progress; develop a series of best practices and a list of policy actions governors can take to achieve increased college completion.	http://ci.nga.org/cms/home/1011/index;jsessionid=6CD354DB2B7A6DF646A32CFB2EF5E617
Gates Foundation: Postsecondary Success Strategy Overview	To ensure that all students who seek the opportunity are able to complete a high-quality, affordable postsecondary education that leads to a sustaining career . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College-Ready Education: to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college and in a career. • Postsecondary Success: to dramatically increase the number of young people who obtain a postsecondary degree or certificate with labor-market value. 	http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/US-Program/Postsecondary-Success
Institute for Higher Education Policy: National Coalition for College Completion	To mobilize a diverse, non-partisan voice in support of college completion that speaks for the collective interests of the American public by demanding a policy agenda that encourages higher education institutions to provide better support to underrepresented students.	http://www.ihep.org/programs/nccc.cfm
Pittsburgh Promise	Mitigate and reverse the population declines in the City of Pittsburgh and the enrollment declines in Pittsburgh Public Schools; Grow the high school completion rates, college readiness, and post high school success of all students in Pittsburgh Public Schools; Deploy a well-prepared and energized work force and an eager core of community volunteers	http://www.pittsburghpromise.org/about_vision.php

Organizations and Initiatives with Mission/Vision based goals - Continued

Organization	Goal	Source
Posse	<p>To expand the pool from which top colleges and universities can recruit outstanding young leaders from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>To help these institutions build more interactive campus environments so that they can be more welcoming for people from all backgrounds.</p> <p>To ensure that Posse Scholars persist in their academic studies and graduate so they can take on leadership positions in the workforce.</p>	http://www.possefoundation.org/
Project Grad	To ensure a quality public school education for students in low-income areas, so that more students graduate from high school and enter college prepared to excel.	http://projectgrad.org/
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: Adult College Completion Network	To unite organizations and agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior credits but no degree in a collaborative learning network.	http://adultcollegecompletion.org/

Appendix C: Summary of Research on College Success in Massachusetts: Benchmarks, Challenges, Policies, and Recommendations

Appendix D: College Research Forum Materials

Tuesday, September 30 - Wednesday, October 1, 2014
The Harvard Club
374 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215

**Sponsored by Mass Insight Education in partnership
with the Nellie Mae Foundation**

The 2014 College Success Research Forum is the first in a series of annual Research Forums designed to bring together researchers, policy actors, advocacy organizations, and support organizations all focused on College Success.

Context

Within the national movement to improve students' career and college readiness, it is important to connect *researchers, organizations working with districts and schools* to improve college success, *advocacy organizations*, and *policy leaders* who share a collective focus on increasing college success for all students. There is an emerging window of opportunity to develop a coherent research and policy message around College Readiness and Success, to create public urgency and the subsequent will to take action, and to conduct research, enact policy, and implement strategies that will lead to improved college outcomes.

Purpose

The purpose of the College Success Research Forum is to provide a forum for researchers, advocacy organizations, and policy leaders to engage in conversations and collective thinking around efforts to dramatically improve students' readiness for, and success in, college.

In day one, researchers will have an opportunity to engage in small working groups to clarify what College Success means for different stakeholders, identify what research says about the core issues impacting students' readiness for, and ability to persist in college, and share how College Readiness and Success is currently being measured (e.g., leading and lagging indicators, key metrics).

In day two, a larger group of researchers, advocacy organizations, and policy leaders will explore ways that goals are used to drive collaboration, investment, and policy, focusing on how states and local communities can develop a consistent message around College Success that will heighten public and private urgency and contribute to meaningful actions and policies.

Outcomes

- A framework for an integrated **College Success Research Agenda** that highlights key research questions, high-leverage metrics and predictive indicators for defining and measuring college readiness and college success, and clarification of specific gaps in data availability and in how data is defined and measured.
- A **College Success Policy Agenda** that communicates the importance of setting clear goals and outcomes for College Success and explores how College Success goals can be used to drive policy changes and action.

Agenda

Tuesday, September 30th

Day One Focus: Measuring What Matters

- Defining College Success and College Readiness as concepts used by researchers, educators, policymakers, and by parents and students from diverse backgrounds.
- Discussion and exploration of metrics and benchmarks for measuring College Success, from the perspective of researchers and program implementers: What is being measured and what are thresholds/criteria for “success”?
- An in-depth conversation and review of challenges and successes related to the use and analysis of data, focusing on gaps in data availability, efforts to align how data is measured, and challenges in accurately tracking students into college and the workforce.

11:00 Registration Opens

12:00 Welcome and Introductions

William Guenther, CEO and Founder, Mass Insight Education

12:30 Framing the Conversation: What do we mean by “College Success”?

Opening Remarks

Dr. Ronald Ferguson, Harvard University

Jonathan Cowan, Chief Research, Design, and Innovation Officer, KIPP

Guiding Questions for Small Group Conversations

1. Broadly speaking, what does it mean for students to be “ready” for college and to have “success” in college? Specifically, what do these terms mean for different constituents (e.g., for researchers, policy actors, and for parents and students from varied backgrounds)?
2. What does research tell us about the key points along the K-20 continuum for intervening and supporting different types of students towards increased readiness for, and success in college?

1:15 What are the core issues and challenges to increasing College Readiness and Success?

This session provides an opportunity for small working groups to share how we conceptualize the problem/issue of college success and readiness for college, including a conversation of key levers for change and high impact strategies.

Guiding Questions for Small Group Conversations

1. What are the key reasons why students may not be “ready” for college?
2. What are the key reasons why students may not “succeed” in college?
3. What does research tell us about these key levers for change and high impact strategies?

Tuesday, September 30th

2:15 Break

2:30 The Research Agenda: How are we measuring College Success and Readiness for College?

This session provides an opportunity to share how we are measuring various aspects of college readiness and success, focusing on what we measure (e.g., concepts and indicators) and benchmarks or thresholds that we use to characterize a student as ready for, or successful in, college.

Guiding Questions for Small Group Conversations

1. How are we measuring College Success and Readiness for College? And what are the primary criteria and/or indicators of readiness and success?
2. Specifically, how are we measuring leading and lagging indicators? What are the specific **measures** and related **benchmarks** that you use in your research to **measure and establish** readiness and success, and that folks may use to make claims about the **impact** of specific interventions on students' readiness and success?
3. What are some of the major gaps in data or types of data (e.g., qualitative, survey, from the perspective of students) that would be useful to help to better understand how students are moving through high school and college, and why some succeed and others do not?

4:00 Break

4:15 Unleashing the power of research: The Research/Policy Agenda to Achieve College Success

Reflections and Round Table Conversation To Frame Day Two

Dr. Jane Hannaway, Director, CALDER

Dr. Margaret (Macke) Raymond, Director, CREDO

Guiding Questions

1. **Research:** How does the Research/Policy relationship impact our work?
2. **Policy:** How can we generate consensus on the "high leverage, high impact" issues and strategies?
3. **Communication:** How might the joint research, policy, and advocacy community generate public focus and urgency to accelerate movement in reaching goals?

4:45 Closing comments

5:00 Adjourn

Wednesday, October 1st

Day Two Focus: Goals, Policies, and Actions

- Sharing researcher perspectives on College Success and implications for setting goals and selecting strategies, as developed in the first day of the Forum.
- Using goals and metrics to increase public awareness, inform policy, and drive action.
- Aligning college success data, research, policy, and advocacy to reinforce public focus, create and sustain urgency, and build the will to take action.

7:30 **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:00 **Welcome and Introductions**

William Guenther, CEO and Founder, Mass Insight Education

8:30 **What the Research Tells Us: Implications for Advocacy, Strategies, and Goal Setting**

Dr. William Corrin, Deputy Director, K-12 Education Policy Area, MDRC
Brett Lane, INSTLL

8:45 **What the Field Tells Us: Setting Goals for College Success**

Opening Remarks

Steven Colón, Vice President, College Board

Sharing of College Success Goals: Full Group Discussion

Setting Big Goals: Many states, districts, colleges, and advocacy organizations are setting goals and tracking outcomes to drive collaboration, investment, and policy - What is working in gaining the public's attention and generating action?

10:00 **Break**

10:15 **Policy and Advocacy for College Success:** How can we organize a collaborative communications campaign (at the state and local levels) to generate urgency and advocacy for this work?

Small Group Conversations: Communicating Goals to Drive Policy and Action

- How do we use what we know from the research about goals to make the case to policymakers and to the public to get College Success to the top of the agenda?
- How receptive are key stakeholders now to an agenda like this?
- How can we use a campaign to help raise urgency and build "public will" in support of these goals? What kind of campaign?
- How can policy help move the ball in getting agreement on and implementing the big goals? What should be the policy priorities?

11:30 **Double the Numbers: A Massachusetts Campaign for College Success**

Justin Cohen, President, Mass Insight Education

12:00 **Lunch**

12:30 **Embracing a Goal and Building Public Support**

Moderator: Michael Contompasis, Senior Field Consultant, Mass Insight Education
Distinguished Panel

Commissioner Richard M. Freeland, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Chancellor Marty Meehan, University of Massachusetts – Lowell
President Daniel Asquino, Mount Wachusett Community College
Superintendent John McDonough, Boston Public Schools

2:00 **Closing comments and conversation**
William Guenther, Mass Insight Education
Justin Cohen, Mass Insight Education

3:00 **Adjourn**

Appendix E. Selected Resources Used by Forum Participants

College Readiness and Access Metrics and Indicators

John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities, Stanford University. (2014). *Menu of college readiness indicators and supports*. College Readiness Indicator Systems Resource Series. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Cromwell, A. M., McClarty, K.L., & Larson, S.J. (2013). *College Readiness Indicators*. Pearson Education: Retrieved September 19, 2014: http://images.pearsonassessments.com/images/tmrs/TMRS-RIN_Bulletin_25CRIndicators_051413.pdf

College Board: Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling (Extracted p. 22)

National College Access Network: Common Measures for College Access

Hein, V. & Smerdon (2013). *Predictors of Postsecondary Success*. College and Career Readiness and Success Center. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

College Completion Metrics and Indicators

Reyna, R (2010). *Common College Completion Metrics*. NGA Center for Best Practices (Extracted p. 3, 5, 7, 9)

Complete College America (2014). *Common College Completion Metrics* (Extracted p. 1, 7-9)

Voight, M., Long, A. A., Huelsman, M., & Engle, J. (2014). *Mapping the Postsecondary Data Domain: Problems and Possibilities*. Institute for Higher Education Policy. (Extracted p. 1, 14)

National College Access Network: Common Measures for College Access

Selected Research

Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Yuan, X., Harrell, A., Wild, J., Ziskin, M. (2014, July). *Some College, No Degree: A National View of Students with Some College Enrollment, but No Completion* (Signature Report No. 7). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (Extracted p. 1 - 9)

Hearn, J.C. (2006). *Student Success: What Research Suggests for Policy and Practice*. Washington DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. (Extracted p. 1 – 9 and Appendix A)

Ewell, P. & Wellman, J (2007). *Summary Report of the NPEC Initiative and National Symposium on Postsecondary Success*, Washington DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. (Extracted p. 1 – 8)

College Success Research Forum



Appendix F. Research and Literature Informing the Research Forum

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- Bradley, A. P. (2010). *Promoting a culture of student success: How colleges and universities are improving degree completion*. Atlanta, Ga.: Southern Regional Education Board.
- Chan, M., & Srey, C. (2012). *Policy Snapshot: Assessing and Increasing College Readiness in New England*. New England Board of Higher Education.
- Coles, A., & Becker, J. (2011). *Getting Through: Higher Education's Plan to Increase the College Completion Rates of Boston Public Schools Graduates*. Success Boston.
- Collins, C. (2013). *Essential Elements of State Policy for College Completion*. Southern Regional Education Board.
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Massachusetts. Department of Higher Education. (2013). *Within our sights: Inside campus efforts to achieve national leadership in public higher education : a report to the people of Massachusetts from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, October 2013*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

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