

SENATE No. 256

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John J. Cronin

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to create and expand student pathways to success.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	
<i>Manny Cruz</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>1/23/2023</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>

SENATE No. 256

By Mr. Cronin, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 256) of John J. Cronin, Manny Cruz and John Barrett, III for legislation to create and expand student pathways to success. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act to create and expand student pathways to success.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General laws, as appearing in the 2018 official edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting, after Section 17A, the following section:-

3 “Section 17B. (a) There is hereby established within the office of the governor a
4 workforce skills cabinet, hereinafter referred to as the “cabinet,” to serve as a cross-agency
5 governance structure for the purpose of advising the governor and relevant executive branch
6 agencies as well as the general court, and aligning the programs and policies of the executive
7 offices of labor and workforce development, education and housing and economic development
8 to improve and expand workforce skills and college and career readiness to meet the varying
9 current and future needs of the Commonwealth and its regions.

10 (b) The cabinet shall consist of:

- 11 1. the secretary of the executive office of education;
- 12 2. the secretary of the executive office of labor and workforce development;

- 13 3. the secretary of the executive office of housing and economic development;
- 14 4. the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education;
- 15 5. the commissioner of the department of higher education;
- 16 6. the chairperson of the workforce development board established by section 7 of
17 chapter 23H of the MGL;
- 18 7. the executive director of the Massachusetts workforce association;
- 19 8. three members appointed by the governor representing business and industry who-
- 20 (i) are owners of businesses, chief executive or operating officers of businesses, or other
21 executives or employees with optimum policymaking or hiring authority; or,
- 22 (ii) represent organizations that represent businesses or industries;
- 23 9. two members appointed by the governor who represent the perspectives and interests
24 of current or future workforce participants, including the parents of school age students; and,
- 25 10. three members appointed by the governor from amongst other college and career
26 readiness and workforce development stakeholder groups.
- 27 (c) The appointed members shall each serve three year terms at the pleasure of the
28 governor and serve without compensation.
- 29 (d) The governor shall select an individual from amongst its membership to chair the
30 cabinet. The chair shall serve at the pleasure of the governor.
- 31 (e) The cabinet shall meet monthly and their meetings shall be public.

32 (f) In addition to, and within, the general mission of the cabinet as stated in subparagraph
33 (a), the cabinet shall:

34 (i) facilitate alignment, collaboration, strategic planning, and joint execution among
35 participating state agencies, offices, and other stakeholders around the development of workforce
36 development strategies for the Commonwealth and the expansion of college and career readiness
37 pathways for all, with an emphasis on high school programs;

38 (ii) conduct a biennial study of all college and career pathway programs that focuses on
39 equity of access to said programs as well as the alignment of said programs with current and
40 future workforce needs, including recommendations on creating a process to phase out programs
41 that are not aligned;

42 (iii) develop and release an annual report on the state's top current and future labor
43 market needs;

44 (iv) oversee the improvement of data collection and reporting on pathways programs by
45 facilitating data linkages between agencies, creating mechanisms to analyze meaningful growth
46 data by specific pathways programs, and building new public-facing data tools;

47 (v) advise the departments of elementary and secondary education and higher education
48 with regard to student acquisition of the employability skills that should be achieved in their
49 preparation for career success; and,

50 (vi) submit an annual report to the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and
51 means, the chairs of the joint education committee, and the chairs of the joint committee on
52 higher education detailing the Cabinet's work over the past year.

53 (g) The cabinet shall be staffed by a full time Executive Director who shall be an
54 employee of the office of the governor, selected in consultation with the cabinet.

55 (h) The cabinet shall have the ability to receive funding to hire additional technical and
56 administrative staff, to award contracts and grants, and to take actions necessary to fulfilling its
57 responsibilities stated herein or as otherwise assigned by the governor.

58 SECTION 2. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 official edition,
59 are hereby amended by adding the following three new sections:-

60 Section 37. (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department of Elementary and Secondary
61 Education shall pay each school district a certification award calculated as follows:

62 (i) \$1,000 for each student in the district who earns an industry-recognized certification
63 for an occupation that has high employment value, as determined by the executive office of labor
64 and workforce development through the publication of the annual list required of it pursuant to
65 Chapter 23, section 26 of the General Laws as amended by Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022, or
66 an industry recognized certification that is recognized by any public institution of higher learning
67 in the Commonwealth as a basis for academic credit in such institution.

68 (ii) \$800 for each student in the district who earns an industry-recognized certification
69 that does not meet the criteria of the previous paragraph but addresses regional demands
70 identified by the local MassHire workforce board.

71 The school district receiving a certification award must allocate at least 80% of any
72 certification award to the school whose students obtained the qualifying certification. The
73 allocation may not be used to supplant funds otherwise provided for the basic operation of the

74 school. The school receiving a certification award must use the award to support or maintain the
75 program, including the payment of stipends for instructors and the subsidization of fees for low
76 income students to obtain the certification.

77 (b) Subject to appropriation, the department may pay a certification development award
78 to a school district to support the development of programs to assist students in obtaining
79 industry-recognized certifications described in subsection (a)(i). School districts may use a
80 certification development award to develop instructors able to prepare students to obtain
81 certification, to obtain equipment and other instructional materials to be used for such
82 preparation, or any other purpose directly related to developing programs to assist students in
83 obtaining a qualifying certification.

84 (c) The department shall each year prepare an annual report on the progress made under
85 this section including:

86 (i) The number of public school students who are seeking certifications for high demand
87 occupations, identifying the number of such students who are low-income, ELL and/or SPED.

88 (ii) The certifications earned by such students, including the number of each such
89 certifications earned.

90 (iii) An analysis of the extent, if any, to which the funding provided for the program
91 during the year was insufficient to make the awards under this section.

92 Section 38. The department of elementary and secondary education shall promote and
93 support with available resources innovative and collaborative career technical education
94 demonstration programs in which students split their time between their comprehensive high

95 school and a school offering programs under chapter 74; provided, that under such programs,
96 participating students' daily schedule shall include required academic classes and vocational
97 courses when the equipment is available.

98 Section 39. The department shall develop, in consultation with the workforce skills
99 cabinet established in section 1 of this act, credentials for students graduating from the state's
100 high schools in applied knowledge, effective relationships and workplace skills as described in
101 the federal employability skills framework. The department shall develop and disseminate
102 guidance to districts for their consideration in establishing said employability credentials as
103 graduation or completion requirements.

104 SECTION 3. (a) Section 2 of chapter 70 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
105 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 70, the words "or (vii)" and inserting
106 in the place thereof the following words:- (vii) early college / innovation pathways / STEM tech
107 career academies; or (viii).

108 (b) Table 1 of paragraph (a) of section 3 of said chapter 70, as so appearing, is hereby
109 amended by inserting after row "high school", the following row:

110 (PLEASEHOLDER FOR TABLE)

111 SECTION 4. Subsection (c) of section 14B of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so
112 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the third sentence and inserting in place thereof the
113 following 2 sentences:-

114 "Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a city or town may
115 simultaneously be a member of a vocational regional school district and any other type of

116 regional school district. A city or town that belongs to a regional vocational school district may
117 offer a vocational technical education program in its municipal high school; provided, however,
118 that the program is approved under section 2 of chapter 74 of the General Laws; provided,
119 further, that a vocational regional school district and any other type of regional school district
120 serving the same town shall collaborate through the office of career technical education in
121 offering reciprocal non-competitive programs under chapter 74 of the General Laws; provided,
122 further, that said programs meet the labor market needs in a community's region as determined
123 by Regional Workforce Boards.”

124 SECTION 5. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is amended by adding the following two
125 new sections:-

126 Section 100. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the
127 following meanings:

128 “college and career pathway program”, a high school based program, designated by the
129 department of elementary and secondary education, which offers a sequenced and/or career-
130 themed set of academic and/or work-based learning experiences, including designated early
131 college programs, vocational-technical education programs, innovation pathways programs, and
132 STEM tech career academies which can lead to, in the department's opinion, improved college
133 and career readiness outcomes.

134 “individual learning plan”, a plan devised by individual students with assistance from a
135 designated educator that provides a clear and detailed student academic pathway from secondary
136 to post- secondary education or career with regard to coursework, sequencing and experiences
137 beyond the classroom, beginning in the ninth grade or earlier.

138 “MyCAP”, an acronym for My Career and Academic Plan, a process for creating a
139 student’s individual learning plan as defined in this subsection, and supported by utilization of an
140 online platform,

141 (b) All public school districts shall ensure that all high school students, beginning in the
142 ninth grade, have developed, with the support of a designated educator and an online platform
143 approved by the department of elementary and secondary education, an individual learning plan
144 as defined in subsection a of this section. Said plans shall allow students to continue to adapt said
145 plans and to make reasonable and relevant changes to their plans through the course of their
146 secondary education that allow for a continuing process of alignment with the student’s needs
147 and planning goals. Districts will provide support to students to participate in the development
148 and refinement of their plans. Districts will also make every reasonable effort to offer students
149 the experiences identified in their plans to ensure alignment with, and accomplishment of, the
150 student’s goals for post-graduate success.

151 (c) Nothing contained herein will prevent districts from beginning the process of having
152 students develop individual learning plans prior to beginning high school, for students within
153 their jurisdictions.

154 (d) Districts shall report annually to the department of elementary and secondary
155 education on their progress in meeting the requirements contained in this section.

156 (e) The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop guidance for
157 districts to oversee and ensure their compliance with the provisions of this section, aligned with
158 their current guidance to districts utilizing the structure of the MyCAP system and its component
159 parts.

160 Section 101. All public high schools in Massachusetts shall offer at least one foundational
161 computer science course that includes rigorous mathematical or scientific concepts and aligns
162 with standards established by the department of elementary and secondary education. In doing
163 so, each high school will ensure that each student has the capacity to access said course within a
164 four year course of study.

165 SECTION 6. (a) The workforce skills cabinet, created in SECTION 1, shall be charged
166 with developing a set of strategic goals for the Commonwealth, its agencies and education and
167 training institutions, in coordination with the governor's office and in consultation with the
168 departments of elementary and secondary education and higher education, regarding the
169 expansion of college and career pathway programs for students that enhance and improve the
170 likelihood of successful outcomes for high school graduates in college and career endeavors. The
171 goals shall include the achievement of universal access for all of the state's high school students
172 to said pathway programs, which shall include, but not be limited to, early college programs,
173 vocational/technical education programs, innovation pathway programs, STEM tech career
174 academies, and other similar programs and courses of study. The cabinet will include, in its
175 consideration of the establishment of said goals, that each pathway program should contain at
176 least one, or more, of the following elements:

- 177 (i) the ability of students to earn college credit while in high school;
- 178 (ii) the ability of students to earn industry-recognized credentials in high school;
- 179 (iii) the ability of students to participate in a meaningful and relevant work-based
180 learning experience while in high school; and,
- 181 (iv) the ability of students to receive dedicated career counseling while in high school.

182 (b) The cabinet will develop, in consultation with the governor’s office and the
183 departments of elementary and secondary education and higher education, a plan for the
184 achievement of the goals established in accord with subsection (a) that includes strategies to be
185 implemented, timelines for meeting interim outcomes and final outcome, resources to be
186 allocated, and any other consideration, including an accounting of the persistent inequities
187 inherent in not achieving said goals. The cabinet will report annually on its progress and that of
188 the Commonwealth and its agencies in achieving universal student access to student learning
189 pathways and establish milestone outcomes toward that achievement whose progress will be
190 reported on as part of its annual reporting.

191 SECTION 7. The department of elementary and secondary education shall conduct a
192 review of all offices, programs and processes under its jurisdiction which are involved in
193 designation and oversight of college and career pathway programs, and act to organize
194 department activities in a way that fosters coordination and uniformity across offices and
195 programs with regard to administration of college and career readiness programs and their
196 respective elements. The department will report to the legislature’s joint committee on education
197 and the ways and means committees of the house and senate by July 1, 2024, as to what actions
198 it has taken, or plans to take, with regard to implementation of the requirements of this section.
199 The department will, as part of its reporting, recommend any changes in statute it deems
200 necessary to facilitate the coordination of college and career readiness initiatives under its
201 jurisdiction.

202 SECTION 8. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following term shall have the
203 following meaning:

204 “work-based learning”, an educational method that takes place related to work or a
205 specific career, usually in a workplace, prompting students to learn about the environment in a
206 chosen career path and allowing them to gain exposure to the world of work in ways that help
207 them develop skills that employers value and enhance their opportunity for career success but
208 which may be difficult to acquire in a classroom setting.

209 (b) The department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the
210 workforce skills cabinet created in SECTION 1 of this act, shall conduct a study of the barriers
211 that exist to creating greater student access to meaningful work-based learning opportunities in
212 the state’s public schools. Said study shall address issues such as transportation, employer
213 liability, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, logistics and any other consideration which may be
214 determined to have the effect of limiting opportunities for students to participate in relevant and
215 meaningful work-based learning. The results of said study shall be issued, along with
216 recommendations for actions to expand work-based learning opportunities in the schools of the
217 Commonwealth, as a report to the legislature’s joint committee on education and the ways and
218 means committees of the house and senate by July 1, 2024.

219 SECTION 9. The department of elementary and secondary education shall require of
220 every public school district a plan for implementing the MassCore curriculum as a requirement
221 for graduation for all of their students. Said plans shall be submitted to the department no later
222 than December 31, 2024 and shall outline the strategies and timeline for implementation that
223 includes, but need not be limited to, changes to curriculum offerings, staffing needs, financial
224 requirements, scheduling restructuring and data related to the current shortfall, if any, in
225 providing universal access to a MassCore course of studies in said district. Each plan will outline

226 its strategy for universal access to MassCore for all of its students to be implemented no later
227 than for the class of 2030.

228 SECTION 10. Section 5 of this act will take effect on September 1, 2026.