

# Report to the Legislature

Implementation and Fiscal Impact of Innovation Schools

Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, Section 8 authorizes the creation of innovation schools. The statue requires an annual report to the Legislature on the implementation and fiscal impact of innovation schools.

April 2017

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D. Commissioner

April 2017

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to submit the 2016 Report to the Legislature: *Implementation and Fiscal Impact of Innovation Schools* pursuant to Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, Section 8. The innovation school initiative is a component of *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* that allows in-district schools to operate with increased autonomy and flexibility and create custom-made solutions to their particular student needs. Through a collaborative, local approval process, schools may use autonomy and flexibility in the areas of curriculum, budget, school schedule, staffing, school district policies, and professional development.

In the five years since the innovation schools legislation was signed into law, 57 innovation schools and academies have been approved and serve approximately 20,758 students in 27 school districts across the Commonwealth.

Within this report you will find an overview of the innovation school model; information regarding the state's efforts this past year to support implementation; and an updated list of operating innovation schools and academies throughout the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D. Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

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## Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education respectfully submits this Report to the Legislature: *Implementation and Fiscal Impact of Innovation Schools* pursuant to Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, Section 8, which established M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 92(p), which states, in part:

(p) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall, to the extent practicable, be responsible for the following: (i) the provision of planning and implementation grants to eligible applicants to establish Innovation Schools; (ii) provision of technical assistance and support to eligible applicants; (iii) the collection and publication of data and research related to the Innovation Schools initiative; (iv) the collection and publication of data and research related to successful programs serving limited English-proficient students attending Innovation Schools; and (v) the collection and dissemination of best practices in Innovation Schools that may be adopted by other public schools. The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate regulations necessary to carry out this section. Annually, the commissioner shall report to the joint committee on education, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the speaker of the house of representatives and the senate president on the implementation and fiscal impact of this section.

This report includes the following: 1) overview of the innovation school model; 2) information regarding the state's efforts this past year to support implementation; and 3) updated list of operating innovation schools and academies throughout the Commonwealth.

## 1. Overview of the Innovation School Model

The innovation schools initiative, a signature component of *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* that was signed in to law in January 2010, provides educators and other stakeholders across the state with the opportunity to create new in-district and autonomous schools that can implement creative and inventive strategies, increase student achievement, and reduce achievement gaps. These unique schools operate with increased autonomy and flexibility in six key areas: curriculum; budget; school schedule and calendar; staffing (including waivers from or exemptions to collective bargaining agreements); professional development; and school district policies.

Innovation schools can be established by teachers, school and district administrators, superintendents, union leaders, school committees, parents, parent-teacher organizations, colleges and universities, non-profit community-based organizations, non-profit businesses or corporations, non-profit charter school operators, non-profit education management organizations, educational collaboratives, consortia of these groups, or other non-profit groups authorized by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### **Operation of Innovation Schools**

Innovation schools operate according to an innovation plan which describes the areas of autonomy and flexibility and specific strategies that will be implemented in the school. At least one of the six areas of autonomy and flexibility must be addressed in this plan, and the applicant can determine which additional areas will be utilized in the short and long term. An innovation plan must include detailed information about the following:

- Specific instructional, curricular, and assessment strategies that will be implemented to improve student achievement and school performance;
- Allocation of fiscal and other resources;
- School schedule and calendar;
- Specific recruitment, employment, evaluation, and compensation strategies for staff members and, if applicable, a description of proposed waivers from or modifications to collective bargaining agreements;
- Professional development opportunities for all administrators, teachers, and staff members; and
- If applicable, proposed waivers from district policies.

The innovation plan must also include annual measurable goals that assess factors such as student achievement and school performance. In exchange for the authority to operate the school with increased autonomy, innovation school operators are held responsible for advancing student learning and meeting these annual benchmarks. Innovation schools receive the same per pupil allocation as any other school in the district, and their operators can also secure grants or other types of supplemental funding to implement the innovation plan.

Eligible applicants can create an innovation zone that may include a set of schools within a district or geographic region, schools that will operate in accordance with particular instructional or curricular themes, or schools that are defined by other factors as determined by the applicants.

In addition, multiple districts can work together to establish an innovation school that would serve students from different communities.

#### **Authorization Process**

Innovation schools are established in accordance with a locally-based authorization process.

- 1. An eligible applicant submits an initial prospectus to the district superintendent. Within 30 days of receiving the prospectus, the superintendent must convene a screening committee that includes the superintendent or a designee, a school committee member or a designee, and a representative from the local teachers' union; two-thirds approval from the screening committee is required for the applicant to move forward.
- 2. An innovation plan committee that includes up to 11 school, district, and community representatives develops the innovation plan.
- 3. Upon completion of the innovation plan, specific steps are required.
  - A conversion school requires a two-thirds majority vote of educators in the school.
  - A new school requires negotiations among the applicant, teachers' union, and superintendent if the innovation plan includes proposed waivers from or modifications to the collective bargaining agreement.
- 4. The innovation plan is submitted to the school committee, which must hold at least one public hearing. A majority vote of the full school committee is required for approval.
- 5. Upon approval, the innovation school is authorized for a period of up to five years, and can be reauthorized by the school committee at the end of each term. The superintendent will work with the school committee to evaluate the school in accordance with the annual measurable goals included in the innovation plan. In addition, the superintendent can work with the operator of the innovation school and the school committee to revise the plan as necessary. Any revisions that propose changes to the collective bargaining agreement require a two-thirds vote of approval from the teachers in the innovation school.

## 2. Academic Year 2015-16 Implementation Highlights

The innovation school model experienced continued interest from the field in academic year 2015-16 and resulted in three new schools and academies receiving innovation status: Dexter Park (Orange), Lowell High School Career Academy (Lowell), and New Liberty Innovation School (Salem). This spring, there are currently a total of 57 innovation schools and academies approved and operating. To date, there are approximately 20,748 students enrolled in innovation schools and innovation academies in 27 school districts across the Commonwealth.

Of the 56 innovation schools and academies noted above several schools implemented a science, technology, engineering and mathematics model, while others implemented a combination of

one or more of the following educational models: multiple pathways to graduation, early college, dual language immersion, Expeditionary Learning (EL), or International Baccalaureate (IB).

### **Technical Assistance & Information Sharing and Gathering**

As in past years, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) continued to share information across the state on this redesign model to innovation school operators, stakeholders, and prospective applicants. Through a combination of quarterly newsletters, phone calls, and emails the Department provided the field with pertinent innovation schools information.

In November 2016, the Department held its first annual Dissemination Fair. Over 200 educators from across the state attended, including representatives from innovation schools/academies. The event was designed to provide cross-sector educators working in areas of school redesign an opportunity to network and share best practices on a variety of educational models. The fair was an outgrowth of dissemination efforts that were previously more focused on specific sectors. Innovation schools, for instance, have been learning from each other through the innovation schools network described below. Teachers and administrators from innovation schools, expanded learning time schools, and charter schools shared with and learned from each another through a combination of facilitated panel presentations, lunch time talks, and school created displays. The Department is working on making materials from the Fair available on the Department's website.

#### **Innovation Schools Network**

The Innovation Schools Network was launched in 2012 by the Executive Office of Education (EOE) as a means to bring together innovation school educators, stakeholders, and prospective applicants across the state to network and share best practices. Due to limited staff capacity and decreased levels of interest from the field the Department did not host network events during the 2015-16 academic year.

## 3. Annual Evaluation and Measurable Annual Goals

By statute, superintendents are required to review innovation schools in their district for progress against their Measureable Annual Goals (MAGs). Annual reports must then be submitted to the local school committee and the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. These reports include information about the progress of individual innovation schools in meeting their goals, including areas required by law such as MCAS achievement data and other measures that capture progress on innovation plan goals. Many innovation schools have goals that address areas such as school climate, staff morale, and community involvement.

The information contained in annual reports also provides the Department with the necessary information about the particular challenges faced and successes attained by innovation schools. This information is important to Department staff as it determines the focus of targeted technical assistance and support. For spring 2016 MCAS data, please go to <a href="http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/">http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/</a> to review school level profiles.

Appendix A: Innovation Schools List

#### Massachusetts Innovation Schools

There are 57 innovation schools and academies in the Commonwealth established in urban, suburban, and rural communities. These include schools of varying grade levels (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school) and school types (e.g., new or conversions schools or academy models). Many of these schools are organized around specific themes like STEM, dual language instruction, International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, alternative education opportunities (like dropout prevention and dual enrollment at community colleges), and wraparound services.

#### **Amesbury Public Schools**

• Amesbury Innovation High School: grades 9–12, at-risk student population

#### **Auburn Public Schools**

- STEM Academy for Middle School Engineers: grades 6–8, STEM focus
- Auburn High School 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Academy: grade 9 freshman academy

#### **Boston Public Schools**

- Blackstone School: conversion school, grades K–5
- Eliot School: conversion school, grades PK-8
- Dr. William Henderson K-12 Inclusion School-Lower: conversion school, grades PK-3, full inclusion model
- Dr. William Henderson K-12 Inclusion School-Upper: conversion school, grades 4–12, full inclusion model
- John F. Kennedy Elementary School: conversion school, grades K-5, STEM theme
- Margarita Muniz Academy: new school, grades 9–12, dual language
- William Monroe Trotter School: conversion school, K-5

#### **Cape Cod Regional Technical High School**

• Cape Cod Tech STEM Academy: academy model, grades 9–12

#### **Dennis-Yarmouth**

- Ezra H. Baker Innovation School: conversion school, grades PK-3
- Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation School: conversion school, grades 4–8

#### **Fall River Public Schools**

• Edmond Talbot Innovation School: conversion school, grades 6–8

#### **Falmouth Public Schools**

• Lawrence School: conversion school, grades 7–8

## **Fitchburg Public Schools**

• McKay Arts Academy: conversion school, grades PK-8

#### **Gloucester Public Schools**

• O'Maley Innovation Middle School: conversion school, grades 6–8

#### **Greenfield Public Schools**

• Discovery School at Four Corners: conversion school, grades K-3

#### **Haverhill Public Schools**

• John C. Tilton Innovation School: conversion school, grades K-4

#### **Leominster Public Schools**

- Center for Technical Education Innovation School: conversion school, grades 9–12
- Leominster Center for Excellence: new school, grades 9–12

#### **Lowell Public Schools**

• Lowell High School Career Academy: conversion, grades 9-12, at-risk

#### **Mahar Public Schools**

 Pathways Early College High School: grades 11–12, collaboration with Mount Wachusett Community College

#### **Malden Public Schools**

• Linden STEAM Innovation School: conversion school, grades K-8, STEAM focus

#### **New Bedford Public Schools**

• Renaissance Community School for the Arts: conversion school, grades K–2, arts focus

#### **Orange Public Schools**

• Dexter Park: conversion school, grades 3-6

#### **Pentucket Regional School District**

- Design & Engineering Academy at the Dr. John C. Page School: conversion school, grades PK–6
- Design & Engineering Academy at the Dr. Elmer S. Bagnall School: conversion school, grades PK-6
- The Merrimac School (International Baccalaureate) at the Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School: conversion school, grades PK-2
- The Merrimac School (International Baccalaureate) at the Helen R. Donaghue School: conversion school, grades 3–6
- Pentucket Arts Academy at Pentucket Middle and High School: new academy, grades 7–12, focus on visual and fine arts
- Pentucket Academy of Business, Finance, & Entrepreneurship at Pentucket Middle and High School, new academy, grades 7–12
- Pentucket Academy of Movement Science & Athletics at Pentucket Middle and High School, new academy, grades 7–12, focus on sports science
- Pentucket Academy of Music Conservatory at Pentucket Middle and High School, new academy, grades 7–12
- Pentucket Safety and Public Service Academy at Pentucket Middle and High School, new academy, grades 7–12

 Pentucket STEM Academy at Pentucket Middle and High School: new academy, grades 7–12

### **Quabbin Regional School District**

• International Baccalaureate School at Quabbin: grades 11–12

#### **Quaboag Regional School District**

- Quaboag Innovation Early College: early college academy, grades 11–12
- Quaboag Innovation Middle School: conversion school, grades 7–8
- West Brookfield Elementary Innovation School: conversion school, grades PK-6
- Warren Community Elementary Innovation School: conversion school, grades PK-6

#### **Revere Public Schools**

• Paul Revere Innovation School: conversion school, grades K-5

#### **Salem Public Schools**

- Carlton Elementary School: conversion school, grades K–5, trimester student transitions
- New Liberty Innovation School: New school, grades 9-12, off-track/at risk

#### **Somerville Public Schools**

• Winter Hill Community Innovation School: conversion school, grades K–8

## **Springfield Public Schools**

• The Springfield Renaissance School an Expeditionary Learning School: conversion school, grades 6–12, Expeditionary Learning

#### **Wareham Public Schools**

• Wareham Middle School STEAM Academy, grades 6–8, STEAM focus

#### **West Springfield Public Schools**

• 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Academy: grades 9–12

#### **Worcester Public Schools**

- Chandler Magnet School: conversion school, grades PK-6
- Claremont Academy: conversion school, grades 7–12, early college model
- Goddard Scholars Academy at Sullivan Middle School: grades 6–8, accelerated magnet program
- Goddard School of Science and Technology: conversion school, grades PK-6, STEM focus
- Lincoln Street Early Literacy Innovation School: conversion school, grades PK-6, literacy focus
- University Park Campus School: conversion school, grades 7–12, early college model
- Woodland Academy: conversion school, grades PK-6
- Worcester East Middle School-Academy of Science, Health and Technology: academy model, grades 7–8

•	Worcester Technical STEM Early Career & College High School: conversion school, grades 9–12, STEM focus