

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 2016



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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 (“DESE”), has provided an annual summary of activities related to the Education Initiative to the Massachusetts State Legislature. This report is pursuant to Chapter 133 of the Acts of 2016 DESE line item 7028-0031 and DYS line item 4200-0010.

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

The Department of Youth Services believes that one of the most important and powerful activities supported and delivered by our Department is education. In order for youth to be successful, in the short and longer term, they have to be able to achieve academically, make a successful transition to the community in an educational and/or vocational placement, and formulate realistic plans for their future. At DYS, we are uniquely positioned to support and guide our youth in that process.

Each year, many of our youth attain their high school diplomas or its equivalent (“HiSET”), complete meaningful training programs, participate in postsecondary courses, earn industry recognized credentials, and achieve other milestones on their way to successful adult lives. These successes are made possible through the hard work and collaboration of a cast of caring adults, including teachers, education and career counselors, group workers, clinicians, administrative officers, caseworkers, program directors, district managers, provider staff, and community supports. We also continue to strive to engage parents, guardians, family members, and other community supports as partners in the rehabilitative process.

To enhance our educational programming, we have advanced opportunities for youth to identify and explore other talents including art, poetry, yoga, music, video, music production, coding, and other areas of interest. These activities are critically important as youth grow and find healthy interests and outlets. The 4th Annual DYS Youth Showcase was an incredible example of the talent that DYS-involved youth possess. To the extent that we are able to expose youth to a hidden talent, or encourage a young person to take the next step in an area that he or she holds potential, we are contributing to long term development and lifelong success.

This past year, the Department was recognized in a national report on ways states can improve educational and vocational outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. This report, issued by the Council of State Governments, surveyed juvenile correctional agencies in all 50 states. Entitled *Locked Out: Improving Educational and Vocational Outcomes for Incarcerated Youth*, the report gave Massachusetts DYS high praise for its system of having Education and Career Counselors who are assigned to help every DYS student transition to appropriate educational and vocational settings in the community. As a result of this report, PBS NewsHour produced a feature story on our agency and how we are working to improve outcomes for the youth in our care and thereby improve communities throughout our Commonwealth.

The achievements outlined throughout 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 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 FY 2016. 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
- College and Career Readiness, including Social Enterprise
- Arts Integration
- Family Engagement

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 the Special Education in Institutional Settings (“SEIS”) program special educators to understand 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 are 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 rigorous 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 area, 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. This past year, we significantly updated and aligned the DYS Science Instructional Guide to include the Massachusetts Science, Technology and Engineering Standards (“MA STE”) and the Next Generation Science Standards (“NGSS”). Each of the DYS Instructional Guides provides faculty with the content guidance they need to be successful in facilitating the educational progress for youth while attending school in a DYS setting.

DYS has developed an official DYS Program of Studies to guide the selection and provision of classes available to youth and to ensure credit recovery or attainment for students returning to their home districts. The menu of studies offers opportunities for differentiated instruction, technology integration, and blended learning. Students may access courses through technology software or the Internet. Also, students work toward success on MCAS, HiSET/GED, the Accuplacer Placement Test, college course completion, vocational certifications, and other postsecondary goals.

DYS recognizes the importance of actively engaging youth in understanding their academic progress and goal setting. Teachers implement an intentional and detailed process 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.

Consistent with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), DYS seeks to ensure that youth are "future ready" and thereby 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 student-teacher conferencing, use student performance data to drive planning and instruction, develop education and career plans, and offer curricular options that align with youth's career interests and educational goals. To help youth identify transferrable skills, DYS created and implemented a common rubric to help teachers with youth to assess employment readiness in three future ready skills 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.

Annually, DYS strives to increase opportunities for youth to participate in project-based, skills-oriented learning that can lead to industry-based certifications, such as OSHA, C-TECH, and ServSafe®. This year, through our professional development and curricular offerings, we have increased the number of postsecondary opportunities available to students so they can become aware of, explore, and experience first-hand some of their career interests which have included: veterinary technician certification, coding, sound engineering, robotics, copper wiring, construction, 3D design and printing, horticulture, and silk screening.

So that students have a clear understanding of their progress, DYS also developed and implemented a quarterly Academic Growth Report that teachers and students discuss during the student-teacher conference. Teachers and students use the report to dialogue about what progress students have made toward mastering content and future ready skills development, and what they need to do to continue their growth moving forward.

As part of the comprehensive literacy initiative, DYS continued using 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. This curriculum and accompanying units engage students using real-life stories drawn from informational texts. To encourage students to become life-long readers, we provide high interest reading selections for classroom libraries that present relevant stories and appeal to students' interests.

To further embed literacy instruction, DYS continued using *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.

As our English Language Learner (ELL) population increases, DYS seeks concrete ways to assess and meet the need of these learners. Last year, DYS teachers participated in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) initiative. The main goal of this initiative is to help close the proficiency and academic gap that currently exists with English Language Learners (ELLs). As a requirement all core content educators and administrators in the state are required to earn Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement within two years of having an ELL in a class. Due in part to our partnership with CES and ESE, 70% of DYS core content teachers had earned their SEI endorsement and/or held an English as a Second Language teaching license from ESE. Additional teachers and administrators are currently enrolled on SEI courses. As a result, core content teachers now embed SEI strategies into their planning and instruction to maximize learning opportunities for EL learners.

Additionally, DYS aggressively pursues teachers' and students' integration of technology in the classroom. To accomplish this goal, DYS employs 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, two Instructional Technology Coaches provide 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.

Additionally, through a partnership with the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings ("CEEAS"), DYS has expanded to nine (9) the number of programs pioneering blended learning opportunities in an effort to greater personalize education and career readiness experiences. All participating 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, building robots, designing printing 3D products, 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, but also they are using blended learning technologies that help them to assert control over their learning and envision a productive future. This initiative has been a fantastic experience for both student and teachers and holds significant promise for increasing learning opportunities and improving youth outcomes.

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, DHS 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, DHS 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 FY 2016, 100% of core content general educators held a current ESE license or waiver.

Additionally, in an effort to close the proficiency and academic gap that currently exists between English Language Learners and their peers statewide, many of our dedicated teachers and educational administrators participated in classes funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (“RETELL”) initiative.

OVERVIEW OF THE FY 2015-2016 DHS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Professional Development Goals

Educators in DHS participate in high quality professional development provided and coordinated by CES, which incorporates effective research proven teaching and learning methods designed to increase educator knowledge and skills in the planning and implementation of consistent high quality instruction for detained and committed youth in DHS. The professional development goals and objectives for SY 2015-2016 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 DHS Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching:

1. Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment,
2. Teaching All Students,
3. Professional Culture, and
4. Family and Community.

The professional development theme for the 2015-16 school year, “Future Ready: *Personalizing Teaching, Learning, and Transition Planning*,” focused on three (3) strategic areas for professional growth:

- Personalization and Future Ready through content and pedagogy;
- Collaborative planning through content and pedagogy; and
- Future Ready skills and student conferencing through content and pedagogy.

The professional development series began with an introduction to Future Ready skills, both from a national and state perspective, as well as the DHS Future Ready Initiative. This launch to the school

year was followed by three content and pedagogy-focused release days and two specialized content release days. Additionally, new teachers participated in a comprehensive five day New Teacher Training Induction Program (NTIP), intended to support their long term success in our programs.

Professional Development Implementation

The SY 2015-2016 general and special educator professional development series heightened educators' awareness of the need to personalize transition planning for postsecondary and career ready experiences and opportunities for youth committed to DYS. With that in mind, DYS introduced educators to Future Ready tools and resources, and provided instruction and modeling in how to apply tools, resources, and strategies for personalizing with youth.

PD is designed such that educators may earn Professional Development Points (PDP's) required to keep their license current or advance it. Over 90 percent of DYS teachers met the requirements for earning PDP's as articulated by the DESE regulations and successfully demonstrated expectations for professional growth as measured by the Assessment of Learning PD Product. Furthermore, more than 80% of DYS educators reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with PD and that the PD they receive is both meaningful and relevant to their jobs.

Last year, DYS implemented the CES Job-Embedded Instructional Coaching Framework for DYS Settings, which is grounded in research on schools as "professional communities of practice", in which PD is most effective when it: includes job-embedded components; uses deliberate, authentic practices allowing for follow-up and continuous feedback; and focuses on student learning and connections to actual curriculum and practice. Instructional coaching was tailored based on the three coaching modalities, including:

1. Residency Coaching

Instructional Coach spends consecutive and/or multiple days – potentially over several weeks – at a program with the teacher or teachers.

2. Rotation Coaching

Instructional Coach works with a teacher for all or part of a day for a specific, timely coaching request. Multiple visits may be scheduled to address the area of identified professional need and complete the cycle of collaborative inquiry.

3. Virtual Coaching

Instructional Coach assists teacher(s) with one or more specific practices by phone, email, webinar, Google Drive, or Edmodo.

DYS also hosted region-wide Content-Based Learning Team (CBLTs) meetings three times during the year. These structured learning opportunities bring together teachers from the same content area to share content-specific instructional strategies, resources, and tools with one another. SEIS teachers and literacy specialists also participated in CBLTs. These teachers reported especially

appreciating the opportunity to collaborate with teachers from the same content area and to share resources specific to their area of expertise.

II. STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

DYS is dedicated to facilitating the academic and 21st century skill development of all our youth. DYS recognizes 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, our student population is highly transient. In fact, most of the youth who participate in MCAS testing while in our care are only enrolled in a DYS education program for less than a full school year and in many cases, less than 90 days. As such, DYS has limited time to close significant gaps in their prior academic knowledge. Secondly, DYS adheres to the regulations set forth for participation in the MCAS as determined by DESE 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 this context in mind, DYS is encouraged by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) proficiency data and completion rates of its students for high school diplomas and HiSET/GED certificates, the enrollment rates for post-secondary courses, and industry recognized certificates reflected in this section. Despite these promising outcomes, the data also indicates that far too many of our youth arrive with significant gaps in their academic knowledge and skills and especially in terms of their science proficiency. As part of a strategy to address this trend in the data, DYS is updating its science instructional guide to align with the new Massachusetts Curriculum Framework in Science and will institute comprehensive professional development with teachers to help our students be more successful.

MCAS PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES (2015-2016)

Student Academic Performance 2016 Results (General and Special Education)	
10th Grade English Language Arts	In the spring of 2016, 78 students completed the 10 th grade MCAS ELA competency exam while in the care and custody of DYS. 74 of these students (94.9%) passed which represents a 1.8 percentage point increase over the 2015 results for 72 students.
10th Grade Mathematics	In the spring of 2016, 72 students completed the 10 th grade MCAS Mathematics competency exam while in the care and custody of DYS. 57 of these students (79.2%) passed which represents a 19.2 percentage point increase over the 2015 results for 85 students.
High School Science	In the spring of 2016, 94 students completed a high school MCAS science competency exam (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics), while in the care and custody of DYS. 34 of these students (36.1%) passed which represents a 6.2 percentage point decrease from the 2015 results for 104 students.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

2016 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	36 general education students took the 10th grade MCAS in English Language Arts in the spring of 2016. 100% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 3.6 percentage point increase over the 2015 results for 31 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	42 students with disabilities took the 10th grade MCAS in English Language Arts in the spring of 2016. 90.5% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This is a non-significant change relative to the 2015 results for 54 students.

10th Grade ELA MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students								
	2013 (N=19)		2014 (N=35)		2015 (N=28)		2016 (N=36)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	0		2	5.7	1	3.6	0	
Needs Improvement	6	31.6	8	22.9	4	14.3	13	36.1
Proficient	13	68.4	21	60.0	21	75.0	19	52.8
Advanced	0		4	11.4	2	7.1	4	11.1

10th Grade ELA MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities								
	2013 (N=43)		2014 (N=45)		2015 (N=44)		2016 (N=42)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	3	7.0	6	13.3	4	9.1	4	9.5
Needs Improvement	21	48.8	22	48.9	17	38.6	15	35.7
Proficient	17	39.5	15	33.3	21	47.7	22	52.4
Advanced	2	4.7	2	4.4	2	4.6	1	2.4

Percent of Students Passing* 10 th Grade ELA MCAS								
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	19	100.0	33	94.3	27	96.4	36	100.0
Students with Disabilities	40	93.0	39	86.7	40	90.9	38	90.5

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

MATHEMATICS

2016 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	27 general education students took the 10th grade MCAS in Mathematics in the spring of 2016. 92.6% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects an 18.4 percentage point increase over the 2015 results for 31 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	55 students with disabilities took the 10th grade MCAS in Mathematics in the spring of 2016. 58.2% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 6.3 percentage point increase over the 2015 results for 54 students.

10th Grade Math MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students								
	2013 (N=22)		2014 (N=34)		2015 (N=31)		2016 (N=27)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	3	13.6	9	26.5	8	25.8	2	7.4
Needs Improvement	8	36.4	12	35.3	12	38.7	14	51.9
Proficient	7	31.8	12	35.3	9	29.0	8	29.6
Advanced	4	18.2	1	2.9	2	6.5	3	11.1

10th Grade Math MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities								
	2013 (N=49)		2014 (N=51)		2015 (N=54)		2016 (N=55)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	24	48.9	26	51.0	26	48.2	23	41.8
Needs Improvement	14	28.6	19	37.3	19	35.2	28	50.9
Proficient	10	20.4	4	7.8	9	16.7	1	1.8
Advanced	1	2.0	2	3.9	0		3	5.5

Percent of Students Passing* 10 th Grade Math MCAS								
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	19	86.4	25	73.5	23	74.2	25	92.6
Students with Disabilities	25	51.0	25	49.0	28	51.9	32	58.2

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

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING

2016 Student Academic Performance Overview	
Results: General Education	25 general education students took a High School End of Course MCAS exam in Science (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics) in the spring of 2016. 56% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 5.8 percentage point decrease from the 2015 results for 34 students.
Results: Students with Disabilities	69 students with disabilities took a High School End of Course MCAS exam in Science (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics) in the spring of 2016. 29% of these youth passed, including those who scored in the Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced categories. This reflects a 3.9 percentage point decrease from the 2015 results for 70 students.

High School Science MCAS Results: DYS General Education Students								
	2013 (N=20)		2014 (N=33)		2015 (N=34)		2016 (N=25)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	9	45.0	10	30.3	13	38.2	11	44.0
Needs Improvement	9	45.0	19	57.6	19	55.9	10	40.0
Proficient	2	10.0	4	12.1	2	5.9	3	12.0
Advanced	0		0		0		1	4.0

High School Science MCAS Results: DYS Students with Disabilities								
	2013 (N=60)		2014 (N=65)		2015 (N=70)		2016 (N=69)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Failing	25	41.7	28	43.1	47	67.1	49	71.0
Needs Improvement	31	51.7	34	52.3	19	27.1	19	27.5
Proficient	4	6.7	3	4.6	4	5.7	1	1.5
Advanced	0		0		0		0	

Percent of Students Passing* High School Science MCAS								
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
General Education	11	55.0	23	69.7	21	61.8	14	56.0
Students with Disabilities	35	58.3	37	56.9	23	32.9	20	29.0

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

Technical Note: All four science tests—Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Tech/Engineering—are offered in June. Biology is also offered in February; the February results are included here with June results.

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

In July of 2016, 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 at rates higher than the rest of the state.

HiSET/GED Attainment and High School Diploma Data for the Past Four Years		
	High School Diplomas	HiSET/GED
2015-2016	74	86
2014-2015	73	72
2013-2014	69	73
2012-2013	63	80

HiSET Pass Rate 2015-2016			
	Test Completed	Pass	Pass Rate
DYS	175	134	76%
Massachusetts	5,058	3,580	71%
All HiSET States	47,775	35,684	75%

HiSET Average Scores by Subject 2015–2016					
	Math	Social Studies	Science	ELA Reading	ELA Writing
DYS	10.9	11.5	11.1	11.35	11.04
MA	8.6	10.9	12	11.2	11.7
All HiSET States	8.9	11.3	12.4	11.6	12

Postsecondary Enrollment

During the 2015-2016 academic year, forty-two (42) students enrolled in post-secondary courses.

This figure is a reflection of DYS' efforts to partner with institutions throughout the Commonwealth that are dedicated to providing access to higher education and certifications for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system and are interested in advancing their academic and/or vocational qualifications.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since 1974, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has provided special education services to eligible children and youth residing in facilities operated by the Department of Youth Services. The Department unit providing these services is the Special Education in Institutional Settings (SEIS) program.

DYS and SEIS continue their collaborative efforts to provide coordinated approaches to special education service delivery for DYS youth.

DYS and SEIS are committed to mutually developing and supporting an educational culture in DYS Educational Programs that supports students with disabilities 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. An emphasis was placed on understanding the Common Core standards and 21st century skills for college and career readiness as related to the DYS curriculum, with emphasis on the use of a personalized approach for instruction and transition planning.
- ◆ Learning Teams, comprised of DYS and SEIS staff, continued to meet in all DYS educational facilities. These teams work to develop shared knowledge and understanding of individual student needs and in so doing promote a more inclusive and personalized educational program for DYS youth with disabilities.
- ◆ Tools and processes to promote more consistent co-planning by special and general educators were implemented across all short and long-term treatment education programs in DYS during the school year.
- ◆ The Agency Coordination Process for students detained or committed with disabilities 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 disabilities in the general education program.
- ◆ Student data sharing procedures between DYS and SEIS continued to be refined and updated to best utilize a shared software system for managing student educational data. This student information management system enables SEIS staff to identify students with disabilities at the

earliest stages of detention and allows all educators to be more informed about their needs of students. This results in more coordinated effective and efficient services for youth while in detention and later in treatment programs.

- ◆ The shared software system to manage student educational data continued to provide access to student data by all those involved in addressing the educational needs of DYS youth. This data 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 by the students' school districts has continued.
- ◆ Regional Education Transition Teams met 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.

DYS and SEIS work jointly to improve administrative procedures and processes to benefit students with disabilities.

- ◆ Both agencies continued working in partnership with DESE's Student Assessment Services Unit to support optimal MCAS and ACCESS test administration for students with disabilities and more functional reporting mechanisms to support effective planning for individual students.
- ◆ ESE technology staff provided initial access to DESE's EDWIN Analytics program for DYS and SEIS staff during school year 2015-2016, providing detailed individual student MCAS performance data for DYS youth. In future years, this will allow DYS and SEIS educators to better understand and address individual student and group needs. This level of detail was previously only available to local school districts.
- ◆ SEIS and DYS continue to work with school districts to enhance ways for more effective administrative procedures to meet student needs, 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 students with disabilities.

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

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, that ran from July – September 2015, and a BOG Year-Round program that ran from October 2015 – June 2016. 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

The BOG Initiative is based on a positive youth development model that is asset-based, culturally responsive, and delivered by personnel with experience in operating youth programs. Programming should be interactive and engaging to youth, and be delivered in a way that addresses a variety of learning styles. BOG grantee organizations include (but are not limited to) human services, community- and faith-based organizations, workforce investment boards and career centers, and vocational technical high schools across the state.

Enrollments

During fiscal year 2016, a total of 370 youth were enrolled in BOG programming. Summer enrollment totaled 134 youth and 236 youth were enrolled during the year round programming. A breakdown of the enrollments is below:

BOG Summer FY16		
BOG Program Option	Youth Enrollments	Percentage
Arts and Cultural	25	19%
HiSET	20	15%
Vocational	18	13%
Work Based Learning	71	53%

BOG Year Round FY16		
BOG Program Option	Youth Enrollments	Percentage
Arts and Cultural	31	13%
HiSET	31	13%
Vocational	21	09%
Work Based Learning	153	65%

Goals

Youth enrolled in BOG programs work on goal requirements for each program type as outlined in the BOG RFR. For example, most program options require a 2 hour orientation in which youth must participate in orientation training that reviews program expectations and workplace documentation. 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 of goals include career readiness training, subsidized employment, vocational training, certification training, and arts and cultural activities.

Summer FY16

Overall 65% of goals set in FY16 summer programming were successfully completed. We also found that youth were most successful at completing arts and cultural activities (92%), orientation training (88%), career readiness training (66%) and subsidized employment (51%).

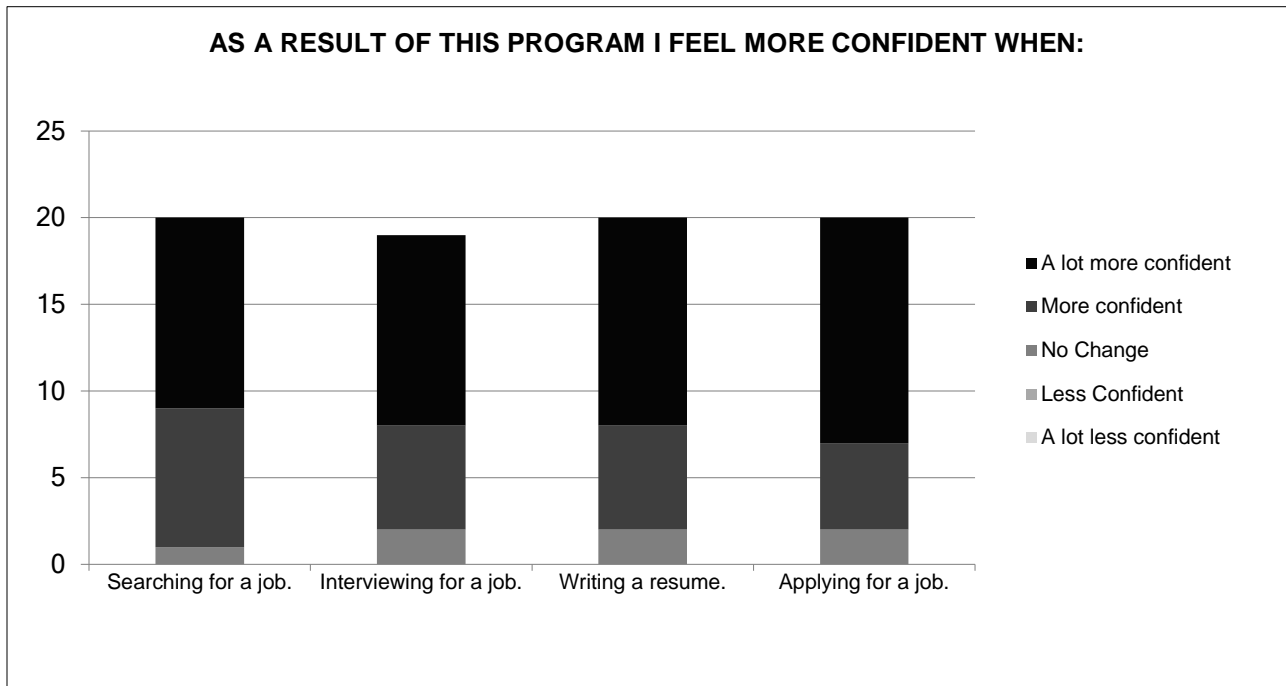
Year Round FY16

Overall 53% of goals set in FY16 year round programming were successfully completed. Orientation training has the highest completion rate at 70%. The subsidized employment goal was successfully completed by 64% of youth.

Survey Responses

Youth

During BOG year round programming youth were surveyed about their thoughts towards BOG programming. Most youth respondents stated that they were at least mostly satisfied (95%) with the program. Youth also stated they felt more confident as a result of programming in searching for a job (95%), interviewing for a job (89.98%), writing a resume (90%), and applying for a job (90%) as a result of programming.



“I think the BOG program is the best. You learn a lot and [it] helps you during the future with your long term career.”

“The BOG job helped me a whole lot by giving me my first job [sic] I can say it helped me a lot because it motivated me to do better and motivated me [to avoid]of bad situations.”

Youth reported that they learned a lot about during their participation in BOG including interviewing, writing a resume, keeping a job, conducting themselves in a professional environment, looking for a job, and their own skills and strengths. The majority of youth liked their work placements (87%) and found their placement interesting (88%). In addition, 93% of youth respondents stated they learned skills during their placement that they will be able to use in the future and 83% stated they received support at their work placement that helped them do their job well. Youth (87%) stated they were able to demonstrate what they learned during BOG programming at their work placement.

Respondents felt that caseworkers play a vital role in program participation. Seventy five percent of respondents said their caseworkers were the reason they participate. Also important according to respondents is the program’s emphasis on employability and the youth’s ability to get job experience. Most respondents also noted that DYS told them about the program, and that DYS has helped them participate by helping with transportation and scheduling.

Employers

Community employers that provided subsidized work placements for BOG participants were also surveyed during the year round program session. Overall, 48% of respondents said that the youth were well prepared to start their job placements. As displayed in the graph below, 74% of respondents felt that youth developed skills in punctuality and attendance. Fifty three percent of

respondents felt that youth developed skills in workplace safety, and 47% of respondents found that youth improved their cooperation and interpersonal skills.



Below is what some employers had to say about the skills they observed in youth working for them:

“He never had any experience. He was really quiet, but interested. He became more outgoing and involved during his time with us. We are now considering hiring him full-time”

“He showed up on time. His attendance progressed. He moved on to full-time outside employment”

“One of the youth developed the skills needed for employment and was hired this year”

Many of the employers (95%) of respondents said they would offer an unsubsidized placement to youth either now or in the future.

Seventy nine percent of respondents felt that employing BOG youth had a positive or very positive impact on their organization. Eighty nine percent of respondents would offer a subsidized employment experience to a BOG youth again next year. Some employers (42%) reported they felt

that their perception of employing youth was positively impacted by their experience employing BOG youth and 100% of respondents would recommend BOG to other employers.

Below is what some employers said was the best part of the program for them:

“Being able to give an opportunity for a youth to gain the foundation of working in society”

“They have some type of preparation before they got there and they all had goals”

“The best thing was showing someone something that they’ve never done before. It shows work ethic. It brought up a lot of ideas and perspectives on the kids”

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

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

Empower Your Future (EYF) initiative is supported by a series of curricula designed to help youth take more control of their future outcomes by strengthening their voice and developing their academic, technical, workplace readiness, and social competencies as outlined in the Massachusetts Career Development Benchmarks. During FY 2016, 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 for Launch Day were provided with an overview of connections between the curriculum and Future Ready Activities such as Education Orientation and Future Ready Concentration (see Future Ready section below);
- Educational staff received further training and support related to implementing the EYF curriculum through New Teacher Induction Program, as well as a training for new and veteran EYF teachers provided on Pedagogy Professional Development Days;
- Collaboration to support the integration of EYF connections embedded within the Science Instructional Guide;
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive data collection process to determine the needs for curriculum changes and actions to support connecting EYF to DYS treatment and discharge planning including surveys for youth, teachers, supervisors, Education and Career Counselors, community and residential staff, as well as focus groups with volunteers from each of the groups listed above.

Future Ready

Building on the implementation of the EYF Initiative, in FY16 DYS continued to expand 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

postsecondary education or training, and are prepared to navigate the workplace and function as contributing citizens.

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.

In FY2016 CEP continued to develop tools and processes and piloted new or strengthened ideas to support this emerging body of work including:

- Recommended a communication process as well as storage plan for recording and storing information collected as part of the Education Orientation.
- Revised and piloted the Education and Career Plan template and process connecting Empower Your Future planning processes to core academic areas as well as technology integration integrated with the Blended Learning Initiative for enhanced instruction and youth access to their plan through an online storage platform.
- Developed a comprehensive outline and a set of protocols for youth academic concentrations while in residential programming to build on the High School Diploma and High School Equivalency options to include Postsecondary and Career Readiness concentrations for youth.
- Developed a list of guidelines and resources to support the Career Readiness concentration to include availability of options across the state and specific to each program type.
- Development of the Postsecondary Guide to support the planning for implementation of postsecondary coursework with youth in residential and community settings.

VI. 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 FY2016 the Arts Initiative consisted of:

Visual Art Education

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

Eighteen (18) artist residencies took place, where professional teaching artists/arts organizations are 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

Youth in community and residential settings across the state worked independently and in small groups to refine their Showcase performances or other requested performance opportunities with community partners or at DYS events. Additionally, two youth served as interns to assist with preparing the portable wall panels and the assembly of the wall panels for the art installation at the 4th Annual Statewide DYS Youth Showcase.

Community Arts

Three community arts programs were developed and implemented in Worcester, Somerville/Charlestown, and Springfield where professional teaching artists/arts organizations developed programs in district offices and community arts spaces. Youth were engaged in programming across a variety of mediums, including theater and performance art, visual arts, screen printing, mosaics, and murals.

4th 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 stage with many youth performers and a guest speaker from the Lewis Brown Peace Institute. Highlights from the 4th Annual Statewide DYS Showcase include:

- 130 youth visual artists submitted 266 pieces of art and 17 youth performed on the main stage at the Emerson Paramount Theater in Boston’s Theater District
- Over 260 pieces of youth visual art on display including: 2D paintings, drawings, and prints; 3D sculptures, and wearable arts
- 3 DYS residential programs created table displays with their youth participants
- 5 programs with youth and staff representing Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) programs participated in field trips or developed table displays including some items for sale
- DYS residential programs and BOG programs collectively sold 154 items connected to their programming, including youth grown plants, youth decorated planters, and a youth operated pop-up book store

- Over 200 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
- Over 100 youth attendees from residential programs and the community including:
 - 13 residential programs in attendance with youth
 - 10 District Offices in attendance with youth

VII. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Background and Purpose

In 2013, DYS supported the development and operation of a small silk screening social enterprise. The silk screen social enterprise program has been designed to provide youth the opportunity to gain 'real world' job experience by engaging in the operations of a business. The business, called 'Exclusive Tees', employs youth to work as a team to fulfill orders, allowing them to gain workplace skills, build self-confidence, and set goals for success in transitioning into mainstream employment.

Marketing and Sales

A comprehensive marketing plan was approved by DYS and rolled out in early FY2017. This included a new website¹ and continued use of a Facebook page². The program manager updates Facebook regularly with pictures of recent orders.

In addition to the online presence, a brand new promotional display was created and visible at various vending opportunities throughout the state this year. This includes a variety of visuals, including a one-pager, pictures from the shop, printed items from the shop, and some quotes from the youth, that generated a lot of interest.

These platforms, along with the great word of mouth and general excitement around and passion for the program, have been instrumental to increasing the visibility of Exclusive Tees, as well as the customer base which has extended beyond DYS and other stakeholders and into the community.

Youth Development and Impact

The size of the shop space and need for hands-on skill development allots for a maximum of six youth to participate in the program at a time.

The Exclusive Tees shop has been a place youth can come, put aside differences, and work together toward the goal of completing an order. The great amount of hands-on and team-oriented

¹ www.exclusivetees.org

² www.facebook.com/exclusiveteescommcorp

work, combined with the ability to see a finished product in a short amount of time, has allowed the youth to quickly recognize the value of their efforts, as well as be proud of them.

VIII. FAMILY AND/OR CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

The DYS Strategic Plan establishes the goal of increasing family and/or caregiver 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 2015-16, educators, together with program staff, caseworkers, and clinicians facilitated a range of events to increase family/caregiver engagement. Among the successes this past year include:

- **The 2016 Youth Showcase:** Held at the Paramount Theater in Boston, it brought together families and caregivers along with members of the extended DYS community to celebrate the creative skills, talents, and interests of our youth. This year, more than 300 people attended this celebration.
- **Open Houses:** Programs throughout the state worked with the education staff to host our version of "open houses" whereby families and caregivers are invited to learn about education programming within DYS, meet teachers, and, whenever possible, hear from the students themselves about their college and career development.
- **Graduation Ceremonies:** All five (5) regions host an end of year graduation ceremony to celebrate those youth who have successfully attained their High School Diploma or its equivalent (HiSET). These ceremonies mark a transformative milestone in the lives of many of our youth that DYS works hard to make sure that families and caregivers are able to join.





**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE
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