

School-to-Career Connecting Activities

Preparing High School Students for College and Career

The School-to-Career **Connecting Activities** program is a collaboration between the Commonwealth's education and workforce development systems, designed to promote career readiness activities and generate employer-paid work experiences for high school students. Connecting Activities supports students in programs in 188 urban, suburban and rural high schools, connecting schools and employers in every region of the state.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) leads the High Quality Career Pathways initiative to significantly expand student access to careers. These include new Early College and Innovation Pathways, as well as expansion of Career and Technical Education Pathways. All three pathways are required to incorporate career exploration and work-based learning to help students make the connection between their coursework and careers. Connecting Activities provides funding and resources for staff who create these experiences with employer partners.

In addition, the statewide Connecting Activities network has been able to provide the infrastructure for exciting program initiatives such as the high school senior internship in education program that provides paid teaching assistant experiences for students, while helping schools cope with pandemic-related staffing shortages.

For FY 2022, the state invested \$7 million in Connecting Activities, a significant increase over recent years. However, with high schools increasingly focused on career pathways, the opportunity to expand both career exploration and work-based learning is now limited only by the size of this line item!



What is Needed?

To support professional skills development and career awareness among students and educators, we request that the Legislature appropriate **at least \$8 million** for the School-to-Career Connecting Activities line item for FY 2023, a \$1 million increase.

The legislature has supported a \$1 million increase each of the past two fiscal years, leading to an orderly expansion of the infrastructure necessary to make career exploration and work-based learning available to more students and more high schools.

Massachusetts Connecting Activities Network Map

