

# Boston

## MASSACHUSETTS

### THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK

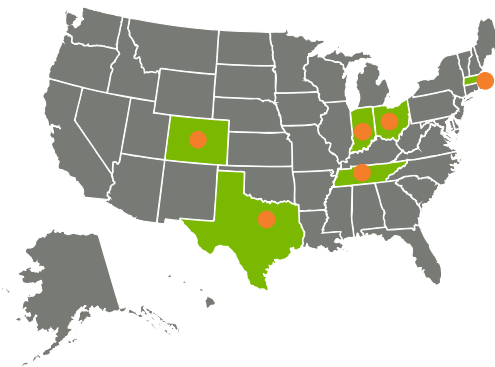
*New Skills ready network*, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity. Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group are working with sites to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways in six US communities.

The six *New Skills ready network* sites are: Boston, Massachusetts; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Nashville, Tennessee. These sites are formulating new partnerships between local school systems, higher education, employers, and government entities to develop pathways and policy recommendations that give underserved students access to higher education and real-world work experiences that lead to high-wage, in-demand jobs.

These snapshots provide an overview of sites' accomplishments in the fourth year of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, including the development of priority objectives and action steps toward those objectives. Through the *New Skills ready network* initiative JPMorgan Chase is looking to advance the following priority areas to prepare students for good careers and economic mobility:

- Strengthening the alignment and rigor of career pathways;
- Designing, implementing and scaling real-world work experiences;
- Building seamless transitions to support postsecondary success; and
- Closing equity gaps.

Boston, Massachusetts, is one of the six sites participating in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, aims to improve learner completion of high-quality career pathways.



#### NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Indianapolis, Indiana
- Nashville, Tennessee

The Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team began the initiative focused on understanding the landscape. They identified gaps in data capacity to accurately measure career pathway experiences and outcomes. By leveraging shared definitions of high-quality career pathways and work-based learning (WBL), they ensured consistency across the network. Their proactive [coronavirus pandemic labor market analysis](#) provided crucial insights for navigating the changing job market. Most importantly, the team laid the groundwork for equitable implementation by delving into equity and cultural wealth frameworks, ensuring that all Boston learners could benefit from high-quality career pathways.

Year two saw the Boston, Massachusetts, team refine their collaborative efforts. Working groups optimized processes to design career pathways catered to learner needs. Staff capacity in four focus high schools was boosted, empowering them to implement career pathways effectively. The team then turned their attention to employers, [developing resources](#) to ignite their participation in WBL experiences aligned with specific career pathways. Formalized partnerships solidified the network, while dedicated initiatives such as providing cross-institutional transition support and strengthening dual enrollment offerings with wraparound services smoothed the journey for learners.

Building on robust partnerships and equity-centered groundwork, year three witnessed the team [scaling their impact](#) in career pathways development, equitable access and systems change. Collaborative career pathways development and implementation remained at the heart of their work, always

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### LEADERSHIP TEAM PARTNERS

- EdVestors (*site lead*)
- The Boston Foundation
- Boston Private Industry Council
- Boston Public Schools
- Bunker Hill Community College
- City of Boston
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Education
- University of Massachusetts Boston



### VISION FOR SUCCESS

The Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team established a vision statement to guide the team's work over the five-year initiative and expand access to high-quality career pathways for all learners.

*The Boston, Massachusetts, team believes in a city where all young people can engage in high-quality career learning that supports exploration, informed decision-making, and preparation for the future. New Skills Boston aims to dramatically increase the number of Black, Latinx, special education, and English Learner students who participate in and persist through engaging, relevant, and equitable career pathways and are prepared to enter meaningful careers. New Skills Boston transforms systems to drive equitable education and career outcomes for all students. We value and leverage the cultural wealth that students bring to schools through their knowledge, skills, and abilities to navigate their context despite systemic barriers, including structural racism.*

with an unwavering focus on equitable access and outcomes. Data collection support became a shared endeavor through leadership team presentations, and the team sharpened their focus on the importance of comprehensive advising. Year three of the initiative saw the team prioritizing seamless advising to ensure that learners can confidently navigate their chosen career pathways and be fully prepared for the workforce. The team's accomplishments over the course of the third year took place in light of transitions at nearly every level of the Boston, Massachusetts, local and state education systems: Boston welcomed a new governor, secretary of education, mayor, local superintendent for Boston Public Schools (BPS) and other city- and state-level cabinet positions. The team's shared commitment to the work is a direct result of the power of relationships built across the site. Their consistency in leadership, expansion across sectors and development of high-quality opportunities for learners have deepened the work of implementing equitable career pathways for learners.

In 2023-24, the Boston, Massachusetts, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

- 1 Operationalizing strategies to increase equitable engagement in WBL;
- 2 Leveraging cross-sector partners in career pathways; and
- 3 Streamlining coordinated, holistic and equitable advising.

## PRIORITY 1

### Operationalizing strategies to increase equitable engagement in WBL

To create a future in which all Boston learners have equitable access to transformative WBL, the team prioritized the establishment of a comprehensive participation baseline. This data-driven foundation will inform strategies to increase engagement in real-world work experiences, particularly for under-represented learners. Over the course of year four, the *New Skills Boston* team built on the progress of existing citywide initiatives, supported increasing the number of job opportunities for learners and leveraged up-to-date labor market information to inform career pathway strategies.

The *New Skills Boston* team's commitment to equitable engagement in WBL aligns with and builds on the progress and strength of the [Mayor of Boston's Summer Youth Jobs program](#) — a nationally recognized program that offers hundreds of summer youth employment opportunities for youth ages 14-18 and young adults ages 19-24 living in Boston. The [Boston Private Industry Council](#) (PIC), the city's workforce development board and a core *New Skills Boston* team partner, met and exceeded the mayor's targets



for the summer program in 2023. The PIC also increased the number of private-sector job opportunities for BPS and engaged learners and employers in comprehensive training to prepare them for the summer opportunities. Key accomplishments include the PIC and BPS partners piloting workforce training workshops for learners in career pathways focused on health care – a priority industry field for Boston, Massachusetts – and the PIC convening industry-specific working groups and offering diversity, equity and inclusion training opportunities for all summer hiring partners.

BPS and the PIC worked closely to deepen their understanding of learner access and participation in WBL opportunities within high-quality career pathways. The PIC and BPS teams meticulously tracked learner participation, career pathway entry points, internship placements and the availability of diverse career-connected learning opportunities. Additionally, monitoring work readiness indicators and assessing the quality of career exploration experiences were part of the data collection work. The PIC provides updated labor market information on priority industry sectors and in-demand skills to inform the district's career pathway strategy and development. This data-driven foundation informs strategies to increase engagement in real-world work experiences, particularly for under-represented learners.

Year four yielded impressive progress in operationalizing strategies to increase equitable engagement in WBL; however, the team recognized areas for continued focus to ensure long-term impact and scalability.

Moving forward, the team is exploring strategies to serve learners and employers:

- **Integrating WBL experiences into the school day** holds promise for broader access and program sustainability;
- **Securing sustainable funding** through state line items and leveraging existing structures are also being pursued;
- **Incentivizing partner commitment** across all levels, with clearly defined scaling goals and robust learner outcome measurement methods, will be crucial; and
- **Exploring promising practices** in career pathway structuring, particularly for career exploration in grades 6-8, and developing effective employer engagement strategies highlighting the long-term benefits of WBL programs for building a diverse and skilled workforce are additional priorities.

Equipped with strategic partnerships, the project team is well positioned to make a lasting impact on career development opportunities for Boston's learners.

## HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS



Biotechnology/  
Environmental Science



Business and Finance



Health Care



## PRIORITY 2

### Leveraging cross-sector partners in career pathways

Leveraging the collaborative spirit cultivated in previous years, the Boston, Massachusetts, team prioritized strengthening cross-sector partnerships to solidify a comprehensive career pathways ecosystem. Over the course of year four of the initiative, *New Skills Boston* higher education partners Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) worked collaboratively to create holistic support systems for learners and explore cross-institutional proposals to further ease the learner experience in high-quality career pathways.

Building on the accomplishments from year three of the initiative, including expanded access to dual enrollment and early college courses in career pathways, BHCC and UMass Boston deepened their partnership to provide more robust support systems for learners across both institutions. Specifically, these supports include structured wraparound services, embedded tutor mentors and curriculum alignment with professional development for instructors – all critical components of supporting learners throughout their educational journeys. BHCC also emphasized providing additional opportunities for transfer learners to engage with the UMass Boston campus, easing their transition.

Building on their strong academic collaboration, BHCC and UMass Boston are exploring a joint admissions proposal to create an even more seamless learner experience. The proposal includes structures for data sharing, streamlined transcript processes, joint advising and the potential for simultaneous acceptance. Additionally, expanded co-curricular opportunities across campuses will further empower learners to thrive. By proactively addressing these areas, they aim to create a replicable model that can benefit learners in the years ahead.



### School Spotlight

**“Edvestors provided a grant to train teachers to develop MyCAP lessons within their area of content. We spent the resources provided on Naviance training, lesson development, planning and support.” - Jodi Then**

At Boston Green Academy, teachers have designed new lesson plans to implement MyCAP into their content standards and instruction. Teachers work together to present and fine tune plans prior to engaging with their students – and share best practices for the future. In addition to designing lesson plans, Boston Green Academy works closely with community partners, such as EdVestors, PIC and Boston University to help students throughout the MyCAP process.

**Milestone:** 91% of 8th graders, 88% of 9th graders, and 93% of 10th graders engaged in at least one MyCAP experience during the 2022-2023 school year.



**Boston Green Academy**

## PRIORITY 3

### Streamlining coordinated, holistic and equitable advising

In year four of the initiative, the Boston, Massachusetts, team continued to strengthen the crucial role of advising in empowering learners to navigate their chosen career pathways effectively. The team implemented vital strategies to streamline coordinated, holistic and equitable advising services by developing a framework for learner transitions, hosting a collaborative summit focused on seamless advising and deepening coordinated advising across BPS.

Building on the momentum of year three, the team further advanced their shared definition of seamless advising. The Postsecondary Transition working group developed a comprehensive framework identifying the essential conditions for smooth learner transitions from secondary to postsecondary to the workforce. The working group elevated adequate direct service capacity, robust data infrastructure and a dedicated intermediary for coordination as key components for a landscape that supports smooth learner transitions. This framework will serve as a blueprint for actionable steps to mobilize partners citywide.

In addition to the framework, the team sustained its commitment to streamlining seamless advising for learners in high-quality career pathways by leaning into collaborative learning and hosting the second annual Seamless Advising Summit. The 2024 Summit engaged 250 attendees from BPS, BHCC, UMass Boston, the City of Boston and community organizations. The day-long event offered workshops covering integral promising practices, approaches and strategies for seamless advising, including leveraging data systems, integrating principles of cultural wealth in practice and more. The Summit also introduced a specialized track for middle-grade educators, advisers and counselors, reinforcing the team's support for implementing the My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) tool in the middle grades. Attendee feedback on the Summit has been overwhelmingly positive, noting the breadth and depth of the topics covered and appreciation for the cross-sector learning space.



**MyCAP Challenge** **School Spotlight**

**"I love how the MyCAP curriculum helps students focus on their academic/college and career planning, career development, and personal and social identity." - Chrissy Soares-Fernandes, Personal Growth Teacher at TechBoston Academy**

At TechBoston Academy (6-12), Chrissy Soares Fernandes developed a unique, interactive activity to incorporate MyCAP discussions into the classroom. Specifically, she helped her students create vision boards to learn and understand their sensory and mindset preferences – and ultimately, develop a study practice. Following the exercise, students reviewed their findings and wrote their teachers a letter to inform them of what they needed to succeed in class. As TechBoston's Personal Growth lead for middle school grades, Chrissy continues to lead classroom lessons in self identity, self advocacy and personal/career interests through MyCAP.

**Milestone:** 87% of 8th graders engaged in at least one MyCAP experience during the 2022-2023 school year.

**GENERATION SUCCESS**



**TechBoston Academy (6-12)**

A final key accomplishment in this priority area for year four of the initiative includes the efforts of BPS to deepen the quality of MyCAP implementation across schools and community organizations. The district, recognizing that seamless advising is critical in supporting learners' postsecondary success, intentionally engaged partners with the MyCAP scope and sequence through training sessions. These sessions, held over the course of a week, ensured consistency in the information and guidance provided to learners across different touchpoints. Additionally, professional development opportunities were offered to equip school teams with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective career advising to learners in career pathways. BPS worked closely with the PIC to strengthen collaboration among advisers, teachers and PIC career specialists. This collaboration ensured a comprehensive understanding of each learner's academic progress, career aspirations and potential challenges. Regular communication channels facilitate the sharing of learner information and the development of individualized advising plans, centering equity in advising to meet learners' diverse needs.

In year five, the Boston, Massachusetts, team will advance seamless advising to streamline communications with learners, improve information sharing among advisers and increase resource access. Data collection and analysis systems will be further strengthened to provide valuable insights into learner outcomes and areas for improvement. By removing barriers for learners and implementing strategic initiatives, the *New Skills Boston* team works earnestly to create a sustainable and impactful advising system that empowers all learners to make informed decisions about their academic and career pathways.



## LOOKING AHEAD

Building upon the momentum achieved in year four, the Boston, Massachusetts, team has identified critical priorities for year five:

- **Enhancing Sustainability:** A critical priority for year five will be ensuring the long-term sustainability of the development, design, implementation and delivery of high-quality career pathways. This work involves nurturing existing partnerships, codifying the lessons learned to inform future practice and articulating the team's shared strategy to continue this work beyond 2025.
- **Scaling and Expanding Seamless Advising:** Efforts will concentrate on deepening coordinated advising actions across partners. BPS will prioritize strategically expanding MyCAP to encompass all middle grades. Similarly, a focus will be placed on scaling the MyCAP scope and sequence across all schools in the district. The team will continue to host the annual Seamless Advising Summit; provide additional training for advisers throughout the year; address postsecondary support; and work strategically to advance policies and practices, including a streamlined data-sharing infrastructure.

By prioritizing these focus areas and taking these next steps, the team in Boston, Massachusetts, remains committed to creating a sustainable and impactful ecosystem that empowers all learners to explore career pathways, make informed academic choices and graduate prepared for success in future careers.



## NIAHEMIAH

**EDUCATION:** 11th grade, Biotechnology Career Pathway, Jeremiah E. Burke High School

**NEW SKILLS ready network CONNECTION:** This career pathway and associated career pathways coordinators were established with funding and support from the initiative.

### What were your educational and/or career goals before participating in the program or initiative?

I wanted to do pathways because I didn't know what I wanted to do at first. [The biotechnology pathway] is eye-opening. It lets you see what's out there. It's just like it aligns with the certain things you want to do. It was more hands on, and I got to be in the lab and see things happen.

### How did the experience shift your thinking about your education and/or career goals?

I think the influence that it has is pushing me more toward nursing. And I know I want to do nursing in some way somehow, but it's pushing me more toward the hospital. Being in the biotech pathway has [also] influenced other things unrelated to nursing such as being confident in what you already know and being able to put what you know [into a] vision. [Take] what's in your head and you can put it out there and see your vision come to life.