

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

# EDUCATION REPORT

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CALENDAR YEAR 2020-2021



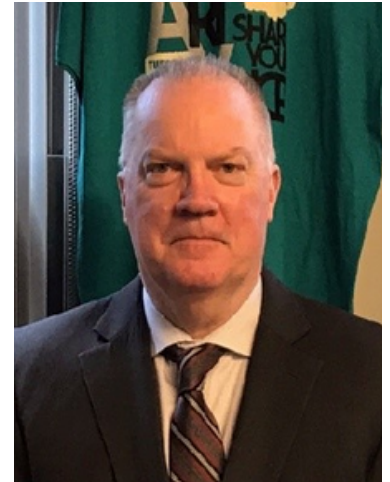
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Executive Summary
3. New to DYS in 2021
4. Education Funding
5. 20-21 HIGHLIGHTS
  - a. Education performance
  - b. Graduation
  - c. Regional Engagement Activities
  - d. Annual Art Showcase
  - e. Arts Initiative
6. Workforce
  - a. Training/Professional Development
  - b. Diversity and Recruitment
7. Engagement
  - a. Parent/Family
  - b. Community

## INTRODUCTION FROM COMMISSIONER FORBES

This 2021 education report reflects a strategic effort by the Department of Youth Services in partnership with Commonwealth Corp., the Collaborative for Education Services to advance the learning process for DYS involved young people. Many youth arrive at DYS in a situation where they have experienced difficulty in the public school systems. This includes a percentage that have stopped going to school for reasons that are both social and academic.

Our job is to re-engage youth in the academic process, help them to feel good about learning and work with them to tailor a success plan moving forward. I'd like to thank the teachers and teaching coordinators for making a commitment to working with difficult to reach young people. I'd also like to recognize Commonwealth Corporation, Collaborative for Education Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the education team at DYS for all the hard work reflected in this report.



Lastly, I wanted to announce that after 39 years I will be stepping down and retiring from state government effective on December 31, 2021. Our General Counsel, Cecely Reardon, has been appointed Acting Commissioner.

It's been a pleasure serving as your Commissioner.

Sincerely,  
Peter Forbes, DYS Commissioner

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter J. Forbes".

## MESSAGE FROM ACTING COMMISSIONER REARDON



On December 31st, 2021, we said goodbye to Commissioner Peter Forbes after 39 years of service with the Department. He left behind an incredible legacy of hard work and commitment to ensure that youth and staff are treated fairly and receive the support and training needed for maximum success. He saw these as the cornerstones of successful programs and public safety. I am honored to have the opportunity to continue the work he started.

We're fortunate to have a partner in CES that shares our vision that education is critical to life-long success particularly for youth involved in the justice system. The research is clear that academic achievement correlates with positive life outcomes and that education is a protective factor related to future recidivism. At DYS, we offer small classroom settings, individualized attention, coaching and a cognitive behavioral strategy that all contribute to a supportive process for DYS involved youth. We also actively engage families and youth in academic and

vocational goal setting so that there is ownership and investment in the learning process.

Over the last two years DYS has been strategic in our work to engage our Juvenile Justice Youth Development Specialists (JJYDS), clinical staff and program managers in supporting education with DYS youth. This team effort across the workforce provides youth support and a unified message from the adults that education is critical for success.

Best Regards,  
Cecely Reardon, Acting Commissioner

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cecely Reardon".

DYS serves youth committed to its care by the juvenile courts while awaiting resolution of pending delinquency and youthful offender matters (“detained youth”), and youth committed to its physical custody by the juvenile courts after being adjudicated for committing an offense against the Commonwealth (“committed youth”). The DYS education mission is to provide a comprehensive educational system that meets the needs, experiences, and goals of our youth through collaboration with local schools, community-based organizations, families, and other partners. Through a contract with Commonwealth Corporation (“CommCorp”) and its subcontractor, the Collaborative for Educational Services (“CES”), DYS provides general educational services to youth in DYS state and provider operated residential programs. Special educational services are provided by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) and its Special Educational Services in Institutional Settings (“SEIS”) through a contract with CES. DYS structures its school year to consist of 180 days with 5.5 hours of daily learning time. DYS also supports a 30-day summer school program with 4.5 hours of daily structured learning time.

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system have complex educational needs. Over the past several years, the distribution of youth across the DYS continuum of care has continued to change in notable ways. Newly committed youth are more likely to be 17 years of age or older. Many are performing below grade level.<sup>1</sup> On average 45-55% of youth committed to DYS have a diagnosed disability requiring special education services and 13 % are English Learners. To keep pace with shifting educational needs and a changing distribution of young people across the age and learning continuum, DYS has responded utilizing individualized educational approaches that engage youth in learning and achieving positive educational and career outcomes.

This report highlights the educational achievements made during the 2020-2021 School Year. These highlights include expanded access to new technologies, online learning content aligned with the Massachusetts high school graduation standards, personalized tutoring services, use of culturally sustaining pedagogy, additional HiSET testing sites and instructional tools, a new integrated Empower Your Future life skills curriculum, and expanded college course offerings for dual-enrolled and post-secondary youth.

This report also reviews the impact of additional stressors on learning and educational outcomes for DYS youth associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recently released 2020-2021 report from the State Education Commissioner, Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores dropped statewide by significant margins. This decline in performance has been attributed to the 2-year disruption in learning associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. The starkest drops were seen among Black and Latinx youth. For DYS involved youth, 70% of whom are youth of color, prior to their DYS commitment MCAS scores pre-pandemic for the majority were in the range of “Failed or Partially Met” for both English and math.<sup>3</sup> While with DYS, many youth in years past have been able to work with our educators to address learning gaps and recover lost educational time, resulting in improved MCAS performance post DYS involvement.

1. Over a third of youth who were newly committed at 17 or older are 2+ years behind. Those newly committed at 16 and younger tend to be on track or just 1 year behind.

2. An “English Learner” is a youth who does not speak English or whose native language is not English, and who is not able to perform ordinary classroom work in English.

3. 1st commit population in FY 21 comprised of 70% youth of color. (78%) failed or partially met MCAS ELA requirements and (75%) failed or partially met requirements on the Math MCAS test.

In the last ten academic years, more than half of the youth in DYS custody (57% in math and 81% in ELA) who had previously failed an MCAS test, passed the 10th grade test while with us. Between 49% and 60% of the youth improved their performance level over a pre-commitment performance level. Youth who may have scored 'Needs Improvement' previously, improved their score to either 'Proficient' or 'Advanced'.

As we look ahead to the coming school year, DYS continues to prioritize targeted and timely educational interventions to manage pandemic attendant stressors, redress lost educational time and boost youth engagement and learning in preparation for successful transitions back into the community.

## Program & Services

### High School Equivalency (HiSET®/GED®)

While HiSET testing and preparation sites across the Commonwealth were closed due to the pandemic, youth in DYS care and custody continued to have access to preparation resources through HiSET Academy, an online instructional tool. HiSET Academy features a preparation program that includes practice tests in Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science, and Social Studies. Youth were able to access these resources independently and studied at their own pace while being supported in the DYS classroom by their teachers. Youth also worked on their proficiency in HiSET content areas in their core content classes. Approximately sixty-eight youth participated in HiSET Academy during the 2020-2021 school year (SY).

Even during the pandemic, DYS was able to establish five new HiSET testing sites in SY 2020-2021 for youth in secure residential treatment programs. These five new sites increased the total number of DYS HiSET testing locations from six to 11 sites that conducted 101 HiSET subtest testing sessions. As the chart below shows, youth in DYS had a pass rate of 85.2%, a rate higher than their peers across Massachusetts whose pass rate was 78.2%. Moreover, DYS youth achieved Math, Reading, and Writing scores that were comparable to not only their Massachusetts peers but also their peers nationally.

### Recent HISET® Pass Rate Comparison

	Total Batteries Completed	Pass	Pass Rate
DYS SY20-21	27	23	85.2%
MA CY20	927	725	78.2%
Nationwide CY20	24,915	20,059	80.5%

## Empower Your Future (EYF)

EYF is a youth-centered initiative that connects classroom activities to life skills and promotes youth engagement in their treatment plan. The EYF Initiative in partnership with CommCorp was re-designed to engage an older population with a wide range of skill-building needs, as well as to function as an integrated learning platform that bridges programs and services across the DYS continuum from residential to community care. The new EYF structure builds on the personalization of EYF content for each youth to support specific transition planning needs. In SY 2020- 2021, this new EYF structure was piloted at five DYS residential programs: Metro Treatment Unit, Southeast Secure Detention, STRIVE, Westfield Revocation, and Worcester Secure Treatment.

The EYF pilot included new training for the Juvenile Justice Youth Support Specialists (JJYDS). The new training focused on the importance of JJYDS staff playing an active role in supporting educational activities, promoting positive youth development as mentors, coaches and advocates and the connection between these roles and program safety and security.

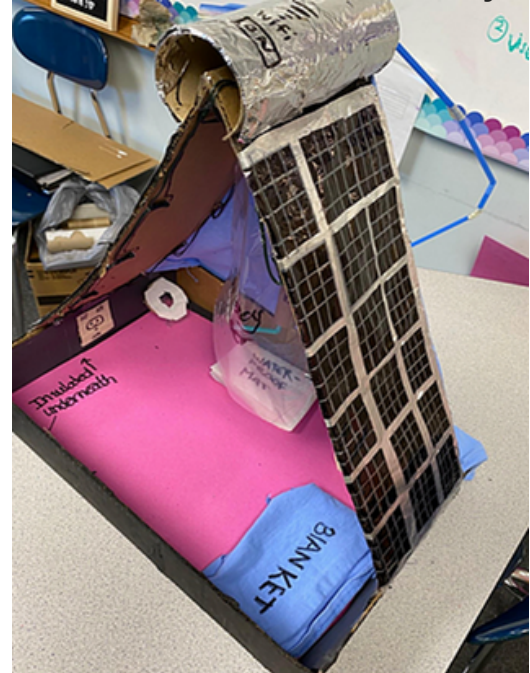
## New Initiative

### Civics Course and Civics Action Project

DYS-CES developed new civics curriculum standards aligned with DESE and implemented an eight-week course using a decolonized lens that shifts the primarily white narrative to an inclusive narrative that teaches about historic and contemporary contributions by people from different race and ethnic backgrounds. As part of the course, youth chose a civics project and presented their projects to their classmates, teachers, and other supportive adults.

As part of Education's January Initiative DYS youth joined students across the country in a contest to develop housing solutions for the homeless.

### Breakfree Unconstruct Civics Project



Youth explored the impact of the nationwide stay on evictions that was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth identified specific populations within the homeless community, including college students, pregnant women, teenagers, or people with disabilities. After exploring and learning about the challenges associated with specific homeless populations, the youth used the design thinking process to identify possible solutions and build and test prototypes.

The winning student, K.P. from RFK South Hadley, designed a tent-like, transportable housing solution equipped with solar-powered energy to be used by runaway teens to ensure their safety. This project, and the student-crafted designs, highlighted how creative and solution-focused students can be when they are presented with a challenge that is tangible and provided with tools to solve the problem.

## Title I

### Who We Serve

Through Title I, Part D,<sup>4</sup> DYS receives federal funding to improve the quality of education in facilities for neglected and delinquent youth who have yet to attain their high school attainment and are under the age of 21. Title I funding has allowed DYS to supplement services for youth with significant literacy and numeracy skills deficits and/or youth who identify as English Learners (ELs). The DYS English Language Education Program provides youth with an individualized plan that focuses on the literacy skills, education, career and vocational exploration, and postsecondary education opportunities necessary to facilitate a successful transition back to their communities.

### English Language Education Program

English Learners present with varying levels of English mastery. In SY 2020-2021 the DYS English Language Education Program provided early screening and assessment to identify EL youth. A personalized plan of service was developed for each EL youth to provide them access to the general education curriculum.

#### Informal Reading Inventory (IRI): Average gains in FY21

	# students	Average GLE change	Average months since first test
Listening Comprehension	5	2.6	6.1
Oral Reading	11	2.1	7.2
Word Recognition	12	1.9	7.0
Vocabulary	12	1.8	7.0
Silent Reading Comprehension	11	1.6	7.2
Spelling	7	1.1	9.3

Academic progress was closely tracked through youth monitoring tools and interventions were modified to help youth meet individual needs. "Six- to ten-month gains in reading among youth supported by Title I Specialists were, on average, over one grade level, and frequently more than one and half grades.

### English Language Education Program Structure

DYS uses a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), "an English language acquisition process in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for [youth] who are learning the language". The DYS EL teaching team includes Literacy Specialists (6), English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching specialists (3), and general education content teachers who collaborate on programming. Depending on a youth's assessed level of English proficiency, their learning plan is delivered through 1:1 or small group instruction led by a Literacy Specialist, or through embedded classroom strategies implemented by the classroom teacher.

4. Title I Part D of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides financial assistance to educational programs serving youth in state-operated institutions.

## Tutor Program

DYS residential programs located in the West, Southeast, and Metro regions implemented a pilot tutoring program in late Spring of 2021. Twenty youth participated in the pilot program. The six week pilot provided youth with tutoring from CES teachers after school and weekends. Seven tutors across three regions provided support for youth in MCAS English Language Arts ("ELA"), MCAS Math, and HiSET preparation. In the Fall of 2021, DYS expanded its partnership with the Petey Greene Program<sup>5</sup> to begin providing in-person, 1:1 tutoring support statewide during the school day for youth in all DYS regions.

A youth participation survey was completed by each youth participating in tutoring sessions at the end of each week. The survey provided youth with the opportunity to share how the tutoring sessions were helping them. Seventy-four percent of the youth shared that the sessions helped them with test-taking skills and eighty-five percent believed that tutoring sessions facilitated in understanding academic concepts.

## Highlights

### Education Performance Data

Age Compared to Last Grade Completed Prior to First Commitment

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	6 Year Total
Below Grade (-9)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Below Grade (-8)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Below Grade (-6)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Below Grade (-5)	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Below Grade (-4)	4	2	2	3	0	4	15
Below Grade (-3)	18	17	9	9	5	3	61
Below Grade (-2)	77	60	43	47	25	14	266
Below Grade (-1)	124	120	71	55	43	23	436
At Grade Level	110	95	88	56	61	27	437
Above Grade (1)	25	27	14	16	11	13	106
Above Grade (2)	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Above Grade (3)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	361	324	230	187	146	84	1332

On Average only 40% of new commitments are at or above grade level

### General Assessment of Instructional Need (GAIN) Performance Outcomes (SY2020-2021)

Youth academic skills are regularly assessed in residential programming. The General Assessment of Instructional Need ("GAIN") provides a grade level equivalent ("GLE") score that can be compared to a youth's grade level, used to document progress, and help instructors identify knowledge and skills to include in upcoming lessons.

Among committed youths' first tests of SY2021, the average GLE in English was 6.5 (middle of 6th grade), and in Math was 5.8 (end of 5th grade). Among youth who took a post-test in SY2021, about half increased their GLE. These students improved their GLE in both English and Math by about 1.5 years over the course of five to six months attending DYS classes.

### Impact of COVID-19 on Return to Fully In-Person Learning

On the heels of an exponential growth in blended learning skills across the teaching workforce the previous academic year, the promotion and use of Google Suites for Education and blended learning methodologies remained instrumental to the provision of educational programming throughout School Year (SY) 2020-2021.

Instructional coaches and administrators created regional websites where teachers could quickly find resources that promote higher order learning such as analyzing and applying concepts. The use of Google classroom, culturally responsive planning and instruction, and quick links to technology resources also supported a Universal Design for Learning.<sup>6</sup> Platforms for on-demand educational coaching were also established.

5. The Petey Greene Program supports the academic goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people through high-quality volunteer tutoring programs

6. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to identify and reduce environmental barriers to learning and offer alternative methods and tools to access the information such as hands-on and visual materials.

## Technology Infrastructure

DYS-CES collaborated with education technology consultants to replace aging Wi-Fi network hardware in all DYS programs to improve highspeed broadband internet services and reduce response time for correcting issues with connectivity and hardware. Upgrades made during the 2021 school year included the addition of Hapara, a classroom management software tool, that allowed Teaching Coordinators (TCs) and teachers to monitor youth's online activity. This new technology infrastructure enabled DYS to modernize classrooms and ensure youth had access to the latest online learning platforms and curriculum materials.

## MCAS

In the last ten school years, more than half of the youth in DYS custody (57% in math and 81% in ELA) who had failed MCAS prior to commitment, passed the 10th grade MCAS. Between 49% and 60% of the youth improved their performance level over a pre-commitment performance level. For example, youth who may have scored 'Needs Improvement' previously, improved their score to either 'Proficient' or 'Advanced'. Passing scores include youth who scored Partially Met Expectations, Met Expectations, and Exceeded Expectations. On Science tests through SY21, passing scores include Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced.

## DYS YOUTH 2021 MCAS RESULTS

<b>10th Grade English Language Arts</b>	In the spring of 2021, 49 youth took the 10th grade MCAS ELA competency exam while in the care and custody of DYS. 41 of these youth (83.7%) passed.
<b>10th Grade Mathematics</b>	In the spring of 2021, 53 youth took the 10th grade Next Generation MCAS Mathematics competency exam 31 of these youth (58.5%) passed.
<b>High School Science</b>	In the spring of 2021, 21 youth took the high school MCAS Science competency exam. 4 of these youth (19.0%) passed.

**Compared to Massachusetts' overall 2021 performance, DYS youth performance was mixed. At the state level, the proportion of scores falling into Exceeded, Met, or Partially Met Expectations categories were as follows in Spring 2021: Grade 10 ELA -- 91%, Grade 10 Math -- 82%.**

**English Language Arts (ELA)**

	<b>DYS General Education Youth</b>				<b>DYS Youth with Disabilities</b>			
	2019 (N= 14)		2021 (N=27)		2019 (N= 22)		2021 (N=272)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Not Met Expectations</b>	1	7.1	6	19.4	13	59.1	9	40.9
<b>Partially Met Expectations</b>	11	78.6	24	77.4	5	22.7	10	45.5
<b>Met Expectations</b>	2	14.3	1	3.2	4	18.2	3	13.5
<b>Exceeded Expectations</b>	0		0		0		0	

(Note: Committed Youth: average length of stay in DYS residential program before testing was 171 days; Detained Youth: average length of stay in DYS residential program was 150 days).

**Mathematics**

	<b>DYS General Education Youth</b>				<b>DYS Youth with Disabilities</b>			
	2019 (N= 15)		2021 (N=28)		2019 (N= 24)		2021 (N=25)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Not Met Expectations</b>	10	66.7	7	25.0	15	62.5	15	60.0
<b>Partially Met Expectations</b>	4	26.7	18	64.3	8	33.3	9	36.0
<b>Met Expectations</b>	1	6.7	3	10.7	1	4.2	1	4.0
<b>Exceeded Expectations</b>	0		0		0		0	

**Science, Technology, and Engineering**

	2017 (N=51)		2018 (N=52)		2019 (N=41)		2020 (N=53)		2021 (N=51)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Failing</b>	30	58.8	24	46.2	19	46.3	34	64.2	17	81.0
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	18	35.3	24	46.2	18	43.9	14	26.4	3	14.3
<b>Proficient</b>	3	5.9	4	7.7	4	9.8	5	9.4	1	4.8
<b>Advanced</b>	0		0		0		0			

**High School Diploma and High School Equivalency (HiSET®/GED®)**

During SY 2020-2021, 72 DYS youth received education attainments (High School diplomas, High School Certificate of Attainment, and HiSETs).

School Year	HS Diploma/Attainment	HiSET or GED
<b>2020-2021</b>	47 H.S. Diplomas 2 Certificates of Attainment	<b>23</b>
<b>2019-2020</b>	49 H.S. Diplomas 3 Certificates of Attainment	<b>22</b>
<b>2018-2019</b>	55 H.S. Diplomas 3 Certificates of Attainment	<b>50</b>
<b>2017-2018</b>	86 H.S. Diplomas 5 Certificates of Attainment	<b>68</b>
<b>2016-2017</b>	88 H.S. Diplomas 4 Certificates of Attainment	<b>93</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>	62 H.S. Diplomas 3 Certificates of Attainment	<b>63</b>

The total number of High School Diplomas and equivalencies is falling from previous consistent with a declining overall population.

	Total Batteries Completed	Pass	Pass Rate
DYS SY20-21	27	23	85.2%
MA CY20	927	725	78.2%
Nationwide CY20	24,915	20,059	80.5%

	Math	Social Studies	Science	Reading	Writing
DYS SY20-21	12.1 (19)	12.0 (22)	12.5 (22)	11.4 (22)	11.2 (22)
MA CY20	10.1	12.6	11.8	9.7	10.8
Nationwide CY20	10.5	13.1	12.3	10.6	11.1

\*Includes only youth for whom we have scores: best score for those youth who took a test twice during the year, and any score regardless of whether full battery was completed

\*\*CY 2020 data include results of tests taken January – December 2020. Source: 2020 Annual Statistical Report on the HiSET® Exam: [https://hiset.ets.org/s/pdf/2020\\_annual\\_statistical\\_report.pdf](https://hiset.ets.org/s/pdf/2020_annual_statistical_report.pdf), pp. 10-11. CY 2020 data also include results of 'All Attempts' (not just first) tests taken January – December 2020. Source: 2020 Annual Statistical Report on the HiSET® Exam: [https://hiset.ets.org/s/pdf/2020\\_annual\\_statistical\\_report.pdf](https://hiset.ets.org/s/pdf/2020_annual_statistical_report.pdf), pp. 29-30

## Career Readiness

DYS and CES are invested in guiding youth to see themselves as college material by providing equitable access to college opportunities, preparing them to be college and career ready, and by offering a menu of postsecondary and career exploration options.

This past year, we continued developing creative solutions with our higher education partners across the Commonwealth. Youth capitalized on these opportunities and achieved postsecondary success. Through the DYS College Program, youth in DYS' residential programs participated in virtual sessions with college advisors to matriculate towards an associate's or bachelor's degree and were able to dually enroll and receive college credits while still completing their high school class work.

The option to dually enroll was available to youth enrolled in high school or those preparing for a high school equivalency credential. Through partnerships with six higher education institutions (Urban College of Boston, Bunker Hill Community College, Springfield Technical Community College, Bristol Community College, Holyoke Community College, and Brandeis University) and based on youth interest, DYS offered college credit bearing certificate programs in Hospitality, Digital Publishing, and General Studies, with a Criminal Justice Focus. In School Year 2021, 172 DYS youth obtained industry-recognized certificates.

Industry-Recognized Career Readiness Attainments Earned in Residence	SY21
CPR: Adult, Infant, Child and First Aid Certification	42
Career Safe OSHA 10: General Industry/Construction Industry	96
SERV Safe Food Handler	34
Total	172

**Business Creativity**

This was the first course offered towards earning the Digital Publishing certificate. The course introduced youth to basic graphic design and typographic principles in a computerized business environment. The course gave youth the background necessary to identify and later apply those principles to create effective and aesthetically pleasing forms of computerized visual business communications.

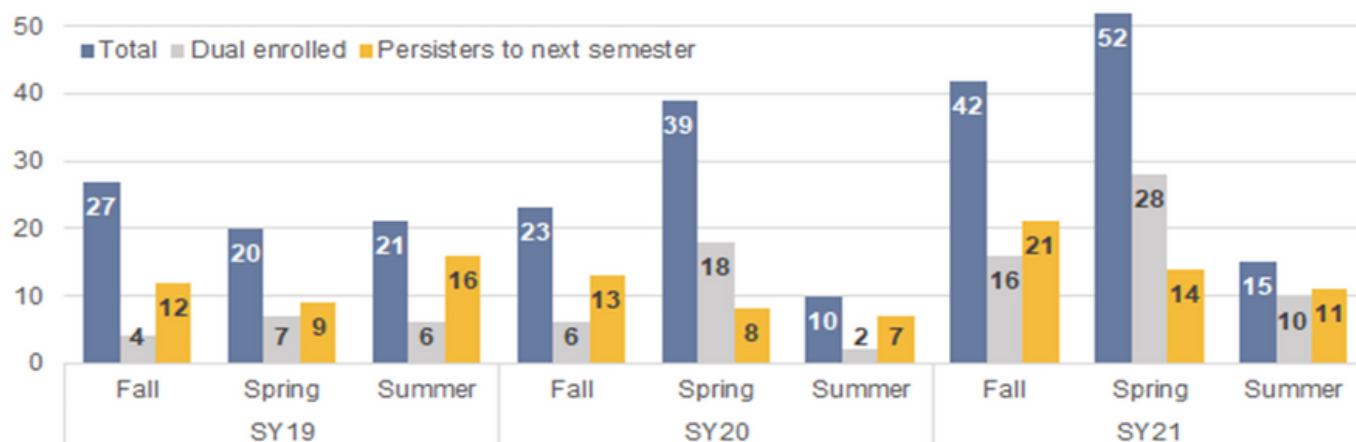
**Introduction to Hospitality**

This was the first course offered towards earning the Hospitality mini certificate. The course introduced youth to the operation of hotels, motels, restaurants, resorts, and tourism. Emphasis was on the development of the industry, current trends, and management responsibilities.

**Dual Enrollment**

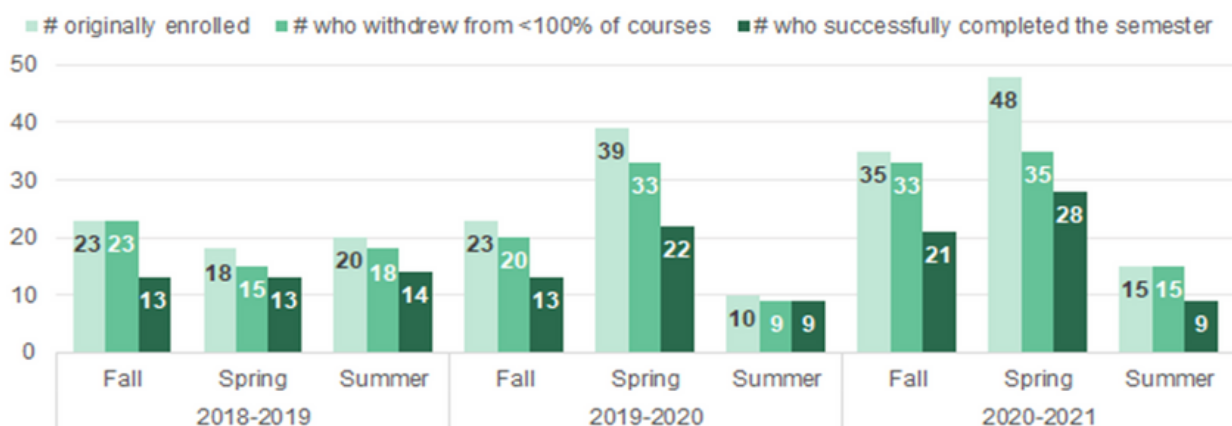
Over the course of the past two years, there has been a marked increase in dual enrollments in the College Program. In the Spring of 2021, more than half of the enrollments in the College Program were dual enrollments (28 of 52 enrollments). Even factoring in the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, our youth have demonstrated their persistence in continuing their postsecondary coursework.

**College Program enrollments increased in the last two years, persistence to the next semester is largely unchanged, dual enrollments are increasing**  
SY2019 - SY2021



As shown below, while a significant number of youth withdrew from all their Spring classes (13 of 48), of the 35 who continued with at least one of their original course enrollments, 80% of them successfully completed.

**College Program students enrolled in greater numbers and stuck with more of their courses in SY2021**  
SY2019 - SY2021



## Transition Services

Every committed youth is assigned an Education and Career Counselor (“ECC”), whose job is to ensure that youth assessments and appropriate academic records are shared jointly between the school districts and DYS. Upon commitment to DYS, the ECC together with the education team helps youth develop and implement their academic plans and ensures their class attendance leads to the accrual of credits towards graduation. The education team also provides HiSET preparation instruction and helps youth enroll in post- secondary classes informed by their personal academic and career goals.

Over the past several years, the changing demographics and numbers of youth served across the DYS service continuum has required ECCs to pivot on the nature and intensity of services they provide to meet the needs of DYS youth. In SY 2020-2021, an ECC’s average caseload of youth in residential and community placements dropped from 40 youth to 31 youth concurrent with the increase in the percentage of youth with high school attainments (30 to 52% of the regional average caseloads). This increase in the number of youth who had high school attainments required investment in more robust postsecondary programming as well as additional training for the ECCs to equip them to provide guidance and advisory supports for not only youth pursuing a diploma or its equivalent, but also youth pursuing postsecondary and careers pathways.

## Graduations

Pre-pandemic, each of the five regions hosted a regional end of year graduation ceremony for youth, their families and staff to celebrate youth earning a High School Diploma (awarded from their local education authority/school district) or attaining its equivalent (HiSET®). This year, each region hosted several smaller celebrations to minimize the risks presented by the coronavirus. Below are SY 2020-2021 graduation highlights from each region.

## Western Region

The Western Region held two graduations. The first event was held on June 17, 2021 at the Westfield Detention Program to celebrate a youth from the Metro region who had earned his High School Diploma while at Westfield and was unable to attend the Metro region graduation ceremony. The medical, clinical, administrative and education teams all worked together to create a memorable ceremony with friends and family witnessing the youth proudly walking to receive his diploma in full cap and gown.

### Transition Vignette

AJ was provided with education and career guidance from his Education and Career Counselor (ECC) together with high-quality direct instruction from his teachers. AJ expressed interest in earning his High School Equivalency (HiSET) and maybe going to college. In August of 2019, while still in DYS residential placement, AJ earned his HiSET. Shortly thereafter, he was released under community supervision and his ECC and Caseworker referred him to vocational development programming in the community. Once engaged in the vocational program, staff provided AJ with intensive one-on-one counseling, career readiness instruction, and subsidized temporary employment learning experiences. AJ remained focused on his goals and in November of 2019 he attended a college fair in his hometown with his ECC.

In June 2021, AJ successfully completed the Career Technical Initiative (CTI) funded BioTech Lab Technician training at a vocational-technical school in his community. MassHire staff worked with AJ to create his resume, prepare for interviews, and provided him help with applying for jobs at local biotechnology companies.

After interviewing with multiple employers, AJ was hired in October 2021 as a Lateral Flow Junior Analyst in his home region, making \$19/hour with full benefits.

The youth later said he was proud of himself and knew his mom and grandma were proud too. The second event was the 5th annual Western Region Graduation Ceremony held at Summit View in Holyoke on June 22, 2021, to celebrate the ten graduates from the Western Region. Youth walked in full cap and gown to receive diplomas awarded by the local high schools.

One youth delivered the graduation speech while another read a poem she had written for the graduation ceremony about her educational experiences while at DYS. The event concluded with speeches from DYS, CES and community leaders and a great meal with over 60 guests in attendance.



### Northeast Region

The Northeast Youth Services graduation ceremony in Middleton was held on June 16, 2021 in the recreation yard. In addition to the four graduating youth, the event was attended by proud family members, teachers, program staff, case managers. The NE Master of Ceremonies was Teaching Coordinator, Keith Therrien, who set a tone of support, celebration, and care throughout the event.



Youth, families, and caring adults were inspired by the advice and support offered by DYS Commissioner Forbes and the Keynote Speaker, Brian Anderson, an attorney in Northeast Region Juvenile Courts.

Commissioner Forbes spoke to youth about the value of continuing learning and encouraged them to take advantage of DYS' Youth Engaged in Services (YES) program. The ceremony was followed by a light luncheon and refreshments. Socially distanced celebrations continued in the NE community this year with joyous support provided by the community case management teams. All graduates were celebrated in a variety of ways including drive by parades, celebrations in district offices and recognition gifts and certificates.

### Metro Region

The Commonwealth Secure Detention (CSD) held three individual celebrations. The first graduation ceremony was held on November 19, 2020 and at a time when no in-person visitors were allowed in the facility due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, CSD invited family members, caseworkers, teachers, and other caring adults to attend the ceremony virtually and even make speeches. The graduates were thrilled to be able to see all the caring adults and how proud they were of what the youth had achieved. On December 10, 2020 a second youth's graduation was also celebrated virtually with families and caregivers in attendance. On May 13, 2021, CSD arranged for a celebration in the gym where the youth' parents were able to attend in person with other caring adults joining virtually. During this event, parents took the opportunity to step up to the podium to share stories and advice that were received with thunderous applause from everyone in attendance.

The Metro Treatment Unit (MTU) held an end of year graduation ceremony in June for four graduates. This was a hybrid event where family members joined in person and others were able to join virtually. Metro Director of Placement, Dudley Haney, was the keynote speaker, and Metro Regional Director Dan O'Sullivan gave the closing remarks.

The Eliot Boys Detention Unit celebrated the high school graduation of one of their residents in the gym at the Metro Youth Service Center. The youth was joined by three family members in person while six caring adults joined virtually. The family was able to share their loving thoughts and speeches via this virtual format, and the in-person visitors were able to enjoy photo opportunities with their graduate in his full graduation gown and mortarboard.



### **Southeast Region**

The Southeast Region opted to celebrate their youth released under supervision in the community who had reached their attainments by hosting smaller celebrations.



Each of the sixteen graduates received a congratulatory video created by Education & Career Counselors, Caseworkers, and other support staff from their respective District Offices; along with a cap and gown; and a personal gift.

During the months of June and July, the accomplishments of each of the 16 graduates in the Southeast Region were celebrated at Powers Farm. The Brockton District Office also

held two celebrations to accommodate graduates and families. The first was held on June 24, 2021 at DW Field in Brockton and the second was held on June 28, 2021 at the Pollinator Garden at Taunton State Hospital. Also, Bourne and Taunton District Office's celebrated graduates on July 8, 2021 and July 20, 2021. The Southeast also held ceremonies for youth in residential programs who had reached their attainments.

The Southeast Secure Revocation program honored graduates on June 17, 2021 in the Silvia Recreation Yard on the Taunton campus. On June 22, 2021, Southeast Secure Detention celebrated youth in the Silvia Gym on the Taunton campus.

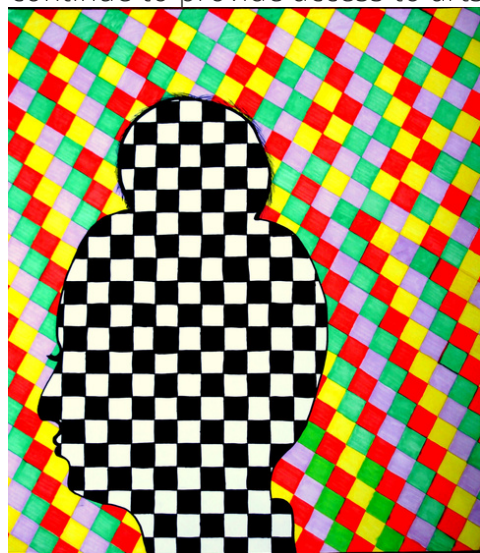
## Central Region

The Central Region celebrated graduates with staff and families through socially distanced virtual gatherings with the district offices and programs. Each graduate received a personal gift that could be used to celebrate with their families. Many graduates were also able to participate in either virtual or socially distant graduation ceremonies with their graduating school districts. Two graduation celebrations were held for youth in DYS programs with their families in attendance in August 2021. Youth in the community were recognized for their achievements during individualized graduation luncheons in the months of June/July. Each District offices held a celebration, for example the Webster office held a small cookout.



## Arts Initiative

The DYS Arts Initiative in partnership with CommCorp provides programming opportunities across the DYS service continuum, culminating with the annual statewide, 'Share Your Art, Share Your Voice' Arts Showcase. The Arts Initiative utilizes virtual platforms and new hybrid models to continue to provide access to arts programming through Arts Residencies.



Art Residencies involve the placement of professional artists in residential settings to work with youth, teachers, and program staff. The Artist in Residency is Integrated into both the academic day and extracurricular activities, and their residencies last from 6 to 12 weeks. The residencies conclude with a celebratory sharing of work for staff and invited guests. Artists in Residency introduce youth to many different forms of art that include music production, spoken word, improvisational theater, fashion, entrepreneurship, dance, poetry, woodworking, and drumming. The number of art residencies was limited in 2021, with the move to online, virtual learning. Nevertheless, the DYS Arts Initiative was able to serve all 5 regions of the state and provide the following programming.



**Actors' Shakespeare Project (ASP)** provided storytelling through the visual arts and creative writing and focused on the themes of utopia and dystopia. Aligning with the History curriculum, artists worked with teachers on site to create programming that touched on themes like colonialism and slavery using *The Tempest* as source material. Mid-year the programming then shifted to align with English Language Arts classes, ending with a staged reading (and accompanying visual artwork) of an original play loosely based on *Twelfth Night*. Youth engaged in dramatic reading and performance focusing on reading contemporary texts and producing reflections on contemporary short plays including the Facing Our Truth collection of short plays inspired by the Trayvon Martin case.

**Enchanted Circle Theater** provided personal, creative writing and storytelling with prompts such as 'If I Ruled the World' and 'My Neighborhood.' Artists and staff at Enchanted Circle made books for each youth that featured their writing, artwork, and additional space for journaling. In two programs Enchanted Circle worked with youth to write personal narratives, chose images and music to accompany them, and helped youth weave them together into a short video montage with voiceover. The online gallery portion of the 2021 Arts Showcase featured a project from a youth participating in this program.

**Everett Company, Stage and School** provided youth with creative writing and personal storytelling, dramatic readings, performance of stories, and engaging discussion.

**Change the Play,** used collaborative exploration of an issue of importance to the youth, which was then marketed through logo creation and merchandising, as well as the creation of original beats. Youth wrote a song, recorded it and the song created was a part of the 2021 Arts Showcase.

**Cotuit Center for the Arts** provided visual arts, drumming, and music production. Youth performance from this work was included in the 2021 Art Showcase.

**Hip Hop Scholars** allowed youth to participate in music engineering, including the introduction to Ableton Live music recording software.

**Performance Project** provided youth with instruction and performance in bucket drumming.



**Change the Play's DJ Lus working with DYS Youth**

### Annual DYS Arts Showcase

CommCorp partnered with DYS to organize and host the 8th annual DYS Arts Showcase, Share Your Art, Share Your Voice where DYS youth displayed their talents in visual art and performances. Over 300 people attended the Showcase including DYS youth, families, staff, public officials, and state legislators. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2021 Arts Showcase was a virtual event that was live streamed from the WGBH studios in Brighton.



In February and March of 2021 CommCorp staged a virtual gallery mini show, 'Past Favorites and New Works', sale to test new online gallery software (Artsteps). This 'mini' sale featured 16 pieces of artwork created by 14 youth from past Showcases, one newly commissioned work and a collection of art cards. The show grossed \$920 with all proceeds going to the participating youth artists.

The mini show provided a vital test run of the Artsteps online gallery platform, paving the way for the full gallery that debuted online on May 19, 2021, for 3 weeks. The gallery was comprised not only of artwork, but also featured 14 prerecorded youth performances including singing and drumming – as well as dance which were live



streamed on May 19th. One community youth participated in a series of conversations with Commissioner Peter Forbes, several of which were interspersed throughout the live stream. The event was DJ'd by Celtics Assistant Coach Jerome Allen who was the keynote speaker.



## Education Workforce

DYS structures its school year to consist of 180 days with 5.5 hours of daily learning time. DYS also supports a summer school program which is scheduled for 30 days with 4.5 hours of daily structured learning time.

### Workforce Roles and Responsibilities

Education Assessment Coordinator (EAC)	3	Conduct education and career readiness assessments upon commitment and create education assessment portfolios to inform educational programming across all 5 regions
Teaching Coordinators (TC)	37	Provide instruction in assigned content area(s) and other administrative functions
Teachers	64	Provide instruction to youth in assigned subject areas
Art Teachers	5	Provide visual arts instruction to include creating, presenting, and researching past and present artists and different ways of conceptualizing ideas.
Health and Wellness Teachers	6	Provide physical education and wellness instruction to include nutrition, healthy lifestyle, and relationship choices.
Education and Career Counselor (ECC)	11	Provide guidance and advising services, credit recovery services, transition supports for youth in residence through to discharge and exit from DYS
Assistant Regional Education Coordinator (AREC)	5	Provides leadership in absence of Regional Education Coordinator for assigned region. Is primary liaison for the coordination of MCAS, the College Program, and transition services in assigned region, including supervision of ECRCs. Is Primary Evaluator of record for select education staff and serves as one of two HiSET administrators required for approved HiSET testing sites in respective regions
Regional Education Coordinator (REC)	5	Oversees education programming in assigned region, serves as primary liaison to regional leadership, and is Primary Evaluator of record for select education staff. Serves as one of two HiSET administrators required for approved HiSET testing sites in respective regions
Instructional Coaches	5	Facilitate a wide range of pull-out and job embedded professional development and training sessions for educators, including required induction and mentoring for new and provisionally licensed teachers
Instructional Technology Coaches	2	Are leaders in advancing blended learning across the state, identifying, and recommending new tools and technologies, and teacher and administrator proficiency in the implementation of new technologies

## Professional Development

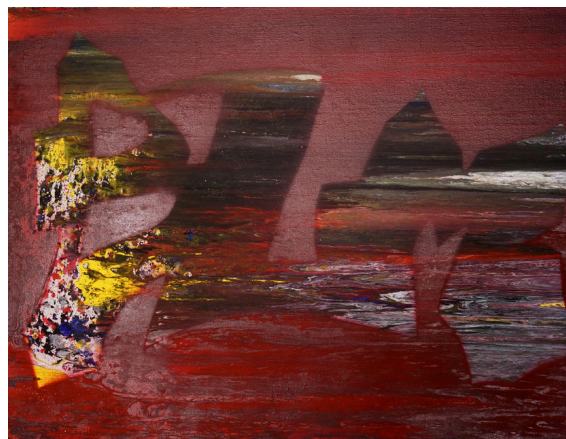
The DYS-CES annual Statewide Professional Development series in SY 2020-2021 included six workshop days where over 150 general education and special education teachers participated in whole-group and small-group learning formats throughout each day. The new Teacher Induction Program provided an additional day of professional development to new teachers each month. The New Teacher Induction Program provided additional professional development opportunities, including more focused and intensive instructional coaching, mentoring, and training in order to improve effectiveness and retention.

### 2021 DYS Annual Racial Trauma Conference

DYS and CES hosted a multi-disciplinary conference titled, “Liberatory Education: Healing from the Hidden Wounds of Racial Trauma in the Classroom.” Liberatory education including raising critical consciousness and applying social justice principles such as teaching youth about concepts like equal access to wealth, opportunities, and social privilege in society to classroom instruction and lesson planning. The conference sought to impart to the participants with a shared understanding of the impact of racial trauma on youth that the participants could use to strengthen their individual and collective skills in reaching and teaching youth. Over 300 participants attended the conference including teachers, education administrators, education and career counselors, clinical staff, direct-care residential staff, leadership across DYS, CommCorp, CES, and DESE.

### Workforce Diversity

In DYS residential settings, youth of color comprise more than 70% of the population, with over 90% of teachers identifying as white. In comparison Massachusetts’ SY 2018-2019 the racial composition of the youth body was over 40% youth of color<sup>7</sup> while the public education workforce was overall 92% white.



### Workforce Recruitment

DYS and CES are deeply committed to maintaining a workforce that is diverse in background, experience, skill, and talent and are especially mindful of the importance of having a workforce that is composed of highly qualified, mission driven educators and support staff who are reflective of the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and economic diversity of the DYS population. The CES’ comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) plan, has goals and strategies to attract diverse and qualified candidates in the areas of salaries and other compensation, hiring and personnel management practices, induction and ongoing high-quality professional development, working conditions, and extensive resources to facilitate engaging teaching and learning.

7. According to the 2020-2021 DESE Enrollment by Race/Gender Report

## Open Houses and Parent-Teacher Conferences

DYS residential programs throughout the state worked with education staff to host events showcasing the comprehensive education programming at DYS. These events provided opportunities for families to meet teachers and review their child's academic and career development. Whenever possible, these events included an opportunity to hear directly from youth about their plans for college and career development. Throughout the school year, there were parent/teacher conferences and special events including youth artistic performances, science fairs, and art exhibitions. During each quarter parent/teacher conference an, an Academic Growth Report was reviewed which detailed a youth's progress in academic and career readiness and skill development. The stories that follow are examples of the collaborative work of DYS education and program teams to foster communication and engagement with youth, their families, and the constellation of caring adults in the lives of DYS youth.

## Southeast Region

**Brockton Revocation/Reception** education, clinical and program staff coordinated a Family Game Day event that provided a casual setting for teachers, youth and families to get to know one another. The event included teachers facilitating the Breakout EDU puzzle game (a virtual, education puzzle solving game) as well as an EYF and Math game, the History of Games with chess, and Mancala.

**Southeast Secure Detention** hosted a family paint night facilitated by the regional art teacher. Members of the education team joined in creating free-hand paintings and pieces with stencils. Families were given a guided tour of the program's school wing. The program also hosted their first "Grill and Chill" event and two special events with Everett Company Stage and School which featured youth, teachers, and staff in performances of newly acquired improvisation skills.

**Southeast Secure Treatment** hosted "A Community Mixed Tape" and family dinner to celebrate the art residency with artist Harrison Grigsby. The youth presented their musical creations to guests and teachers, met with parents in the classrooms, and shared updates on their progress. A picture booth was set up for youth, families, staff, and teachers to have their holiday photos taken together. Preschool and elementary age family members were given scholastic books to take home.

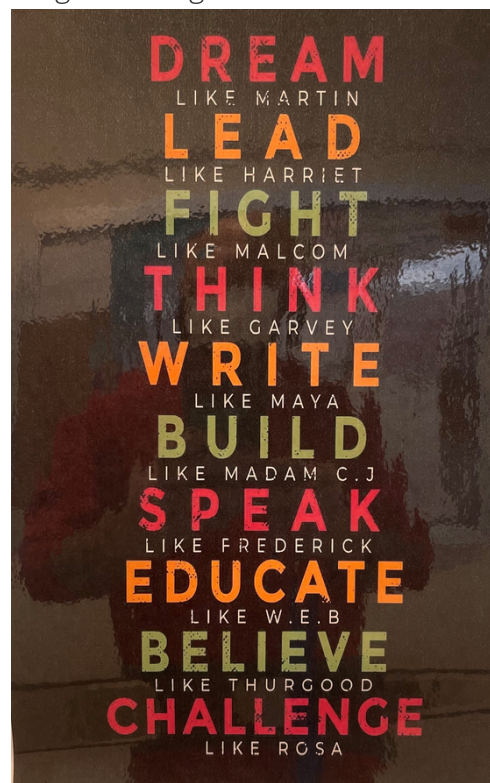
**Nauset Academy** hosted an event showcasing a large group art piece and music projects created by youth working with the Cotuit Center for the Arts. The event allowed the youth to share their art experience as well as present their artwork to parents, family, and the community.

**Robert F. Kennedy School** in the Northeast region held a "Harvest Family Night" for families to meet and talk to teachers about academic programming offered at RFK and the academic pursuits of their children.

## Central Region

The Central Region celebrated graduates with staff and their families, through virtual gatherings and in person at the district offices and programs. Each graduate received a personal gift card that could be used to celebrate with their families. Many graduates were also able to participate in either virtual or socially distant graduation ceremonies with their graduating school districts. In August 2021, two graduation celebrations were held for youth in DYS programs and their families in June and July 2021, youth in the community were recognized for their achievements during individualized graduation luncheon. Each District office also held celebrations, like the Webster's office small cookout for their youth and families.

**STRIVE** hosted a series of events for youth, families and staff including a holiday celebration in December. Youth made chocolate candies, sugar cookies and peanut butter cookies. Three community engagement events were held in connection with the Empower Your Future curriculum including an online presentation on how to apply for college and complete a FAFSA with guest speaker Buffie Whittaker from Quinsigamond Community College. Whittaker also presented on the different opportunities available for postsecondary education at Quinsigamond Community College. Guest speakers, Timothy Caldwell from YouthBuild did an online presentation on the YouthBuild program and Thomas Ortiz from Northern Essex Community College did an online presentation on the different opportunities available for postsecondary education, including degree and certificate programs.



**Fitchburg District Office** hosted an event in the fall of 2020 where staff, including the ECCs, assembled and delivered Thanksgiving Baskets to the families of youth working with the office. In Spring 2021 the office delivered activity baskets to all families which included movies, snacks, board games, card games, and fidget toys for the families.

## Western Region

**RFK Girls Treatment** held a Breakfree Education Open House where youth shared their fall Breakfree Education projects like "Unsung" where youth wrote lyrics that could be used in a Rock the Vote song with families, program staff, educators and various CES and DYS guests as well as representatives from BreakFree Education. Two Virtual Art Celebrations events were also held to highlight the youth's work with Enchanted Circle Theater group. The artists worked with youth on creative projects to encourage open communication. Families, teachers, and program staff were able to attend virtually through Google Meet.

**Gandara RISE Treatment** held a Watch Party for staff and youth to share food and cheer on youth who participated in the live stream of the DYS Art Showcase.

**Westfield Detention and Westfield Revocation** held three major events during the year. The Fall Festival brought the two programs together to celebrate fall and the return of school and community members to campus. The Fall Festival included DYS guests including Commissioner Forbes, CES guests, and caseworkers and program advocates as well as food, games, speeches and activities to foster community. A Winter Holiday Party was also held where the award for best overall Gingerbread House construction in DYS was presented to the youth of Westfield Revocation by DYS Assistant Commissioner Dr. Luz Valverde and regional DYS dignitaries. After the award ceremony youth were treated to pizza and wings.



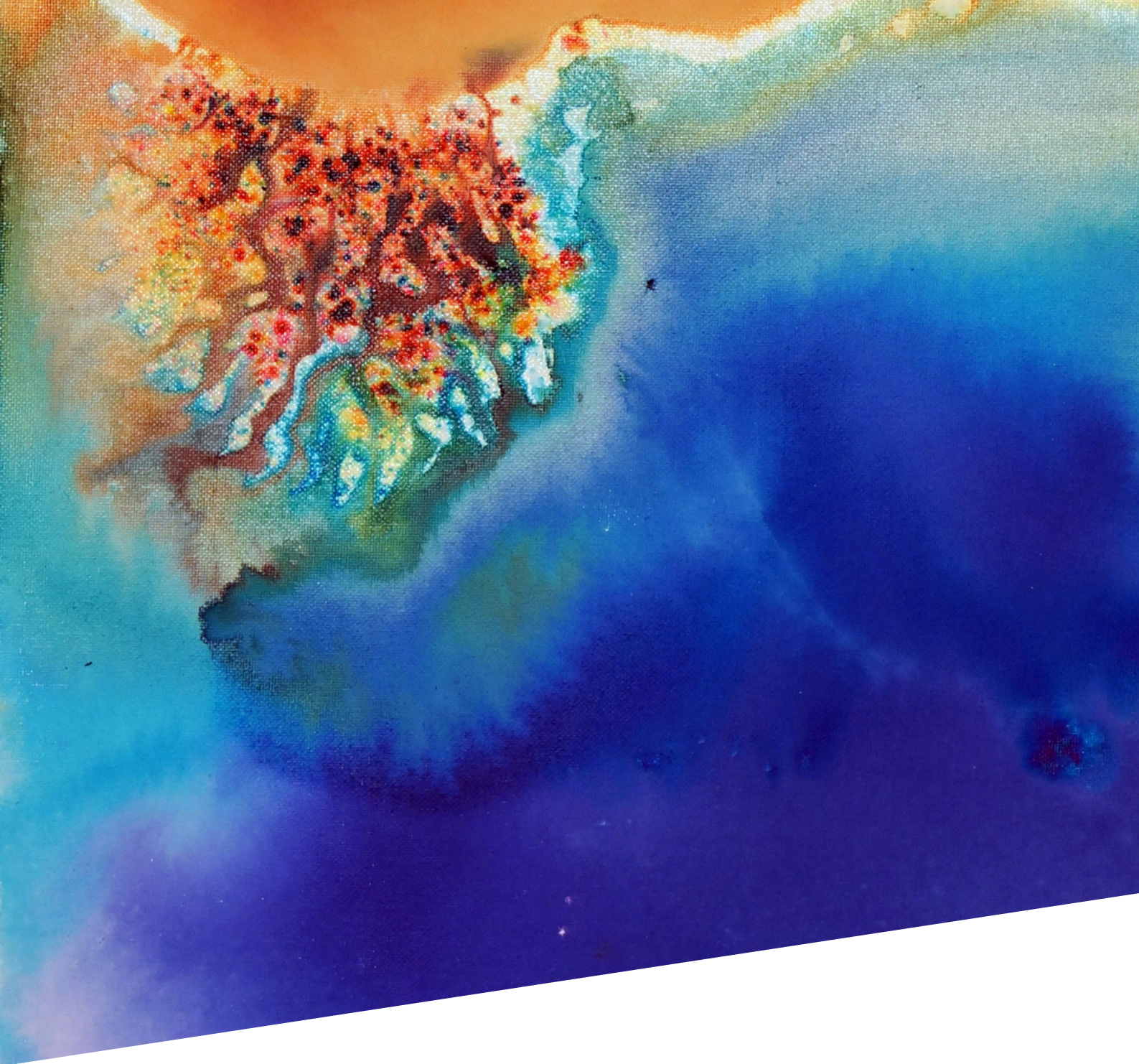
A Virtual Guest Speaker Series was held that brought community members to speak to youth about employment opportunities, community volunteering and involvement, and resources for youth upon returning to the community. Guest speakers included members of ROCA in Holyoke, Pittsfield's 18 Degrees organization, and community business owners.

## CONCLUSION

Research demonstrates that youth who participate in high-quality educational programs and attain higher levels of education while in juvenile justice settings have lower rates of recidivism than their peers (Hall, 2015; Nally et al., 2012), and a higher likelihood of continuing their education after release or discharge (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011). The educational programming at DYS has been impacted by youth who are older with complex learning profiles and are performing at different grade levels. DYS has had to find new ways to engage youth in DYS residential settings so that they can continue their educational progress before returning to the community. In the coming year DYS will continue to focus on accelerated learning interventions to prevent learning loss and provide youth with opportunities to propel achievement towards a high school attainment and post-release educational and career advancement.

DYS seeks to enhance its delivery of personalized learning to ensure that supports are provided for each youth in an equitable and developmentally appropriate manner. DYS will invest in efforts to achieve more diversity in its teachers as well as enhance the resources for English Language Learners. Through expansion of our quality assurance programming, DYS' research and evaluation of our education programming will include the voices of parents, guardians, youth, teachers, and other stakeholders to advance best practices and inform future recommendations.





[WWW.MASS.GOV/DYS](http://WWW.MASS.GOV/DYS)