

## *Readiness Centers Initiative*

Governor Patrick's Education Action Agenda included a recommendation to establish regional Readiness Centers, multipurpose and collaborative centers focused on improving the quality of teaching both across the education continuum and across Massachusetts. The Executive Office of Education (EOE) established six Readiness Centers in October 2009, and they are managed and operated by regional consortia of partners that include public and private institutions of higher education, school districts, early education and out-of-school-time providers, educational collaboratives, non-profit organizations, and business and community partners.

### **Core Functions of the Readiness Centers**

- Provide high-quality professional development and instructional services to educators in early education and out-of-school-time programs, K-12 institutions, and higher education institutions to address both local/regional needs and statewide priorities
- Convene stakeholders from early education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, and other sectors to collaboratively address key education priorities, leverage resources, build statewide capacity, and increase integration and coherence across the education continuum

The Readiness Centers are beginning to provide professional development and instructional services to address local/regional needs and the following statewide priorities: 1) closing persistent achievement gaps among different groups of students; 2) improving the quality of instruction for English language learners, students receiving special education services, and in STEM courses of study; 3) using data more effectively to assess student progress and inform instruction; and 4) improving the quality of early education and out-of-school-time services in Massachusetts. In addition, they are leveraging existing relationships and building new partnerships among stakeholders to improve the delivery mechanisms through which services are provided to educators and also collaboratively address the following education priorities: 1) developing and implementing a rigorous and aligned P-20 curriculum; 2) developing and retaining an effective educator workforce; 3) improving reading proficiency for children from birth through grade three; 4) increasing college and career readiness; and 5) increasing student engagement and success in STEM fields of study.

Each Readiness Center is also providing a site and basic operational support for a District and School Assistance Center that is providing targeted assistance and focused professional development to selected districts and schools that are identified pursuant to regulations of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **Leadership and Governance**

In collaboration with the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC), Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), and Higher Education (DHE); the Standing Committee on Professional Education for the State Colleges Council of Presidents (SCOPE); and other partners, the EOE has established an organizational structure to sustain this initiative. The Readiness Centers Network includes all of the regional partners and state representatives, and supports successful partnerships among the Readiness Centers by disseminating information about effective professional development models and instructional

practices and developing strategies that address common needs across all regions. In addition, the Readiness Centers Coordinating Committee, which includes representatives from each region and also state representatives, is the leadership team for this initiative.

The six Readiness Centers and the primary regional partners are as follows.

Berkshire Readiness Center – Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Berkshire Community College, and the Berkshire Compact for Higher Education

Central Massachusetts Readiness Center – Fitchburg State College, Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association, Worcester State College, Mount Wachusett Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District, Auburn Public School District, Fitchburg Public Schools, Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, Worcester Public Schools, FLLAC Educational Collaborative, and the French River Education Center

Greater Boston Readiness Center – Framingham State College, University of Massachusetts Boston, Wheelock College, Massachusetts Bay Community College, and the Greater Boston Regional Collaboratives Organization

Northeast Regional Readiness Center – Salem State College, University of Massachusetts Lowell, North Shore Community College, Middlesex Community College, Northern Essex Community College, Merrimack College, Endicott College, and Gordon College

Pioneer Valley Readiness Center – Westfield State College, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, and the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative

Southeastern Massachusetts Readiness Center – Bridgewater State College, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Massasoit Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Brockton Workforce Investment Board, New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Southeast Collaboratives Regional Organization, Lighthouse Superintendents' Group, and the Lighthouse Assistant Superintendents' Group

### **Impact and Added Value**

The Readiness Centers are having positive impact and adding value by:

- Increasing the effectiveness of educators across the continuum and across Massachusetts by increasing the quality, alignment, and coherence of professional development/instructional services;
- Maximizing the power of collaboration and convening local, regional, and state stakeholders to address critical issues in education;
- Building new mechanisms for sharing information about best practices and effective models; and
- Building local, regional, and statewide capacity to create a truly coherent and seamless education system in Massachusetts.

For additional information about the Readiness Centers initiative, please contact Saeyun Lee in the EOE at [saeyun.lee@state.ma.us](mailto:saeyun.lee@state.ma.us).