

DYS Comprehensive Education Partnership Report

A System-Wide Approach for Providing High Quality Education to DYS Clients



Massachusetts Department of Youth Services



Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and Secondary Education
Special Education in Institutional Settings



FISCAL YEAR 2015



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A System-Wide Approach for Providing High Quality and Effective Education to DYS Clients

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) undertook an unprecedented reform of its education programs. This continuous improvement process, referred to as the “Education Initiative,” has created access to high quality education and employment opportunities for youth in the care and custody of DYS. Over the last several years, DYS, in conjunction with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), has provided an annual summary of activities related to the Education Initiative to the Massachusetts State Legislature. This report is pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2015 ESE line item 7028-0031 and DYS line item 4200-0010.

This report reflects the growth and breadth of the Massachusetts juvenile justice education system through the DYS current contract with the Commonwealth Corporation (“CommCorp”), referred to as the **Comprehensive Education Partnership Initiative (CEP)**.

The achievements outlined in this report are the result of the combined leadership efforts of the education staff at DYS, ESE, CommCorp (the fiscal agent and workforce development partner), and the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES). The Partnership continues to provide multifaceted support and strategic direction for innovative teaching and learning in DYS residential programs and effective educational and workforce development services for DYS clients residing in the community. The approach is aligned with the DYS Strategic Plan (2013/2014) and the explicit goal of sustaining the gains youth make while in the care and custody of DYS and seeks to guide youth into a variety of education and employment pathways as they return to their communities.

This report provides an overview of the many accomplishments and positive outcomes resulting from specific efforts DYS undertook in fiscal year (FY) 2015. It is organized to highlight the progress and impact of key initiatives and demonstrate our comprehensive approach toward providing a range of education and workforce learning opportunities for the Commonwealth's most troubled youth and, as a result, contribute to safer communities.

These initiatives include:

- Engaging Teaching and Learning supported by High Quality Professional Development
- Multiple Pathways to Educational Attainment and Student Outcomes
- Understanding how special education contributes to the educational environment
- Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) Career Development and Employability Initiative^{*}
- Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) for Educators and Staff
- College and Career Readiness
- Arts Integration
- Family engagement

^{*} The Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) Initiative is the recipient of the 2010 Council of State Government Innovations Award. The BOG program was recognized for leveraging resources to develop a state-of-the-art approach to provide access to quality education and support employment opportunities for Department of Youth Services youth.

I. ENGAGING TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORTED BY HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The DYS approach to teaching and learning is comprised of the following three (3) core components:

1. Access for All

All students have access to the curriculum and a high quality education. Providing effective access to the general education curriculum for ALL students requires several approaches that include culturally responsive practices, positive youth development, and differentiated instruction, as well as coordination with Special Education in Institutional Settings (SEIS) special educators in understanding the impact of a student's disability, if any, on his or her access to the general education curriculum.

2. Student Progress Monitoring

Teachers are proficient in the use of a variety of assessment tools and the use of student data to drive instruction. They use these data and tools to co-plan lessons, and continuously monitor and adjust instruction to meet students' needs and support academic growth.

3. Curriculum and Instruction

All curricula is grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks aligned with the Common Core State Standards and teachers use high impact instructional strategies to facilitate learning.

Overview of Curriculum and Instruction in DYS

The DYS curriculum is grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks aligned with Common Core State Standards. This approach ensures students are exposed to content that would be provided in their home districts. There are four core content area DYS Instructional Guides: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, U.S. History I and II, as well as the Empower Your Future (career exploration and life skills) curriculum. For each core content areas, the curriculum guides are developed using research-based principles of Understanding by Design (UbD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and they support teachers in personalizing curricula to meet

the needs of all learners. The Guides provide faculty with the content guidance they need to be successful in facilitating youth educational progress while in a DYS classroom.

DYS has developed an official DYS Program of Studies to guide the selection and provision of classes to youth and to ensure credit recovery or attainment for students returning to their home districts. We offer a menu that offers opportunities for differentiated instruction and blended learning. Students may access courses through technology software or the Internet. Also, students work toward success on MCAS, HiSET/GED, college course completion and other post-secondary goals.

DYS seeks to ensure that youth are “future ready” and prepared for the demands of further education and a 21st century workplace. In an effort to further personalize the educational experience while in DYS, our teachers strive to develop relationships and trust through conferencing, use student performance data to drive planning and instruction, personalize individual learning plans, and offer curricular options that align with youth’s career interests and educational goals.

We recognize the importance of actively engaging youth in understanding their academic progress and goal setting. This year to deepen rapport and engage youth in planning for their futures, we developed and piloted an intentional and detailed process for teachers to welcome youth into the DYS classroom, and to learn about youth’s education and career goals. Teachers use this early data and conference with youth regularly using conferencing guidelines adapted from the Harvard Graduate School of Education using a system-wide conferencing protocol. The process encourages student reflection and dialogue, links student progress directly to their academic work, and provides the opportunity for students to revisit their academic and future-ready goals. In addition, we have increased opportunities youth to participate in project-based, skills-oriented learning that can lead to industry-based certifications, such as ServSafe®. To help youth identify transferrable skills, we have launched a common rubric for all programs to assess employment readiness in three areas: effective communication, initiative and self-direction, and productivity and accountability. These skills are woven into content instruction, and practiced and mastered as youth proceed through the DYS continuum of care.

Also this year, as part of our comprehensive literacy initiative, we continued our use of the reading curriculum, *On the Record*, in all treatment, assessment and revocation sites and *Id: vision, voice and identity* in treatment sites. This curriculum is based on four social justice platforms: (a) defining self, (b) becoming resilient, (c) engaging others, and (d) building capacity. The curriculum and accompanying units engage students using real-life stories drawn from informational texts.

To further embed literacy instruction, we continue to use *Keys to Literacy*, a set of strategies that help students build comprehension, vocabulary and writing skills. Keys to Literacy “routines” are aligned with the Common Core and are a reliable way to implement the standards across all subjects and grades.

Additionally, we aggressively pursue teachers' and students' integration of technology in the classroom. To accomplish this goal, we employ several strategies. First, all statewide and regional professional development includes modeling of the authentic use of technology to meet the learning objectives. Secondly, webinars are delivered to teachers for their use in order to supplement the wide range of learning needs that exist in any one classroom. Lastly, an Instructional Technology Coach provides small group and one to one experiential learning and instructional modeling to faculty throughout the year on the range of technology tools available for use to increase student success.

In FY 15, we were one of six states selected to participate in a national Blended Learning Initiative sponsored by the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings (CEEAS) for states interested in using blended learning technologies to greater personalize education and career readiness opportunities for youth in secure care settings. This includes, but is not limited to, developing online digital portfolios, providing opportunities for multiple means of expression and collaboration among students (e.g. wikis), increasing exposure to online post-secondary learning, providing career exploration, and advancing self-efficacy.

All four programs have seen an increase in student engagement as the teachers and students explore a variety of technology tools that support blended learning. Students have been involved in coding, creating digital stories with a restorative justice lens, and writing book reviews for authentic audiences. Not only are the students creating high-tech products demonstrating their learning, they are also using online portfolios and courses to direct their own learning paths. This initiative has been a fantastic experience for both student and teachers and holds significant promise towards increasing learning opportunities and improving youth outcomes.

In Summer 2015, four additional teachers were selected and trained by CEEAS. As of fall 2015, students in eight (8) secure treatment facilities are enjoying the benefits of a blended classroom.

Highly Qualified Faculty

DYS dedicates considerable resources toward professionalizing its education workforce. Research consistently demonstrates that highly qualified teachers are the key to successful learning for all youth. To this end, DYS places a heavy emphasis on attracting, hiring, training, and retaining the most highly qualified teachers who share a commitment to work with this population. In 2008, DYS' established the goal that 95% of CES' instructional staff be licensed, in possession of a waiver, or have documentation demonstrating adequate progress in working toward licensure. In 2013-14, we surpassed that goal, and 100% of CES general education teachers held a current ESE license and/or waiver. In 2014-2015 100% of general educations held a current ESE license and none were on a waiver.

Overview of the FY2014-2015 DYS Professional Development System

Professional Development Goals

Educators in DYS participate in high quality professional development that is sustained, coherent, comprehensive, and well executed in its theory of action, design, planning, and implementation. The professional development goals and objectives for 2014-2015 were designed to increase the likelihood that faculty would be successful in fulfilling the expectations outlined in the CES Teacher Evaluation System performance rubrics, referred to as the DYS Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching:

- (1) Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment,
- (2) Teaching All Students, and
- (3) Professional Culture.

The professional development theme for the 2014-15 school year, “*Personalizing Teaching, Learning, and Transition Planning*,” focused on three (3) strategic areas for professional growth:

- Planning effective and relevant instruction using Understanding by Design (UbD) or Backward Planning;
- Personalizing teaching and learning through Universal Design for Learning (UDL); and
- Promoting youth voice through Positive Youth Development and Culturally Responsive Practices (PYD/CRP).

The professional development series began with a focus on three essential questions about youth in DYS care, which included:

Essential Questions:

- Who are our youth and how do we learn about them?
- How do we help our youth build the social/personal, academic, and workplace readiness competencies necessary for successful transition?
- How do we use knowledge about our students’ assets to inform discharge and transition planning?

Professional Development Implementation

The 2014-2015 DYS and SEIS joint professional development series heightened educators' awareness of the importance of transition planning throughout the DYS continuum of care, provided a more in depth understanding of the relationship between the Massachusetts state standards and Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and included six statewide and regional full release days for DYS general and SEIS special educators. Teachers who successfully demonstrated expectations for professional growth were awarded Professional Development Points (PDPs) as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Our Professional Development Delivery System provides instruction and resources consistent with current research on effective adult learning models at three different levels including:

1. Universal

Training that develops the knowledge, skills, and understandings of all educators across the system.

2. Specialized

Training that develops the knowledge, skills, and understandings of groups of educators responsible for fulfilling specialized activities.

3. Job-embedded

One-to-one or program-based coaching to teachers as they seek to apply new skills, knowledge, and understandings.

Content-Based Learning Team (CBLTs) meetings occurred three times during the year in all DYS regions. Teachers reported that they appreciated the opportunity to come together and share content-specific instructional strategies, resources, and tools with one another. SEIS teachers and literacy specialists also participated in CBLTs. Teachers co-planned mini-units and lesson plans with their colleagues and received immediate feedback.

Additionally, the art and health and wellness teachers were organized into their own content-based learning team meetings referred to as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). They especially appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with their content colleagues to discuss content resources specific to their area of expertise. Both groups met in their own PLCs five times during the year.

II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

DYS is dedicated to facilitating the academic and 21st century skill development of all our youth. We recognize that each student in our care is in a different place along his/her college and career readiness pathway. As such, the DYS educational model provides students with multiple pathways to academic and vocational growth, including opportunities for youth to pursue and obtain a high school equivalency diploma (formerly the GED, now HiSET), earn credits towards a high-school diploma, achieve success in MCAS, and gain 21st century skills and knowledge.

In order to provide context for the following charts reflecting student performance outcomes, it is important to highlight several characteristics of our population. First, over the past decade, DYS has experienced a significant decrease in the committed population. Secondly, DYS adheres to the regulations set forth for participation in the MCAS as determined by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and therefore the number of students who participate in each subject area test differs. Lastly, the sending school district is responsible for determining eligibility of students for special education. As a consequence, the population of students with disabilities also fluctuates from year to year.

With that in mind, DYS is encouraged by the completion rate of its students for high school diplomas and HiSet/GED certificates, the enrollment rates for post-secondary courses, industry recognized certificates, as well as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) proficiency data reflected in this section.

MCAS PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES (2014-2015)

Student Academic Performance 2015 Results (General and Special Education)	
10th Grade English Language Arts	In the spring of 2015, 72 students completed the 10 th grade MCAS ELA competency exam while in the care and custody of DYS. 67 of these students (93.1%) scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient and Advanced categories, a 3.1 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 80 students.
10th Grade Mathematics	In the spring of 2015, 85 students completed the 10 th grade MCAS Mathematics competency exam while in the care and custody of DYS. 51 of these students (60%) scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient and Advanced categories, a 1.2 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 85 students.
10th Grade Science	In the spring of 2015, 104 students completed an MCAS science competency exam (Biology or Physics), while in the care and custody of DYS. 44 of these students (42.3%) scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient and Advanced categories, an 18.9 percentage point decrease to the passing rate from the 2014 results for 98 students.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

2015 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	28 general education students took the 10th grade MCAS in English Language Arts in the spring of 2015. 96.4% of these youth scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 2.1 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 35 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	44 students with disabilities took the 10th grade MCAS in English Language Arts in the spring of 2015. 90.9% of these youth scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 4.2 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 45 students.

10th Grade ELA MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students						
	2013 (N=19)		2014 (N=35)		2015 (N=28)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	0	0.0%	2	5.7%	1	3.6%
Needs Improvement	6	31.6%	8	22.9%	4	14.3%
Proficient	13	68.4%	21	60.0%	21	75.0%
Advanced	0	0.0%	4	11.4%	2	7.1%

10th Grade ELA MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities						
	2013 (N=43)		2014 (N=45)		2015 (N=44)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	3	7.0%	6	13.3%	4	9.1%
Needs Improvement	21	48.8%	22	48.9%	17	38.6%
Proficient	17	39.5%	15	33.3%	21	47.7%
Advanced	2	4.7%	2	4.4%	2	4.6%

Percent of Students Passing* 10th Grade ELA MCAS						
	2013		2014		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	19	100.0%	33	94.3%	27	96.4%
Students with Disabilities	40	93.0%	39	86.7%	40	90.9%

* Includes students in the *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* categories

MATHEMATICS

2015 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	31 general education students took the 10th grade MCAS in Mathematics in the spring of 2015. 74.2% of these youth scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 0.7 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 34 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	54 students with disabilities took the 10th grade MCAS in Mathematics in the spring of 2015. 51.9% of these youth scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 2.9 percentage point increase to the passing rate over the 2014 results for 51 students.

10th Grade Math MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students						
	2013 (N=22)		2014 (N=34)		2015 (N=31)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	3	13.6%	9	26.5%	8	25.8%
Needs Improvement	8	36.4%	12	35.3%	12	38.7%
Proficient	7	31.8%	12	35.3%	9	29.0%
Advanced	4	18.2%	1	2.9%	2	6.5%

10th Grade Math MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities						
	2013 (N=49)		2014 (N=51)		2015 (N=54)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	24	48.9%	26	51.0%	26	48.2%
Needs Improvement	14	28.6%	19	37.3%	19	35.2%
Proficient	10	20.4%	4	7.8%	9	16.7%
Advanced	1	2.0%	2	3.9%	0	0.0%

Percent of Students Passing* 10th Grade Math MCAS						
	2013		2014		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	19	86.4%	25	73.5%	23	74.2%
Students with Disabilities	25	51.0%	25	49.0%	28	51.9%

* Includes students in the *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* categories

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING

2015 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	34 general education students took the 10th grade MCAS in Science (Biology or Physics) in the spring of 2015. 61.8% of these youth scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 7.9 percentage point decrease to the passing rate from the 2014 results for 33 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	70 students with disabilities took the 10th grade MCAS in Science (Biology or Physics) in the spring of 2015. 32.9% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 24.0 percentage point decrease to the passing rate from the 2014 results for 65 students.

10th Grade Science MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students						
	2013 (N=20)		2014 (N=33)		2015 (N=34)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	9	45.0%	10	30.3%	13	38.2%
Needs Improvement	9	45.0%	19	57.6%	19	55.9%
Proficient	2	10.0%	4	12.1%	2	5.9%
Advanced	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

10th Grade Science MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities						
	2013 (N=60)		2014 (N=65)		2015 (N=70)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	25	41.7%	28	43.1%	47	67.1%
Needs Improvement	31	51.7%	34	52.3%	19	27.1%
Proficient	4	6.7%	3	4.6%	4	5.7%
Advanced	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Percent of Students Passing* 10th Grade Science MCAS						
	2013		2014		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	11	55.0%	23	69.7%	21	61.8%
Students with Disabilities	35	58.3%	37	56.9%	23	32.9%

* Includes students in the *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* categories

TECHNICAL NOTE: PREVIOUS YEARS' LEGISLATIVE REPORTS HAVE REPORTED ONLY ON STUDENTS MAKING FIRST ATTEMPTS AT 10TH GRADE MCAS TESTS. THIS YEAR'S REPORT INCLUDES STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO RETEST, AND ADJUSTS 2013 AND 2014 NUMBERS TO REFLECT THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS IN THOSE YEARS AS WELL.

High School Equivalency Assessment Test (HiSet/GED) and High School Diploma

In July of 2015, all DYS Education and Career Counselors gathered data from DYS Caseworkers for HiSet/GED attainment and High School Diploma figures from across the state. Following are the HiSet/GED attainment and High School Diploma data from the past four (4) years. In addition, as a result of our collaboration with ESE, we set up three HiSet testing sites for youth in secure residential treatment who are unable to test at a community based HiSet testing site. It is noteworthy that while the overall population of youth in DYS has declined over the past several years, our students continue to attain success in this indicator.

GED Attainment and High School Diploma Data for the Past Four Years		
	High School Diplomas	HiSet/GED
2014-2015	73	72
2013-2014	69	73
2012-2013	63	80
2011-2012	79	90

Hiset Pass Rate 2014-2015			
	Test Completed	Pass	Pass Rate
DYS	121	89	74%
Massachusetts	2621	1877	72%
All HiSet States	19,619	14,730	75%

HiSET Average Scores by Subject 2014–2015					
	Math	Social Studies	Science	ELA Reading	ELA Writing
DYS	10.07	11.02	12.08	10.94	11.89
MA	9.7	11.5	11.6	11	11.7
All HiSet States	10.2	12	12.1	11.5	12.1

Post-Secondary Enrollment

During the 2014-2015 academic year, thirty-five (35) students enrolled in post-secondary courses. This figure is a reflection of our effort to partner with institutions throughout the Commonwealth who are dedicated to providing access to higher education and certifications for youth who are interested in pursuing it.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

During the 2014-2015 school year, the following industry-recognized credentials were earned by students in residential settings:

146 students earned their CPR/First Aid Certificate.

Students learn the critical skills needed to respond to and manage a first aid, choking or sudden cardiac arrest emergency in the first few minutes until emergency medical services (EMS) arrives. This includes CPR and AED use, as well as how to relieve choking on an adult.

8 students earned their Copper Wiring C-Tech Certificate.

This program employs curriculum materials purchased from C-Tech, a nationally recognized company that has developed programs used by other states that provide vocational training in institutional schools. Youth will receive an industry-recognized credential as a result of completing this forty (40) hour curriculum.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Department of Youth Services' (DYS) Educational Services Program and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) Special Education in Institutional Settings (SEIS) program continue their joint efforts to provide collaborative approaches and greater consistency to special education service delivery for DYS youth.

DYS and SEIS are committed to developing and supporting an educational culture in DYS Educational Programs that supports students with IEPs having access to the general curriculum and personal learning success. The following activities supporting that commitment took place during the past year.

- ◆ Professional development offerings were jointly provided for SEIS and DYS educators, with an emphasis on the mutual understanding of Common Core standards, their alignment with state standards and DYS curriculum, as well as emphasis on the use of a personalized approach in DYS Education Programs for instruction and transition planning.
- ◆ Learning Teams continued to meet in all DYS educational facilities and included DYS and SEIS staff at each site. These teams work together to develop shared understandings of individual student needs and in doing so promote a more inclusive and personalized educational program for DYS youth eligible for special education.
- ◆ Tools and processes to promote more consistent co-planning by special and general educators in short and long-term treatment programs were developed and piloted within educational programs. These co-planning tools and processes will be implemented across all short and long-term treatment education programs in DYS during the next school year.
- ◆ The Agency Coordination Process for students eligible for special education and detained or committed to DYS, was reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in the DYS educational program, as well as changes in procedures and regulations. These joint agency guidelines reflect best practice and support more effective and efficient procedures for communication, service provision planning and inclusion of students with IEPs in the general education program.
- ◆ Student data sharing procedures between DYS and SEIS continued to be refined and updated to best utilize the student information management system utilized by both DYS and SEIS. This student information management system enables SEIS staff to identify students eligible for special education at the earliest stages of detention and for all educators to be more informed about the needs of students in order to effectively and efficiently provide services for youth while in detention and later in treatment programs.

- ◆ The shared student information management system also provides better access to data by all those involved in addressing the educational needs of DYS youth and enhances individualized planning for the general education setting and future transitions.
- ◆ A standardized screening process for students not identified, but who may need to be evaluated for special education eligibility, continued.
- ◆ Regional Educational Transition Teams continued to meet monthly in all regions to provide a consistent method of ensuring alignment of all educational services and transition planning processes for youth throughout the DYS continuum of care.

Collaborative efforts to increase inclusive educational programming for students with IEPs across DYS are emphasized at all levels. DYS and SEIS examined a variety of administrative procedures and processes to benefit students eligible for special education.

- ◆ Both agencies continued working in partnership with ESE's Student Assessment Services Unit to support optimal MCAS and ACCESS test administration for students with IEPs and more functional reporting mechanisms to support effective planning for individual students.
- ◆ DYS continued work with ESE and school districts to improve the quality of data for students involved with DYS, as reported by districts, in order to insure greater accuracy and early identification of students eligible for special education.
- ◆ Working closely with SEIS and ESE technology staff, access to ESE's EDWIN Analytics program for DYS and SEIS was established. This access was made available in the spring of 2015. DYS and SEIS staff are now able to use detailed data regarding individual student performance, to better understand and address individual student and group needs. This level of detail was previously only available to local school districts.
- ◆ IEP and service delivery data monitoring and analysis are ongoing activities undertaken by both agencies, to identify problematic areas in administrative procedures and the provision of special education services. SEIS and DYS continue to work with school districts to enhance ways in which we can more effectively address those administrative procedures, as well as promote smooth transitions.

Both agencies will continue their collaborative efforts to promote an educational environment that provides quality special education services for all eligible students.

IV. THE BRIDGING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP (BOG) INITIATIVE: A Work-Based Learning, Vocational, and Community Programming Model

BOG Overview

The Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) initiative provides funding for workforce development training, education (HiSET and tutoring), arts and cultural programming and mentoring programming that support the success of youth committed to the Department of Youth Services (DYS). The BOG initiative has two funding components—a BOG Summer Program, which runs from July–September 2014, and a BOG Year-Round program that runs from October 2014–June 2015. The BOG Initiative (summer and year-round) offers five different program options including:

- Option 1:** Work-based learning (career readiness and subsidized employment)
- Option 2:** Vocational training (career readiness and training in a vocational skill or trade at a vocational school or other training venue)
- Option 3:** HiSET and Tutoring Services at DYS District Offices
- Option 4:** Arts and Cultural Activities
- Option 5:** Mentoring Programs

Key Accomplishments for this year include:

- The launch of a new database that allows us to capture how youth are participating in BOG programs over time. All grantees were trained in the use of the database in November of 2014.
- The launch of a revised BOG Empower Your Future Curriculum that is aligned with the career readiness requirements. All grantees were trained in the curriculum in October of 2014.
- Four new partnerships were established throughout the state to offer new and innovating programming to youth. One of the programs took place at a regional technical high school where youth were trained in 7 modules in the automotive industry from mechanical and detailing to electrical and welding. The training led to one youth receiving a subsidized internship with a local automotive shop.
- A statewide BOG technical assistance conference that brought all partners together to be trained in culturally responsive practice and how to best support adjudicated youth in seeking employment and education. In addition, this conference incorporated youth voice by demonstrating what youth are gaining through BOG programs. Youth provided an opening performance and served as facilitators to discuss how BOG programs aid youth in reaching their goals.

Participation

In FY 2015, 107 youth participated in BOG summer programming and 268 in year round programming. Out of the 107 youth that participated in summer programming a total of 63 youth continued to participate in year-round programming.

Enrollments

During summer and year-round program session youth are often served by more than one grantee. Youth are given separate enrollments for each grantee they are served by, and because of this youth sometimes have multiple enrollments during a program session. As a result total enrollments for the summer and year-round programming are greater than the number of participants. For summer FY15 there were 112 total enrollments, and for year-round FY15 there were 290 enrollments. A breakdown of enrollments by program option, for summer and year-round programming, is below:

BOG Year Round FY15		
BOG Program Option	Youth Enrollments	Percentage
Arts and Cultural	63	22%
HiSET	33	11%
Vocational	47	16%
Work Based Learning	147	51%

BOG Summer FY15		
BOG Program Option	Youth Enrollments	Percentage
Arts and Cultural	33	29%
HiSET	11	10%
Vocational	17	15%
Work Based Learning	51	46%

Goals

Youth enrolled in BOG programs work on set goals outlined in the BOG RFP throughout the grant session. There are a wide range of goals that youth work on while participating in BOG programs. All youth are required to participate in orientation training that reviews program expectations and workplace documentation. Other goals vary based on program option. Some examples include career readiness training, subsidized employment, vocational training, certification training, and arts and cultural activities. Non-completion of goals can be influenced by many factors such as: the youth began the programming late, the youth were returned to custody during programming, and the youth struggled with attendance.

Summer FY2015 (107 youth)

Overall, 58% of goals set in FY2015 summer programming were successfully completed. Youth were most successful at completing career readiness training (63.2%), obtaining their HiSet (100%), and orientation training (76%). In the coming year we will work with grantees to improve goal completion for subsidized employment (45.3%) and vocational training (41.2%).

Year Round FY2015 (268 youth)

Overall, 54% of goals set in FY15 year-round programming were successfully completed. Youth were most successful at completing arts and cultural activities (78%), certification training (62%), and orientation training (73%). In the coming year we will work with grantees to improve goal completion for career readiness training (28%), obtaining their HiSET (48%), subsidized employment (53%) and vocational training (11%)

Year Round FY2015 Services

In the graph below we find a list of services provided to youth during the fiscal year 2015 year round BOG program session. As stated previously, youth are often served by more than one grantee and are given separate enrollments for each grantee they are served by, which results in multiple enrollments during a program session. The first column shows us the total number of youth that were trained in specific workforce development areas, the second column shows the percent of total youth participants who received each service. Overall 55% of youth received services towards orientation training, and 41% of youth received services towards ongoing career readiness. Orientation training and ongoing career readiness training are both part of the overall Career Readiness training youth receive in BOG programming.

Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG)

Services	Total Count Participants	% of Youth Participants
VOCATIONAL		
Carpentry	26	10%
Automotive	50	19%
CAREER READINESS TRAINING		
Workplace Etiquette	51	19%
Preparing youth Portfolio	87	32%
Program Expectations/Workplace documentation	77	29%
Field Trips	65	24%
Searching and obtaining a Job	88	33%
Maintaining Employment	59	22%
Orientation Training	147	55%
Ongoing Career Readiness	109	41%
Subsidized Employment	104	39%
Certifications	18	7%
HiSet	37	14%
Arts	107	40%

V. POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD) AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES (CRP)

Over the past seven years the Positive Youth Development and Culturally Responsive Practice Initiative has served as an extension of professional development support offered to educational faculty and staff throughout the Comprehensive Education Partnership (CEP) DYS Education Initiative. The work of this initiative is guided by a workgroup that includes DYS Education Initiative staff from the Comprehensive Education Partnership including representatives from DYS, Commonwealth Corporation, the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) and the ESE Special Education in Institutional Settings (SEIS) contract. As a professional development initiative numerous trainings and workshops are offered to support PYD and CRP in all educational programs.

Fiscal Year 2015 Trainings

In order to expand and strengthen instructional strategies to reflect both a PYD and CRP lens the foundational instructional framework used to guide this initiative was expanded to identify concrete strategies in DYS educational settings through the creation of a framework entitled *Elements of Positive Youth Development & Culturally Responsive Practice: Strategies to Support Assessment, Planning & Classroom Instruction* (“Elements”). This guide served as the basis for a set of trainings throughout the year, including:

- DYS New Teacher Induction Program
- Professional Development Facilitator’s Training
- Regional Professional Development Menu Option
- Bridging the Opportunity Gap Annual Grantee Conference

In FY 2014 the PYD and CRP Initiative embarked on a new endeavor that is a tenet of PYD and a priority in DYS; youth voice and participation. The development of a Youth Advisory Council for Education and Workforce Development began with a planning group including stakeholders from CommCorp, CES, DYS Educational Services, DYS Community Services and most important youth advisors convened to guide this development. In FY 2015, building on last year’s learning, we were able to refine a recruitment process of youth participants as well as develop a process for connecting all Youth Advisory opportunities to Future Ready skills where youth are provided with feedback that prepares them to develop skills that will support them in reaching their education and workforce development goals. Currently, the Youth Advisory Council expanded into a group of Youth Advisory Consultants that provide advice, guidance and training at DYS Basic Training, Teacher Professional Development, and Technical Assistance for BOG grantees.

VI. COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS: EMPOWER YOUR FUTURE AND FUTURE READY INITIATIVES

Empower Your Future Life Skills, Employability, and Career Readiness Initiative

The Empower Your Future (EYF) initiative is supported by a series of curricula designed to help youth take more control of their future by strengthening their voice and developing their academic, technical, workplace readiness, and social competencies as outlined in the Massachusetts Career Development Benchmarks. During FY 2015, the following actions were implemented to build upon the existing curriculum, integrate comprehensive youth directed services, and increase the impact of the initiative:

- Professional Development Facilitator's were provided with an overview of the curriculum in order to support making connections between EYF and core content areas.
- Educational staff received further training and support related to implementing the EYF curriculum;
- Coaching was provided for teachers to support effective implementation of EYF in classroom instruction.

EYF Program and System Integration

The Empower Your Future initiative has evolved into much more than a curriculum delivered 3 days a week in the classroom; EYF truly has the capacity to integrate personalized services offered in programs and across the DYS system based on the youth's interests, values, and abilities. DYS has embraced this idea by including EYF as a part of the DYS Strategic Plan: 2013-2014 in Strategy 3.2 to "Link the Empower Your Future life skills curriculum and discharge planning to ensure youth have a successful transition with appropriate community supports."

Future Ready

Building on the implementation of the EYF Initiative, in FY 2015 DYS expanded efforts to increase college and career readiness for youth in DYS by aligning with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's "Future Ready Initiative: Whereby all students acquire the knowledge, skills and experiences required to enter an institution of post-secondary education or training, and are prepared to navigate the workplace and function as contributing citizens."

Being Future Ready in DYS means striving for youth to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to complete whatever education and training they need to achieve their goals in school, work and life. The central goal of education in DYS is for students to make progress towards demonstrating the knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary to successfully complete entry-level, credit-bearing

college courses and/or participate in certificate or workplace training programs and ultimately enter economically viable careers. In order to meet this goal, DYS has developed and will continue to add Future Ready experiences to expose youth to future education and career options and provide opportunities for skill development and mastery over time. These experiences complement and enrich the acquisition of academic common core competencies.

FY2015 Pilot

In FY 2015 DYS piloted a set of tools and processes in two programs in the Northeast Region to support the education staff in implementing Future Ready programming including:

- An Education Orientation process to begin to build a relationship with each youth as they enter an assessment and/or treatment program, to meet them where they are at by gathering information about previous education and work experience and connecting youth to a focused concentration area based on their previous experience and their goals for the future.
- An Education and Career Plan process connecting Empower Your Future planning processes to core academic areas as well as technology integration through the Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS) for enhanced instruction and youth access to their plan through an online storage platform.
- A Future Ready Rubric that builds on our student conferencing efforts to include providing youth feedback on three Future Ready 21st century workplace skill areas: Effective Communication, Initiative and Self-Direction, and Productivity and Accountability.
- A work-based learning and hands on training program using the curriculum from the Residential Construction Academy where youth learned basic woodworking skills required for a career in construction, participated in workshops that followed a workday model, received feedback and supervision from the instructor using a modified Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan known as the Future Ready Work-Based Learning Plan.

The pilot yielded extensive feedback from staff, teachers and youth. Overall, the feedback was favorable and offered concrete suggestions for improvement on the tools and processes. In the coming year CEP will implement the Education Orientation in all Assessment and Treatment programs while continuing to develop an Education Orientation process for Detention and Treatment programs; continue to refine the Education and Career Plan including technology integration; implement the Future Ready Rubric during student conferencing in all program types; and strengthen the Residential Construction Academy Future Ready experience in the Northeast Region and expand as appropriate.

VII. THE DYS ARTS INITIATIVE

DYS has continued to make arts programming for DYS youth a priority. DYS has endeavored to refine and support system-wide structures for all arts programming; drawing connections between youth success in the arts and youth success in workforce development/career readiness; and prioritizing opportunities for youth to showcase their voices through the arts.

In FY 2015 the Arts Initiative consisted of:

Visual Art Education

In school year 2014-2015 CES employed five (5) art teachers for the DYS residential programs—one for each of the five regions. These teachers help students and teachers use the arts to improve teaching and learning, to recognize and validate the creativity of our youth, and to develop workplace readiness skills, such as creative problem solving.

Artist Residencies

During school year 2014-2015, there were sixteen (16) artist residencies where professional teaching artists/arts organizations were placed in residential programs across the state. Students engaged in focused, often self-reflective projects crossing many media (dance, improvisation, drumming, poetry, mural painting, theater, and more).

Arts Internships

During school year 2014-15, youth from Holyoke, Quincy, New Bedford, Lowell and Dorchester worked independently and in small groups to refine their Showcase performances. Additionally, two youth from the Dorchester District Office served as interns to assist with Youth Showcase set-up including leading the assembly of the gallery wall panels, securing all visual arts and general presentation of the visual arts area of the Showcase.

BOG Art Program Option

Community arts through the Bridging the Opportunity Gap), in which youth who have transitioned back into the community can join other local youth in art-study in a career-readiness setting.

3rd Annual Statewide Youth Showcase: “Share Your Art–Share Your Voice”

Guests gathered to celebrate youth voice through the arts; BOG and community programming; and residential programming. The DYS Showcase was the culmination of months of preparation and rehearsal by youth; their art teachers; artists in residence; participating program staff, clinicians, teachers, and management; community programs, and DYS community staff and caseworkers. The Department’s executive staff shared the podium with many youth performers and a youth Master of Ceremonies. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito

gave the keynote address. Additional words of support and encouragement were provided by Tina Chery, Executive Director of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.

Showcase highlights included:

- 260 youth visual artists submitted 350 pieces of art and 23 youth performed
- Over 320 pieces of youth visual art were on display including: 2D paintings, drawings, and prints; 3D sculptures, and wearable arts
- Youth artists experienced selling their work, making connections between the value of completing and presenting their work
- 3 DYS residential programs created table displays with their youth participants
- 8 programs with youth and staff represented their Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) work in the community at table displays including some items for sale
- DYS residential programs and BOG programs collectively sold 160 items connected to their programming, including youth grown plants, youth decorated planters, and youth operated pop-up book store
- Over 100 youth attendees from residential programs and the community including:
 - 15 residential programs in attendance with youth
 - 7 District Offices in attendance with youth
- Over 350 statewide attendees, including youth supporters, case workers, teachers, legislators, clinicians, program directors, provider partners, community organizations, families, and direct care staff attendees from the DYS System.
- Featured activities for youth included:
 - A graffiti art nametag station
 - A Health and Wellness Exhibition with physical and nutritional activities
 - Bright, fashionable Showcase T-shirts for all, printed by youth
 - Projection of the youth performances into the visual arts display area
 - A “shout out” station to share positive feedback on the visual art
 - An improvisation workshop

The statewide Arts Initiative seeks to improve data collection and evaluation practices to learn more about the impact of arts education and career development opportunities for youth. The impact this year is exemplified in the following quote:

“The young men at Douglass Academy discovered talents they didn't even know they possessed while working with the Everett Company. These talents enabled them to stage performances for friends, family and DYS Staff that they would not have imagined themselves capable of when the program began.”

– Staff Member, Douglass Academy, Spring 2015

VIII. FAMILY AND/OR CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

The DYS Strategic Plan establishes the goal of increasing family engagement. The premise is that when we are able to successfully involve families with their child's treatment and education at DYS, youth will be more likely to make progress in attaining their future goals. In 2014-15, educators, together with program staff, caseworkers, and clinicians facilitated a range of events to increase family/caregiver engagement. These events include, but are not limited to “open houses” or family engagement nights in all our short term or long term treatment programs, career fairs, horticulture festivals, and graduation ceremonies. These opportunities have greatly expanded the ways in which parents and/or caregivers engage in and support the youth's growth and development while in DYS care.





**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE
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