

2005

# Achieving Prosperity For All Maine Citizens

Task Force to Create Seamless Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade Sixteen Educational Systems

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# AN INTEGRATED

## Driving the Change for Our High Quality System

Quality Educational Personnel

Masters degree for all teachers while encouraging high quality professional development

Increase educational salaries

## READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Establish early learning guidelines

Professional standards

Expand access to quality programs

Regional hubs of child-related community services

Transition guidelines from early care and education into Kindergarten

## READY FOR COLLEGE

Transparent alignment of expectations and standards

High assessments with college entrance exams

Professional development centers as hubs

Refinement of high school programs and organizational structures for equitable access of all students

Develop a communication system for parents, students, and institutions to understand

Develop a support system for parents and students in transition between high school and college

## Technology

Enhance the delivery of educational and professional development through the use of Technology

All Maine PK-16 institutional work to leverage resources to provide efficient use of collective technologies

Enhance PK-16 datamanagement systems to facilitate the efficient and effective transfer of information between constituencies

## ALL STUDENTS TO EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE

Invest in scholarships

Invest in core operations

Invest in infrastructure

## MOVING FORWARD

### PK-16 Council

The cooperation between the institutions of higher education and the Department of Education set the foundation for the work of the Governor's Task Force. The goals, strategies and activities set forth in this plan reflect integrated, partnered undertakings to yield the desired results in a strong jointly - levered approach. We will need to ensure that a mechanism is established to keep all the players together – Members of the Community College, the University System, and the private colleges, the Department of Education, representatives of K-12 schools, adult education institutions, and legislators – to move this work forward.

### Strategy

Governor Baldacci will create a PK-16 Council to establish a collaborative culture that will include representatives from the Maine Department of Education (DOE), the Maine Community College System (MCCS), the University of Maine System (UMS), the private institutions, K-12 schools, and adult education institutions.

### Action:

- The council will meet regularly to:
- ∑ • serve in an advisory role in the visioning of systems;
  - ∑ • partner in common messaging;
  - ∑ • promote consensus; and
  - ∑ • monitor and evaluate results of the strategies and action set forth in the PK-16 Report

Success in the 21st century will depend upon the ability of nations and states to respond to rapidly changing global forces and to adapt political, economic, and educational institutions to new challenges. Key to this success is the ability to anticipate the convergence of opportunities and orchestrate coordinated actions that maximize institutional effectiveness. Just such a convergence now exists with the multitude of initiatives and policy levers designed to address issues from early childhood to post-secondary educational programs. From new structures to coordinate early childhood intervention to programs that support the preparation of all students for success in post-secondary learning, the PK-16 context is the next critical domain for ensuring that Maine citizens have every opportunity to achieve success in the 21st century.

### Endnotes

- 1 Rainwater, T. and Venezia, A. (2003). Early outreach. Student Success: Statewide P-16 Systems. Denver, Colorado: State Higher Education Executive Officers.
- 2 Silvernail, D.L., Gollithur, G., Lane, D., and Crate, P. (February 2003). Maine's college graduates, where they go and why, finding Maine's future workforce. Augusta, Maine: Finance Authority of Maine and the Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, and Evaluation. Augusta, Maine.
- 3 Lingenfelter, P.E. (2003). Executive summary Student Success: Statewide P-16 Systems. Denver, Colorado: State Higher Education Executive Officers.
- 4 NAEYC/NAECS/SDE, Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success, November 19, 2002.
- 5 1 College-ready means that students are academically prepared to enter a two- or four-year degree program at an accredited institution, and to succeed in 100-level courses without academic remediation. While students may not choose to enroll in college immediately after high school, they will be academically prepared to enter a postsecondary degree program if or when they choose to attend college (Definition from the Aspirations Subcommittee report).
- 6 Silvernail, D.L., Gollithur, G., Lane, D., and Crate, P. (February 2003).
- 7 Lingenfelter, P.E. (2003).

# ACHIEVING PROSPERITY

## FOR ALL MAINE CITIZENS



Starting All Students Ready for Kindergarten

Graduating All Students Ready For College

Empowering All Students to Earn A College Degree

Driving the Change for Our High Quality System

A plan for an integrated and seamless public education system in Maine  
 -- pre-kindergarten through grade 16 in college --  
 that guarantees that all students are prepared for college, careers and citizenship

## THE CASE FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Maine has a strong history of educational reform. We have a number of initiatives underway – Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Building Task Force, the reexamination of Maine's Learning Results, Early College, the Compact for Higher Education, the Promising Futures high school reform work, the University Strategic Plan, Maine's PK-16 Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure Board and Advantage U. Each initiative is critically important, but overall there is a lack of integration that results in not being able to realize the most gain from each effort. Maine needs a vision for an integrated and seamless system which, though it will take several years to achieve, will provide a context and direction for reforms.

Aligned, coherent policies – from student transition-focused policies to teacher education and professional development programs – will create a more seamless education system that will allow all students to meet higher standards and move easily from one level to the next. A systematic approach to PK-16 education offers the hope that all students will know what is expected of them as they transition.<sup>1</sup>

Maine ranks first in New England in the percentage of working age adults with a high school degree diploma, but last in New England with a postsecondary degree. Maine ranks 33rd in the nation for its percentage of high school seniors enrolling in college immediately after graduation.<sup>2</sup> To guarantee a more promising future for Maine youth and to ensure economic vitality in our state, we need to dramatically increase the number of citizens with either an associate's or a baccalaureate degree.

As the number and diversity of high school graduates who aspire to earn college degrees increase, our educational systems must be poised to prepare all students for the academic and social demands they will encounter along the way. It is clear that both policy and practice must change to "achieve the goal of providing high-quality opportunities to so many students".<sup>3</sup> In order to ensure that students gain access to and succeed in higher education, colleges and the PK-12 systems have to work together as partners to define areas of concern and make strategic interventions.

This report is organized around the four questions which framed the work of the Task Force

- How can we start all students ready for Kindergarten?
- How can we graduate all high school students ready for college?
- How can we ensure that all college students to earn a degree?
- How can we provide quality educators, technology, and a continuing collaboration to support the work to assure success?



# SEAMLESS SYSTEM

## STARTING ALL STUDENTS READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

The first years of life are critical for later outcomes. Young children have an innate desire to learn. That desire can be supported or undermined by early experiences. High quality early childhood education can promote intellectual, language, physical, social, and emotional development, creating school readiness and building a foundation for later academic and social competence.<sup>4</sup>

Too many children enter kindergarten with physical, social, emotional and cognitive limitations that could have been minimized or eliminated through early attention to child and family needs. Ongoing research confirms that children's readiness for school is multifaceted, encompassing the whole range of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills that children need to thrive. Recent brain and other child development research indicate that access to early and continuous prenatal care, well child care, mental health services, comprehensive family support programs, early intervention programs, high quality early education and economic security have a great impact on the likelihood that children will enter school ready to learn. A foundation of universal access to pre-kindergarten is critical for our young children.

### Strategy

**Encourage every community to offer quality, accessible, affordable early childhood education for four year olds through private and school-based programs, supporting the notion of universal access to Pre-K.**

### Actions:

1. Establish early learning guidelines.
2. Develop certification standards for the UPK personnel.
3. Establish transition guidelines for children served in the early care and education settings to ensure effective transitions into the PK-16 system.
4. Identify the different types of regionalized, community strategies that Maine has in place to establish regional "hubs" which would allow, for example, the Regional Resources, Healthy Maine Partnerships, Communities for Children, and the early care and education programs to work together under a common vision.



## GRADUATING ALL STUDENTS READY FOR COLLEGE

According to the Maine Compact for Higher Education, despite a relatively high rate of high school completion in Maine and increasing proportions of high school graduates expressing intentions to enroll in college, actual college enrollment among recent high school graduates declined between 1998 and 2002. In 2002, one-half of Maine high school graduates enrolled in a degree-granting postsecondary education institution in the fall. While the college enrollment rate in New England also declined in that time period, the overall rate of continuation on to college in New England is significantly higher than in Maine. In 2002, the New England proportion of 60% was a full ten percentage points higher than Maine's 50%. If we are to achieve the Governor's goal of 70% attending college, by 2010, much more must be done to graduate all high school students ready for college, citizenship and careers.

By creating an integrated, systematic approach to PK-16 schooling, the state's educational institutions will close the academic gap that currently exists between high school and college. The public education system in Maine will provide a transparent alignment of expectations and standards—as well as opportunities and support—between high school and higher education and, in so doing, will ensure student preparedness for success in post-secondary education.

### Strategy I

**Develop and implement standards, assessments, and supports that allow for a smooth transition from high school to college and to college level work.**

### Actions:

1. Engage a group of higher education and high school faculty in aligning the Maine Learning Results with college-entry and placement expectations to reduce the need for remediation.
2. Develop a uniform assessment at 11th grade which will determine college readiness.
3. Expect the senior year of high school will be a "Transition to Higher Education" year with adequate provisions for remediation and acceleration, including "early college" experiences at the UMS and community colleges as well as internships and other preparatory opportunities.
4. Develop a support system for students and parents during the transitional phase between grades 11 and 14.
5. Identify the roles and responsibilities of secondary schools, the UMS, and the MCCS in making transitions from high school to college.
6. Align adult education's high-school-completion programs with the "college ready" standards, practices, and assessments.
7. Under the leadership of the Committee on Transition, collect and publish data on how Maine institutions

define college readiness in writing, reading, and math and the number of entering students who meet the criteria.<sup>5</sup> Use this data to support all high schools implementing a rigorous college ready curriculum and to support the college systems' development of retention strategies.

### Strategy II

**Develop a communication system that ensures that parents, students and every educational institution, at every level, understands college ready expectations.**

### Actions:

1. Use Maine's Regional Professional Development Centers as informational "hubs" to promote and host regular conversations between high school and post-secondary career decisions faculty members about creating and refining a seamless PK-16 system.
2. Form a partnership among key organizations involved in high school reform to disseminate the message of college readiness to the public.
3. Create a messaging campaign that helps change cultural attitudes about education and college, so that college ready standards will be embraced more readily in every region and community of Maine.
4. Create opportunities to engage in public conversations about the characteristics of high schools, what is required for the 21st Century learning, and the need to graduate all Maine youth college ready.
5. Develop a community and parent education program focused on raising the aspirations of parents and equipping parents and other adults in the community to help students make educational choices.

### Strategy III

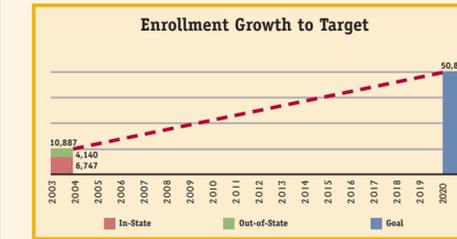
**Change high school programs and organizational structures so that all students have equitable access to a college-ready curriculum.**

### Actions:

1. Support the revamping of course requirements, class scheduling, and resources in Maine high schools to ensure that every student has access to an engaging, authentic, and rigorous curriculum that prepares them for college.
2. Identify and discontinue outmoded, irrelevant programs to free up vital resources that can be redistributed to support college readiness.
3. Embed career awareness and preparation in the K-12 curriculum
4. Support, through both local programs and state policy, Early College opportunities for all students while still in high school.
5. Align Career and Technical Education ("voc/tech") and adult education with college ready expectations.

## EMPOWERING ALL STUDENTS TO EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE

In February 2003, a report—entitled Maine's College Graduates, Where They Go and Why: Finding Maine's Future Workforce—highlighted that Maine ranks 11th in the nation for its strong high school graduation rates, and 1st in the nation for its even stronger percentage of 18-25 year olds that have earned a high school diploma.<sup>6</sup> However, the report also points out that Maine ranks 33rd in the nation for its percentage of high school seniors enrolling in college immediately after graduation—and, according to the 2000 census, only 24% of Maine citizens have earned a baccalaureate degree. In 2004, after a year of research and analysis, the Maine Compact for Higher Education announced that its goal is to make Maine people among the best-educated in America, and that the primary measure of progress toward that goal is the proportion of working-age adults in Maine with postsecondary education degrees. The Compact's target is for Maine to match educational attainment in New England by 2020. The Compact's plan to achieve the substantial increase in degree holders relies on working adults enrolling in college and on a vision of college transition programs being available throughout the state. The most recent data indicate that 37% of Mainers ages 25-64 have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree, compared with 45% in New England. If the growth rate of the past decade continues, we will need roughly another 40,000 degree holders above projections over the next fifteen years.



To meet this target, we need to commit to long-term, stable and increased investments in Maine students and in Maine higher education institutions.

Three strategies are suggested:

### Strategy I

**Investment in scholarships – The financial needs of students should be a top priority of any new funding for both private and public higher education. Reducing financial obstacles to college will increase both numbers of young people going to college, and the numbers that remain in college all the way through to graduation.**

A chief reason that Maine students do not go to college is money. From 1994 though 2001, average in-state tuition and fees at Maine's public colleges and universities were 50% higher than the U.S. average. Meanwhile, 12 percent of Maine's population—and over a quarter of all public schoolchildren in Maine—live in poverty. A postsecondary education is imperative to break the cycle of poverty and elevate future incomes and quality of life.

### Actions:

1. Launch a significant scholarship program to enable all capable high school students from low income families to attend the college of their choice.
2. Consider merit-aid programs by focusing resources only on low- and moderate-income families and rewarding students for taking a rigorous curriculum.
3. Examine the data on the current scholarship programs, ie amounts of state and federal funds, numbers of students which access these scholarships under what criteria – merit, need course of study.

### Strategy II

**Investment in core operations - It is essential to increasing capacity To significantly increase the capacity of our public higher education systems will require additional funding for general operating budgets. Although more efficient delivery can provide some of the additional capacity, we cannot expect it to be large enough to reach the goal of almost 40,000 college degrees above projections.**

### Strategy III

**Investment in infrastructure – The growing amount of deferred maintenance in Maine's public public higher education facilities is becoming critical. A significant increase in bond funding is recommended to address this.**

### Actions:

1. Prepare a Ten-year Higher Education Investment Strategy, in consultation with education and government leaders, that expresses year-to-year financial commitments to meet the capital and operating needs of the systems and their institutions, to achieve the goal of 40,000 additional degree holders.
2. Seek commitments to finance the strategy from the Governor and Legislature in January, 2006.

## DRIVING THE CHANGE FOR OUR HIGH QUALITY SYSTEM

### QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

Recognizing that there are important relationships among the variables of teacher quality, teacher preparation, classroom instruction and student achievement and that all levels of the educational system impact the quality of both students and prospective teachers/teacher educators, it is critical to improve teaching and learning at all levels.

Teacher quality is a particularly salient P-16 issue because it is a joint product of the elementary-secondary and post secondary systems. Post secondary institutions are responsible for assuring that teachers know the content they are responsible for teaching; know the research about effective teaching approaches; understand the connection between curriculum and assessment and have acquired the basic skills for effective teaching.<sup>7</sup>

Ensure quality preparation and professional development for teachers, counselors, and other educational personnel that transmits the P-16 vision and mission.

### Strategy I

**Encourage and fund high quality professional development opportunities for Pre-K-16 educators that encourages increased collaboration among educators and across all grade levels.**

### Actions:

1. Encourage PK-12 teachers to obtain a master's degree by:
  - (a) improving accessibility to graduate programs statewide; and
  - (b) providing incentives and fiscal supports for teachers, such as tuition reimbursement and scholarships.
2. Support and fund master's degree programs that emphasize content-based pedagogy to support teachers' understanding of the Learning Results core content areas. One model program is the Master's of Science in Teaching (M.S.T.) degree at the University of Maine.
3. Provide for stable and predictable funding for the Regional Teacher Development Centers for PK-12 teacher professional development.
4. Encourage and support the development of partnerships between schools and universities, and between schools and business/research laboratories, to provide opportunities for PK-16 educators to engage in more intensive, content-focused learning experiences, through summer institutes or internships that include paid stipends.
5. Fund faculty-designed program for faculty development for the Community College and University Systems.

### Strategy II

**Increase educator salaries to be competitive with New England and beyond. Attracting and retaining high quality educators at all levels is imperative to achieving our vision for Maine Youth.**

### Actions:

1. Increase PK-12 teacher salaries so that, by 2009, the minimum beginning teachers' salaries for Maine will be equivalent with the national median level for beginning teachers' salaries.
2. Fund recruitment incentives in geographically isolated regions, including: a) loan forgiveness; b) access to low interest rate mortgages; and c) higher starting salaries.
3. Increase higher education salaries (for the UMS and for the Maine Community College System) to at least 90% of the national average for comparable public institutions by FY09.

### TECHNOLOGY

As Maine faces the challenge of preparing students to live, learn, and work successfully in the knowledge-based digital society, it is critical that all parties involved in the technological systems work together to assure that all systems are integrated and interoperable, which will reduce the overall cost of development, deployment and maintenance. Combining and leveraging the resources of partners will allow more cost effective solutions. A seamless approach to the utilization of data will increase the ease of timely exchange of student based information across the educational systems.

### Strategy I

**Enhance the delivery of education and professional development through the use of technology.**

### Actions:

1. Provide for an interoperable set of technologies across PK-16.
2. Expand the Maine Laptop Initiative to include grades 9 thru 12.
3. Integrate the use of laptop technology in professional development PK-16.
4. Leverage the use of specialized computer applications, such as Course Management Systems, to expand educational offerings for PK-16.
5. Work with carriers and other parties to provide cost effective transport systems or present and future technologies.
6. Investigate, develop and implement new technologies to more broadly distribute academic offerings, both synchronously and asynchronously.

### Strategy II

**All Maine PK-16 institutions will work collaboratively to leverage their resources to provide efficient use of the collective technologies.**

### Actions:

1. Document resources available within PK-16 constituencies.
2. Make the Department of Education infrastructure available for delivery of AP and college courses for PK-12.
3. Deliver professional development and adult education programming over the existing higher education and DOE infrastructure.
4. Identify and assess evolving and emerging technologies that enhance the delivery of educational opportunity.
5. Integrate the telecommunications and technology initiatives identified in the strategic plans of the respective parties where that will serve the goals of this report and the missions and resources of the institutions involved.
6. Leverage higher education locations, such as centers, campuses and usage of the UMS ITV sites, to increase access to educational offerings.

### Strategy III

**Enhance PK-16 data management systems to facilitate the efficient and effective transfer of information between the constituencies.**

### Actions:

1. Document the status of the current data management systems of the PK-16 constituencies.
2. Maximize data exchange among PK-16 constituencies.
3. Expand the data management systems to provide for the electronic transfer of all documents required for post secondary applications, including academic records.
4. Expand the data management system of PK-16 to facilitate the electronic exchange of documents for students transferring between institutions.



ACHIEVING PROSPERITY FOR ALL MAINE CITIZENS