

*School-to-Career*  
**Connecting Activities**

*Preparing Students for Success after High School*

**FY16 Annual Report**





# Connecting Activities

Preparing Students for Success after High School

**Annual Report FY16**

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Office for College, Career, and Technical Education  
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## Overview and Highlights FY16

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Connecting Activities (CA)<sup>1</sup> is a dynamic Massachusetts initiative designed to help schools prepare students for college and career. **CA is a state-funded system, led by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), linking education, business and workforce development partners through the work of skilled intermediaries.** Its infrastructure provides schools across the Commonwealth with methods for offering students work experience and a range of other career awareness and exploration activities.

Connecting Activities is funded annually through an appropriation in the state's budget (Line Item 7027-0019).<sup>2</sup> CA funds are allocated by ESE to all sixteen local **Workforce Development Boards (WDB)** in the state. In turn, the WDBs partner with high schools and other local stakeholders to offer work-based learning and career development education services to students. The return on investment from CA is very high: **For each public dollar invested, CA is leveraging close to five dollars in private sector wages.** In FY16, with an appropriation of \$2.8 million, the return was over \$14 million in student wages.

Effective partnerships with **employers** are essential to provide students with relevant career development activities. The CA system has created strong connections with several thousand employers over the years, engaging them in every aspect of career readiness, from short term career awareness events like guest speaker series and career fairs, to more sustained engagement, including high-powered internship programs. CA is responsive to labor market needs, and actively recruits employers in key STEM industries like health care, finance, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and IT.

**Schools** are also integral to the success of the CA initiative. In FY16, over half of the state's 398 high schools were connected to the CA initiative, constituting a significant network of practitioners. The high schools involved in this network include urban, suburban and rural high schools; they are academic, comprehensive and career vocational technical education (CVTE) schools. CA is instrumental in building systems of Career Development Education (CDE), including new career pathways, in all of these settings.

Over its history, thousands of **students** have been served as a result of the system that CA has built. Currently in Massachusetts there are about 290,000 high school students. About 60,000 (20%) are enrolled in CVTE programs, while the remaining 230,000 (80%) are not. Connecting Activities serves students in both settings; however, it has a stronger role to play for the 80% not enrolled in CVTE programming, where it may be the primary source of CDE. CA is designed to offer **all** students the foundation and technical skills needed for the many skilled positions in the state's labor market.

**10,258 students** had career immersive work experiences that were brokered and supported by the CA network in FY16; that represents 1 out of 7 students, when compared to our state-wide graduating cohort of approximately 75,000 students. Our goal is to scale up so that **all** students have an immersive career exposure by the time they graduate, as part of their pathway to success after high school.

### **FY16 Performance across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as School-to-Career Connecting Activities.

<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix for a table showing the history of funding for Connecting Activities since 1998.

## Overview and Highlights FY16

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During FY16, when the state appropriated \$2.8 million<sup>3</sup> for the initiative, Connecting Activities had a very productive year, generating the following significant outcomes:

- ★ **10,258 students were placed in internships at 3,679 employer sites.**
- ★ **Employers invested \$14,024,114 in wages to support student internships, almost a 5:1 match (the legislation requires 2:1, but the initiative regularly exceeds that).**
- ★ **7,422 (72%) students utilized the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP) on the job. The WBLP structures learning and productivity at the worksite.**
- ★ **7,040 students participated in classes/workshops including career exploration, work-readiness and internship workshops.**
- ★ **2,660 employers sponsored career awareness and exploration activities for students including career days, job shadowing and guest speaker programs.**
- ★ **186 high schools were partners in the CA initiative, and another 77 were members, totaling more than half of the state's 398 public high schools.**

### Highlights from FY16

In FY16, the Connecting Activities initiative sustained its longstanding commitment to career preparation for students through work-based learning and other career activities, while developing new ways to help its partner schools build their career development education systems.<sup>4</sup> Working with a simple self-assessment tool designed to help MA high schools establish baselines, the CA leadership network began supporting schools assess the scale of their career preparation activities. This effort will be a work in process, as interest in the state's high schools increases in college *and* career readiness for all students.

In late FY16, the Executive Office of Education included ESE's CA initiative in a new collaboration with the state's STEM Council to support an ambitious effort to expand STEM internships for high school students. This promising effort continued into FY17, and reflects the importance of the STEM sectors to the success of the state's economy, and the importance of career immersion experiences to both students and employers.

The CA initiative is also contributing to ESE's efforts to expand access to career pathways. In the spring of FY16, Massachusetts received a significant planning grant from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), a national association of the states' heads of education departments, intended to increase access to career preparation across the nation. That new CCSSO funding opportunity built upon

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<sup>3</sup> The FY 16 full appropriation was for \$3,025,000, but \$225,000 of that was for unrelated earmarks.

<sup>4</sup> Several years ago, CA developed a two-tiered method of connecting with high schools, enabling schools to be either "partner" or "member" schools. The former involves direct services for students, and shared resources, while the latter is a lighter touch, with access for school staff to professional development and training opportunities.

## Overview and Highlights FY16

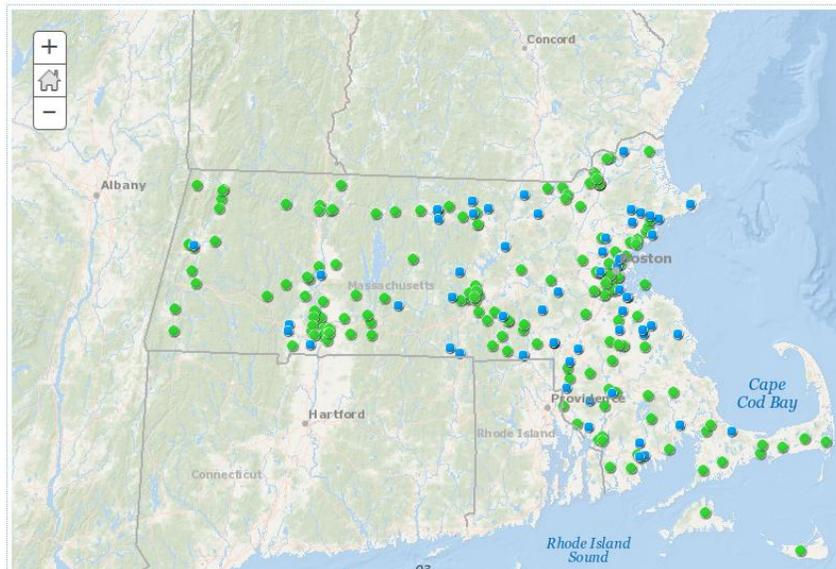
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the conclusions of its report from 2014 entitled “[Opportunities and Options: Making Career Preparation Work for Students.](#)” In that report, CCSSO called for scaling up and improving the quality of career preparation programs nationwide. It proposed several mechanisms for achieving that, including “dramatically expand(ing) work-based learning opportunities to expose students to career options and connect what they’re learning in the classroom with the world of work.” (Report at p. 4). In FY16, it launched its national project called “New Skills for Youth” (NSFY) to advance the cause.

In the NSFY initiative, CCSSO provided a definition of high quality career pathways with six essential elements, one of which is work-based learning.<sup>5</sup> The funding was designed to help states develop a blueprint for expanding access to high quality career pathways, a process which participating states began in FY16 and continued into FY17. Massachusetts has embraced the NSFY definition of career pathways, and intends to formally adopt and promulgate this to assist with career pathway expansion across the state. Connecting Activities will play a central role in those expansion plans.

On a more local level, the CA network began to see the fruits of its new “member” status for high schools in FY16. Staff members from over 75 high schools have signed up to participate. Unlike the “partner” status, member status does not involve direct services for students.. The member status enables high schools not previously active in CA to get acquainted with some of CA’s career preparation strategies, and consider ways to build out new programs for college and career readiness at their schools.

**Massachusetts Connecting Activities Schools Network Map**



To view the map at the Connecting Activities website and see a text list of partnering schools, visit: <http://www.massconnecting.org/content/massachusetts-connecting-activities-schools-network-map>

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<sup>5</sup> The six pathway elements are: 1) work-based learning, 2) postsecondary linkages, 3) career advisement, 4) integration of academic and technical instruction, 5) credential attainment, and 6) LMI alignment.

## Overview and Highlights FY16

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In FY16, the CA initiative offered a series of regional trainings for counselors and educators about the importance of labor market information (LMI) in helping students make more informed decisions about their futures, using the [Labor Market Information \(LMI\) Primer](#) it created in FY15. Another key resource used in its trainings and regional supports is ESE's [Guide to Career Development Education](#).

### **How does CA work and who does it serve?**

The sixteen Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) use CA funding primarily to pay for the intermediary role that is the heart of the initiative, performed by both talented workforce professionals and educators. These staff broker work-based learning experiences for students, as well as career awareness and exploration activities in the community.

Each WDB has a designated lead staff member who serves as the CA point of contact for ESE. A core group of leaders, including these 16 staff members and a comparable number of leaders who have been active in those regions as support, guides CA under the direction of ESE. This core group meets several times a year to share information and effective practices, and to support continual improvement.

In addition to that core leadership group, there is a much larger network of practitioners who provide the essential functions required in all participating communities, including school district administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, career counselors, workforce professionals at WDBs, chambers of commerce, and Career Centers, and local leaders of long-standing local School-to-Career partnerships, among others. Well over 250 people are part of this larger network.

Connecting Activities reaches all corners of the state, from our large urban areas to our smaller cities, from suburban to rural areas, and is designed to serve students of all skill and income levels, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and low-income students. While Connecting Activities serves all students, there is a strong effort to serve students at risk of dropping out. CA is aligned with the ESE's strategies related to dropout prevention, graduation rate improvement, and student engagement.

**State Level Leadership:** Two departments of the Commonwealth's executive branches are linked through Connecting Activities – the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) which guides the K-12 public education system, and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) which guides the workforce development system, supported by the MA Workforce Development Board (MWDB). From the beginning, Connecting Activities has helped to build bridges between these two agencies and the local organizations they support.

Connecting Activities continues to play a key role in the state's overall college and career readiness (CCR) agenda. ESE and the Department of Higher Education adopted a joint [definition of CCR](#) in 2013. This definition is based on a holistic approach to college and career readiness for students, establishing that skills are needed in three critical domains for student success after high school: the academic; work readiness; and personal/social realms. CA initiatives address all three.

## Overview and Highlights FY16

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ESE continues to be a collaborating partner in the Future Ready campaign, with the Department of Higher Education and the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. In that capacity, ESE has directed Connecting Activities to support the state's efforts to make sure every youth is "future ready."



Connecting Activities is also a critical response by the state to the challenge of teen unemployment. Connecting Activities began well before the now well-known precipitous drop in youth employment; its importance in our state has also grown as that trend has worsened. As observed in the CCSSO Report,

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently announced an unemployment rate of 5.9 percent, the equivalent of 9.3 million Americans classified as unemployed. More troubling still, 14.3 of our 16-24 year olds are unemployed, yet there remain 4.8 million job openings in our economy, the highest number of job vacancies since January of 2001. (Report at 2))

### **CA Performance Expectations for the Commonwealth's 16 WDBs**

ESE has developed a set of core performance expectations for the WDBs, and has designed a rubric about quality of performance to help regions continually improve. The minimum requirements are:

- They must generate at least two times the amount of awarded funding in private sector wage match, to be demonstrated by data-entered student wage information;
- They must establish goals about the number of student job placements they will broker and support, and then document their outcomes, including the number of Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plans implemented;
- They must establish goals for targeting students who are at risk of dropping out, to support the ESE's major goal of improving graduation rates;
- They must document the other career awareness and exploration activities they sponsor or support, via ESE's data-collection system;
- They must provide quarterly reports about their progress against annual goals; and
- They must participate in a range of technical assistance opportunities designed by ESE to ensure a common understanding of expectations, and stay current with respect to effective practices.

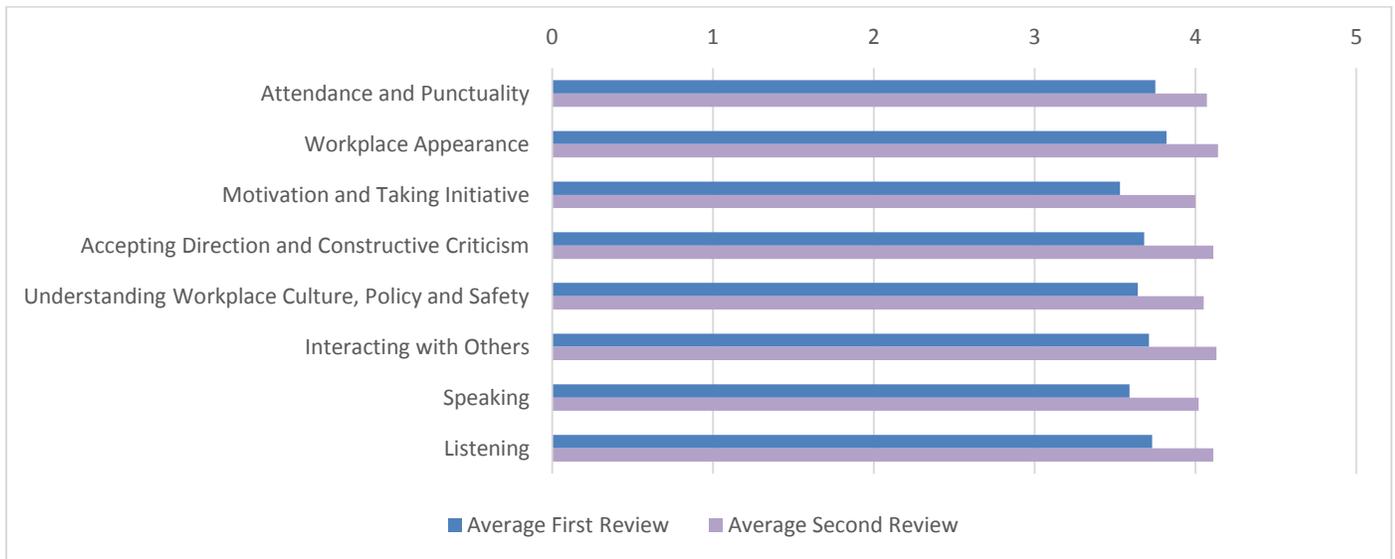
### **A leading strategy: Use of the MA Work-Based Learning Plan**

The implementation of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP) by the CA network is a critical aspect of the initiative. The WBLP supports student mastery of the foundation, technical and higher order skills needed for success in the workplace. It is a diagnostic, goal-setting and assessment tool, offering structure and clarity to internships, summer jobs and other career immersion experiences. The WBLP is widely used across the state. The WBLP is also the data source for ESE's skill gain analysis;

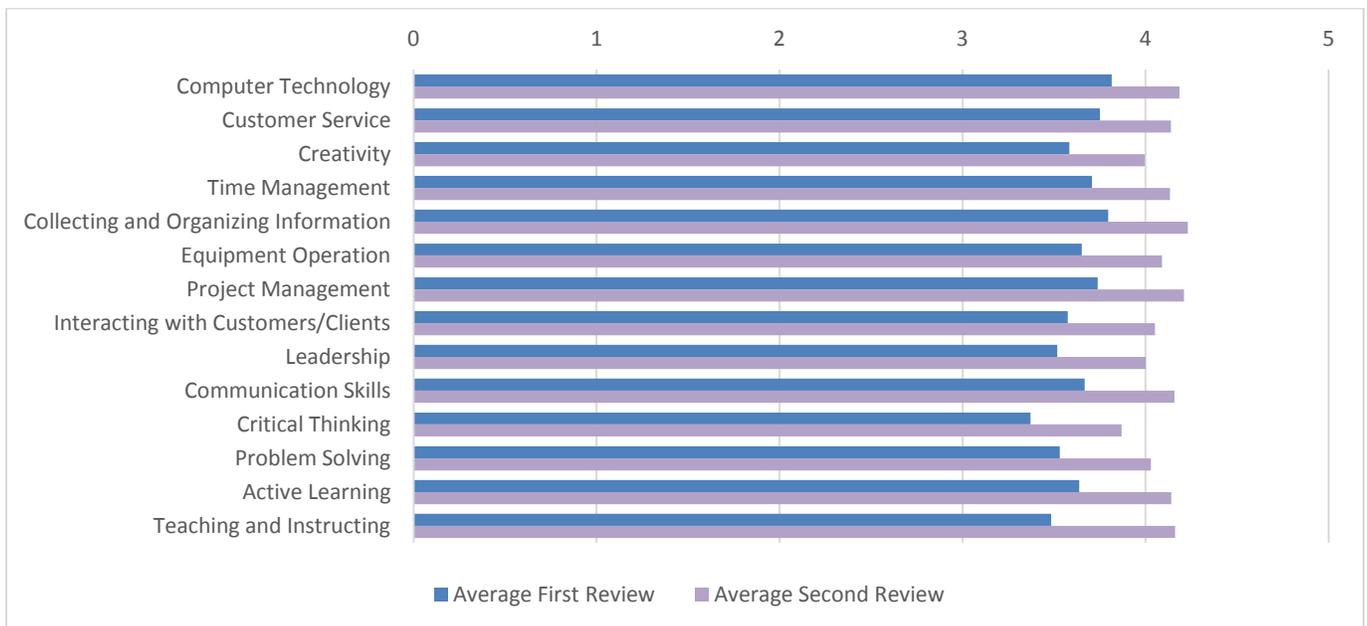
## Overview and Highlights FY16

reports generated from data collected through the plan offer compelling evidence of students improving their skills through these experiences. The two charts below present FY16 data about skill gain in the eight foundation skills, along with the most common technical and higher order skills addressed by the WBLP. [The “foundation” skills are sometimes referred to as transferrable or soft skills.]

### Work-Based Learning Plan, Skill Gain in Foundation Skills, July 2015 – June 2016



### Work-Based Learning Plan, Skill Gain in Common Workplace Skills, July 2015 – June 2016

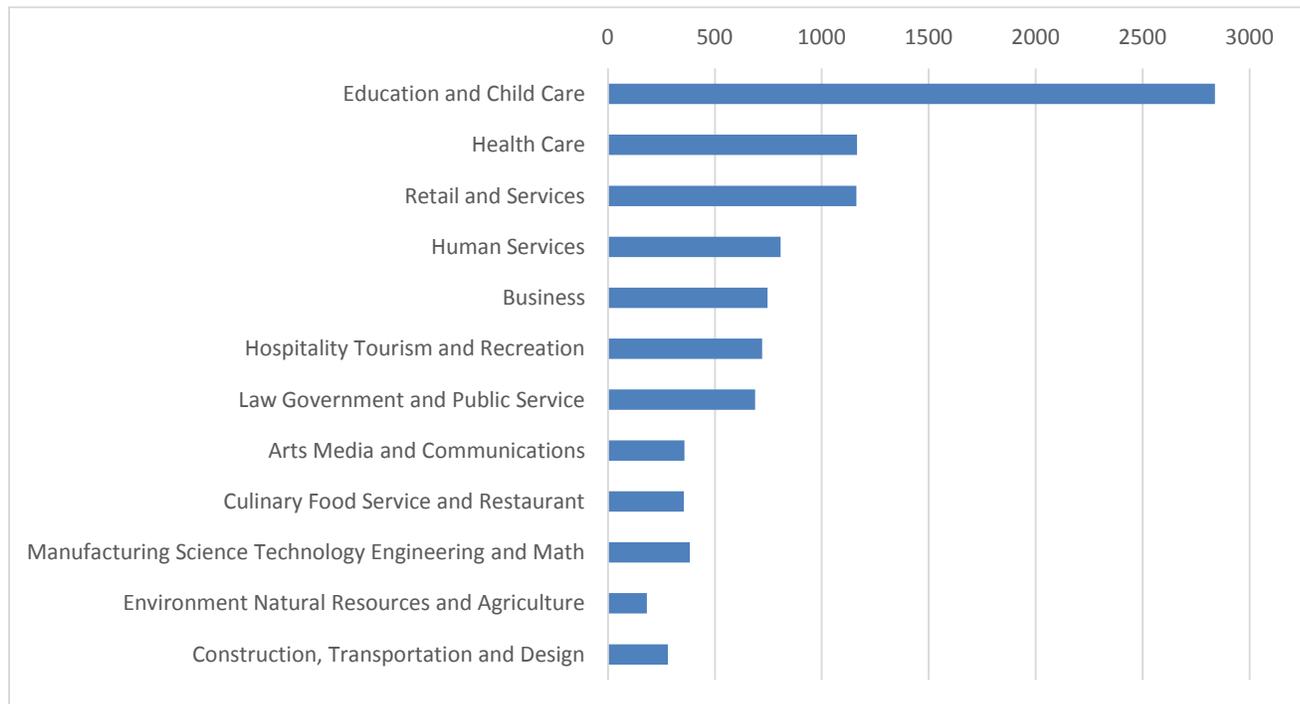


## Overview and Highlights FY16

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The following chart illustrates the diversity of industry sectors in which students have been placed. Already strong in the health care sector, CA aims for a substantial increase in other STEM placements in FY17, driven by the new campaign led by EOE, the STEM Council and CA.

### Student Placement by Industry, July 2015 – June 2016



To make effective use of the WBLP in all of these settings, CA staff members receive regular, ongoing professional development. Training is offered to all partners in the field, including employer partners, worksite supervisors and staff. ESE has produced a training video for new users of the WBLP, which can be viewed at the employer page of the CA website, [massconnecting.org/employers](http://massconnecting.org/employers).

The WBLP is used across the state in a multitude of settings, during and after-school, in the school year and in the summer. It is implemented in the full range of employer sites that are connected to the schools by CA intermediaries. It is also used in programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and YouthWorks, the state's subsidized employment program for eligible low income, at risk youth in about 30 cities, managed by Commonwealth Corporation. There is an on-line and a mobile website version, lending efficiency and capacity to the data collection and analysis effort.

Connecting Activities has managed a database of the detailed information generated by the MA WBLP for many years. It is accessed at the [www.massconnecting.org](http://www.massconnecting.org) site, where practitioners across the state log on to store the detailed information that underpins this initiative. Through this mechanism, ESE is able to document the practices for which CA is responsible, including the pre- and post-assessments of work experience that enables students' skill gain to be measured, as well as the amount of wages generated through the brokering work of the initiative.

## Regional Profiles

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Each of the state's sixteen WDB regions is actively involved in CA. All of the regions pursue a range of strategies that offer career development education and work-based learning opportunities to the students of their partner schools. All of the regions broker large numbers of placements at employer work sites, and document those placements in the Connecting Activities database. Additionally, all regions record the range of other career development education activities they lead in the CA database.

The regions have also developed effective ways to leverage the resources from CA funding in combination with other local resources, in order to offer youth in their region multiple opportunities to become both college and career ready. ESE is not prescriptive about the service delivery models to be used to achieve the expectations of the initiative, encouraging and supporting a range of approaches. The CA resource are deployed locally to pay for staff at WDBs, school districts, chambers, One Stop Career Centers, community colleges and community-based organizations. These staff support the student preparation and employer engagement needed for CA. The resources also cover some of the costs of services for students, most notably the ever-increasing cost of transportation of students for field trips and other events.

The remainder of this report presents *highlights* of each region's achievements and activities in FY16, to give a sense of the depth and breadth of the CA work across the state. These selections do not purport to represent all of the critical CA work being done by each region; instead they offer only a sample. Readers are encouraged to visit each WDB's website, included in their segment, for more information about their supports for youth and their CA work.

***A student is profiled for each region, and these stories bring the CA initiative to life. The internships and career exploration offered to these students by the region's CA initiatives have guided them to important life choices for post-secondary education and career. Their stories illustrate the power and potential of work-based learning experiences, enabled by Connecting Activities.***



## Regional Profiles

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### **Berkshire County Regional Employment Board**

For more information, visit [berkshirereb.org](http://berkshirereb.org)

The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. (BCREB) and its longstanding, partnering public school districts are pleased to report that 450 work-based learning experiences took place in FY16, provided by 222 regional employers. In addition, FY16 brought about a 20% increase in career awareness, exploration and immersion activities being provided to students throughout the region. These opportunities, through 110 different activities across all of the partner schools over the year, served a total of 2,101 students representing a nearly 22% increase in students served from FY15. These increases are a direct result of the expansion of the high school career readiness models, continued career readiness and academic integration, further development of college & career centers within the schools and the expansion of career readiness activities within the middle and elementary schools.

In FY16, the BCREB strengthened its partnership with the Berkshire Compact for Education, a countywide initiative driven by MA College of Liberal Arts dedicated to promoting a continuum of education in Berkshire County. With this strengthened collaboration comes the Compact's full support and prioritizing of Connecting Activities; the Compact will be supporting the BCREB's expansion work within the middle and elementary schools throughout the region in FY17.

These increases in career readiness exposure for our youth along with the Berkshire Compact's support, are a true testament to the entire region fully embracing the positive impact of the work-based learning experiences brokered by Connecting Activities, and its central function in delivering vital career readiness opportunities to our youth population. The BCREB will certainly have exciting news to report on this expansion work throughout FY17.

#### **Student Profile: Sutye**

Sutye participated in a STEM-based internship experience his senior year, working with Thomas Krens, founder of Mass MOCA and former director of the Guggenheim Museum. He assisted with the plans for the proposed Extreme Model Railroad and Contemporary Architecture Museum, to be located at Western Gateway Heritage State Park in North Adams. His performance was so impressive that, upon graduating from high school, Sutye was offered a permanent position there. He continues to work as an assistant engineer tasked with designing and building the many prototypes for this one-of-a-kind museum that is slated to be opened in 2018.



## Regional Profiles

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Sutye is currently in the process of applying to Berkshire Community College (BCC) to pursue a degree in Engineering. He hopes to also participate in BCC's STEM Starter Academy. His supervisors describe Sutye as "the best intern/employee they have – he is a great worker, dedicated and learns very quickly. He takes initiative to learn new things and has contributed a great deal to the productivity and efficiency of their assigned project."

Sutye is thoroughly enjoying his experience as he is aware how important and revered this museum will be to the entire Berkshire community.

**Districts:** Adams Cheshire; Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter School; Berkshire Hills; Central Berkshire; Lee; Lenox; Mount Greylock Regional; North Adams; Northern Berkshires Vocational Regional; Pittsfield; Southern Berkshire

### **Boston Private Industry Council**

*For more information, visit [bostonpic.org](http://bostonpic.org)*

In partnership with participating employers, the PIC provides Boston public high school students with unique access to professional and technical environments. Students develop skills such as communication, collaboration, time management, and critical thinking. The backbone of the PIC's connecting activities work are its well-trained career specialists and employer account managers. PIC career specialists work year round to identify, prepare, and match students from each of Boston's public high schools with paid work experiences in professional environments that they would not see otherwise. PIC employer account managers bring on new companies and assist with interview schedules, hiring processes, supervisor recruitment and training, and student evaluations.

For summer 2016, the PIC was able to identify 3,733 job opportunities for Boston public high school students, a 12% increase over the summer 2015. The PIC oversees the private sector component of the Mayor's Summer Job Campaign, and access to the employer-paid workplace is one of its primary objectives. This summer, 81.6% of the placements tracked by the PIC were employer-paid, employer supervised positions. Another 8.6% were placements sponsored by private corporations and foundations, bringing the total share of privately funded jobs to just over 90 percent. The remaining 9.8% of placements were at local nonprofits and community-based organizations (CBO) with wages subsidized by the state's YouthWorks program.

This year, Massachusetts General Hospital was the number one employer, hiring 168 BPS students. Brigham & Women's Hospital was close behind, hiring 160 students. Third overall, but leading the financial services sector, was State Street Corporation with 117 summer hires. All three of these employers are very committed to providing a summer experience for students that extends well beyond a typical summer job. Many companies now offer students enrichment opportunities, such as career panels, financial literacy trainings, college visits and professional etiquette workshops, as part of their summer job.

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Many employers use their summer program to help identify students for highly sought after school year internships. Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Santander, Citizen’s Bank, Liberty Mutual and the Federal Reserve Bank, have all created internship programs that allow highly productive summer students to continue working throughout the school year. In these cases, students continue to be paid through a centralized community relations/workforce development budget and work 8 – 12 hours per week in their departments. At other employer sites, including Harvard University, the Boathouse Group, and Tufts Medical Center, supervisors have been so pleased with their summer interns that in order to retain them throughout the school year, they have agreed to pay students directly out of the department budget.

### **Student Profile: Ely**

Ely Depina is a senior at the Dearborn STEM Academy. Ely’s first experience as a PIC intern was working for Boston NAACP as a community organizer during the summer of 2015. From his very first day on the job, Ely made an impression as an enthusiastic learner and an eager employee. His PIC career specialist, Valdir Lima, recognized that Ely had the drive necessary to compete for a private sector internship the following summer.



During the school year Ely took advantage of a mentoring opportunity offered by State Street Corporation. The program paired high school students with State Street employees for the school year, and offered monthly activities for mentors and mentees, including a Red Sox game, volunteer days and other networking opportunities. He also participated regularly in PIC work readiness workshops and prepared himself to visit State Street on Job Shadow Day.

Ely’s hard work paid off. He was accepted into Tech Apprentice, a selective internship program for tech-savvy students, and placed at State Street during summer 2016. Working for a worldwide financial services company was a big step for Ely, but he made sure to show up every day, bringing with him his strong work ethic and his infectious smile. He finished the summer as one of the top PIC interns at State Street.

Districts: Boston; Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter

### **Bristol Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [bristolwib.org](http://bristolwib.org)

Connecting Activities (CA) is known by the Bristol Workforce Investment Board area as the primary vehicle that drives all work-based learning programming in the region. Of the 20 public high

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schools, including 3 alternative and 2 collaborative schools within the Bristol WIB region, 12 are Connecting Activities' partners, and 5 are members. The student population in the 12 partner schools account for approximately 70% of the total high school population attending public schools in the Bristol area.

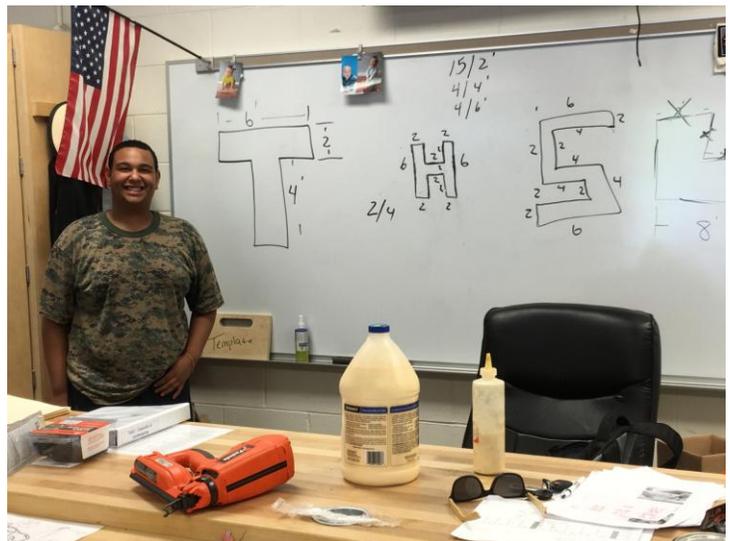
The Bristol WIB coordinates its Connecting Activities work primarily through three partnering organizations – the Fall River Career Center's Youth Connection, the Attleboro Area School to Career Partnership (AASCT), and the Taunton Area School to Career Partnership (TASC). In collaboration with local schools and businesses within the Bristol region, students are provided with comprehensive career awareness, exploration, and immersion experiences. Connecting Activities Career Specialists and School Program Administrators have solid relationships with the staff at each partnering school. Some partnering schools have dedicated staff to support Connecting Activities functions while others have provided space for CA staff. In some partner schools, most participants in the School to Career Program take part in a paid work experience (subsidized or private sector paid employment) and earn academic credit for their work experience and classroom instruction.

FY16 was a very successful year for the CA initiative in Bristol; most of the region's CA goals established for FY16 were met or exceeded. In FY16 over 7,000 students took part in career awareness and career exploration activities in which over 1,200 employers participated. Over 200 employers provided work opportunities to area teens and paid over \$800K in qualifying wage match or a 7.7:1 ratio. Through the efforts of the three partnerships, CA engaged over 500 students in career awareness/job readiness training, internship or job placement supported by a work-based learning plan, and work and learning experiences. Additionally, youth are able to connect with the one stop career centers, namely Youth Connections in Fall River and the Career Centers of Attleboro and Taunton, for career assessment, work readiness skills training, and job search assistance.

### **Student Profile: Josue**

Josue Ledesma is a freshman at Taunton High School. His family moved to Taunton in May 2015. Josue's first language is Spanish; his mother was born in the Dominican Republic.

Working with a Connecting Activities Career Specialist from Taunton Area School to Career (TASC), Josue was placed in the Carpentry work-study summer program last summer. Josue expressed a desire to build something that could be enjoyed by others once the summer was over. He proposed that the Carpentry students construct planter boxes with Taunton High School's initials, a project quickly approved by the teaching staff.



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With his teachers' support, he took a leadership role within the group. As the project manager for the group, Josue helped the team complete the full process of designing, diagramming, and creating three planter boxes. In addition to using math to calculate the required materials to construct the planters, Josue had to learn management skills, including leadership, communication, negotiation, influencing, problem-solving, and decision-making. Josue and his team completed the three planters, now in use at Taunton High School for staff, students and visitors to enjoy. Linda Cooperstein, one of the teachers, stated Josue took his job responsibilities seriously. "He really made you love going to work" stated Linda, adding that "He would come in everyday excited, smiling and ready for the next challenge."

Josue was awarded "Most Likely to Succeed" at the summer graduation ceremony for his positive attitude and strong work ethic. Josue plans to graduate from high school and move back to Michigan for his college degree. He hopes to play football for Michigan State University and would like to become either a historian or physical therapist. Josue appreciated the opportunity to work as a team member and improve his communication and interpersonal abilities, all skills he firmly believes are needed in order to be successful at any career.

Districts: Attleboro; Bristol County Agricultural; Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School; Dighton-Rehoboth; Fall River; Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical; North Attleboro; Norton; Seekonk; Swansea; Taunton; Westport

### **Brockton Area Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [www.bawib.org](http://www.bawib.org)

In FY16, the Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board's (BAWIB) Connecting Activities Partnership (CAP) brokered 406 internships with over 85 businesses in the Brockton Area in order to guide youth in college and career readiness. BAWIB has a longstanding relationship with the Metro South Chamber of Commerce which continues to assist BAWIB Staff and School Liaisons with business connections throughout the area. YouthWorks, which is the name for the region's Youth One-Stop Career Center (not to be confused with the state's youth employment program), is fully integrated with Connecting Activities programming. YouthWorks gives the partner schools and youth ages 14 - 24 in the Brockton Service Area instant access to the resources in the Center, which includes area job postings, the resource room computer lab and employer partners. The schools can also set up work readiness, life skills, career development and other career focused workshops for their students.

CAP also sustained the major programs/events that it has cultivated over many years. BAWIB hosted its second annual Employer Snowball Event on December 17, 2015 to expand employer participation with BAWIB programs. This event was a networking event that encouraged the BAWIB board, staff and the Connecting Activities Liaisons to bring one to two new business friends to gain awareness.

The 5th Annual STEM Career Exploration Event in collaboration with Bridgewater State University's Office of External Affairs was held on March 8th from 8 am to 1 pm. Over 50 high school students from Avon Middle High School, Brockton High School, Keith School and Southeastern Regional Vocational

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Technical High School came together and participated in a “speed networking” style setting discussing different STEM careers, opportunities, and ideas. The event also included a keynote about STEM education and research by Dr. Arthur Goldstein, Dean of Bridgewater State’s Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics.

The 19th Annual Brockton Area Connecting Activities Career Day, sponsored by BAWIB & supported by the Metro South Chamber of Commerce was held on April 5, 2016 at the Shaw’s Center in Brockton. The event provided about 300 students the opportunity to meet with 35 businesses and leaders about careers, job placement, skills training, and more! Students from Avon Middle-High School, Brockton Public Schools, Independence Academy, Southeastern Regional Technical Vocational High School, Stoughton High School, West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School, and Whitman-Hanson Regional Technical High School, joined together to ask questions and explore different career opportunities. The students were also encouraged to participate in dressing for success and showing their best business attire during this event to be entered into a raffle.

BAWIB’s Future Entrepreneurs Series Planning Team hosted their 6th Annual Youth Business Plan Competition presentation round on May 10, 2016. Contestants pitched their entrepreneurial ideas to a panel of four expert judges. The primary goal of this competition is to empower the entrepreneurial spirit among our region’s young population and encourage the development of feasible business ideas. The top four awardees were announced on May 11, 2016 at BAWIB’s Young Adult Initiatives Committee Meeting and awarded funds for startup materials.

BAWIB also continues to support a Teacher Externship Program for its school partners as part of its CA programming. This program was created to help teachers gain first-hand experience from local employers about workforce needs related to the classroom. Faculty develop curriculum for a workshop that ties the relationship between the externship and materials that is being taught in the classroom.

### **Student Profile: Tianna**

During her senior year, Tianna Spinola, a Business & Marketing student at Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School, participated in a cooperative work experience at Fernandes Insurance Co., a local insurance company, after being recommended for the position by her teacher. In that position she was responsible for processing payments and developing quotes for customers. Tianna was also responsible for creating, rewriting, and endorsing insurance policies.



In describing the position, Tianna reflected that “it is a pleasure meeting new people, and being able to help the customer when it comes to insuring their vehicle and getting them the best rates possible that would suit them mentally and financially. The most interesting aspect of my job is being able to know

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how to insure a car, and what affects a person's rate, and why they pay the amount for coverage. There are many factors that influence the price of policy and the potential risk to insure a driver. I've learned that your reputation goes a long way. It is true in general and especially when running a local business."

Tianna continues to be employed at Fernandes Insurance while also attending Bridgewater State University where she is majoring in Economics and Accounting.

Districts: Avon; Brockton; North River Collaborative; Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical; Whitman Hanson

### **The Cape and Islands Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [ciwib.org](http://ciwib.org)

The Cape & Islands Workforce Investment Board (CIWIB) serves a wide seaside geographic area that is comprised of many diverse school districts. The CIWIB has developed and cultivated strong collaborative partnerships with each of these school districts, which include two vocational schools. This approach has been exceedingly advantageous in gaining support from school administrators, principals, and program staff.

In October 2015, in partnership with the Home Builders Association of Cape Cod, CIWIB launched the first Residential Construction Career Day (RCCD). The event was held at the Cape Cod Fairgrounds in Falmouth and was open to all Cape Cod juniors and seniors. RCCD provided students with an overview of multiple careers within the construction field and related industries, as well as employment opportunities on Cape Cod. Students were also provided with opportunities for job shadow, internships, and information interviews. This inaugural event brought together 200 students and upwards of 40 exhibitors and community partners.

In FY16 CIWIB and its school partners engaged in a number of career development education initiatives. These activities included job shadow opportunities, mock interview sessions, classroom presentations, career and job fairs. During FY16, the Director of Youth Services at CIWIB also co-facilitated a year-long class at Bourne High School which focused on career readiness and awareness for a group of students who were credit deficient. During this new class, students were exposed to resume and interview skills, career awareness, and MassCIS. The year culminated with all students completing a project based upon their choice of career.

Credit for Life, which is a collaboration between Cape Cod Five Bank and the region's partner schools, is a financial literacy fair, teaching students to make well informed financial decisions about saving, spending, and budgeting. The fair is an interactive way for students to get a realistic view of issues such as student debt, employment, mortgage lenders, insurance costs, as well as cell phone service plans, cable, and transportation costs. Credit for Life fair is delivered to seniors on the Cape and Islands. All of the School to Career partner schools participate in this event.

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The ArtWorks Program is a program that is unique to Cape Cod and one which continues to be a strong part of the Connecting Activities initiative. The ArtWorks program links juniors and seniors with mentors to explore their chosen artistic discipline, while learning more about the creative economy on Cape Cod from viewpoint of an artist. As it enters its 20<sup>th</sup> year, CIWIB sees it continuing to evolve. One of the biggest changes incorporated during FY16 was partnering with Cape Cod Community College to host the ArtWorks Exhibit onsite at its Tilden Art Gallery.

### **Student Profile: Chris**

Chris Gardiner is a 2016 graduate of Barnstable High School who has known since his middle school years that he wanted to be a firefighter. In the spring of his junior year, Chris applied for the Senior Internship program at Barnstable High School. It was clear that he was motivated and eager to learn about the firefighting career. Erin Eastman, Career Readiness Counselor there, helped Chris pursue an internship at Hyannis Fire, the busiest fire station in the area.

Chris interviewed and was offered the internship position. Interns at this station have an authentic hands-on experience. Chris was able to participate in calls throughout the year, riding in the ambulance and on the fire truck. His most memorable experience came when he did an overnight at the station during a major snow storm. The extra time spent at the station on a regular basis sent the message to the firefighters that Chris was truly committed. In turn, they helped to support him in his educational and employment pursuits. Chris says his internship “reassured me that this is the career for me.” From the get-go, Chris demonstrated initiative, a willingness to learn, and enthusiasm for the career.



With a desire to jumpstart his career, Chris enrolled in the EMT course at Cape Cod Community College (CCCC) in the fall of his senior year. He completed the practical in January 2016 and passed the written portion in October 2016. He is currently studying Fire Science at CCCC and working full time for Cape Cod Ambulance as an EMT. He plans to continue studying at CCCC in the paramedic program. Ultimately, he would like to return to Hyannis Fire as a full time firefighter amongst a “good group of guys who supported me.” Chris is very grateful for the learning and support he received at Hyannis Fire.

Districts: Barnstable; Bourne; Cape Cod Regional Technical High School; Dennis-Yarmouth; Falmouth; Martha’s Vineyard; Mashpee; Monomoy Regional; Nantucket; Southeast Alternative School; Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School

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### Central Massachusetts Workforce Development Board

For more information, visit [cmwib.org](http://cmwib.org)

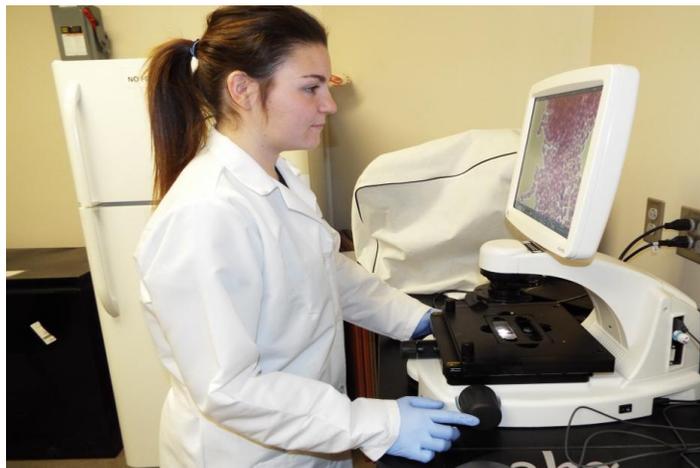
The Central MA Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) serves the City of Worcester and thirty-seven communities in Central Massachusetts. CMWIB is focused on the design and performance of an integrated system that prepares youth for successful employment. The Board's Connecting Activities collaborating partners are the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) and the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation (BVEF).

The Connecting Activities partners have established career fairs, career awareness events, and education events at participating schools in an effort to increase employer/student connections. This past fall WPS established Career Clubs in 7 high schools geared towards career awareness and exploration. Through the Career Clubs, advisors work with students to identify areas of exploration to increase their understanding of career pathways. The advisors guide students through the use of the MassCIS website designed to provide occupational and educational information, arrange guest speakers, and coordinate field trips to local community-based organizations and businesses.

The BVEF, with support from the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, has established a STEM internship program for participating Connecting Activities schools. Two CEOs from partner manufacturers have given an early commitment to identify possible student interns for FY17, arrange visits to the business for the students and support the administration of Levels 1 and 2 of the MACWIC curriculum, enabling students to earn important credentials in the advanced manufacturing sector.

#### Student Profile: Chloe

Chloe Dimarzio is a senior at Worcester Technical High School in the biotechnology trade. This past summer, she had an internship at UMASS Medical School in the Biotech 2 lab with Dr. Michael Czech. Lucky for Chloe, she is able to continue as an intern during the school year. Chloe helps them with their research. She assists in various experiments and records the results. Most of the research centers on diabetes. Using mice and mice tissue, Chloe has performed Western blots, loaded gels, ran them, and worked on RNA analysis.



When asked about what she has learned about the workplace, Chloe said, "I never used to like going into new situations, but Dr. Czech and Dave treated me like a colleague and made me comfortable in the setting. It gave me confidence to do the work, be presented with a problem and do the research working towards a conclusion. It gave me a good understanding of what it's going to be like when I have a full time job after college, which is really helpful."

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At the beginning of high school, Chloe knew she wanted to explore a STEM related career and felt the biotechnology area would benefit her the most in the long-run. Chloe plans to go to college to become a forensic psychologist.

Districts: Abby Kelley Foster Charter; Blackstone Valley Regional Technical High School; Blackstone-Millville; Douglas; Dudley-Charlton; Grafton; Hopedale; Leicester; Mendon-Upton; Milford; Millbury; Northbridge; Nipmuc; Quaboag Regional; Sutton; Uxbridge; Wachusett; Webster; Worcester

### Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board

For more information, visit [franklinhampshirereb.org](http://franklinhampshirereb.org)

The Franklin Hampshire Connecting Activities program serves the largest geographic workforce area in Massachusetts. Oversight and administration of the program is primarily operated out of the Franklin Hampshire REB office in Greenfield, which is located within the One Stop Career Center. Two coordinators cover the region, one serving schools in Franklin County and North Quabbin, and another in Hampshire County. The Hampshire County coordinator is based at Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) in Northampton.

In FY16 the region continued to build on partnerships within its communities to provide services that enhance our School to Career work. It collaborated with the Hampden County region to develop a Life Sciences Career Fair, which took place at UMass Amherst thanks to support from the Massachusetts Bio Education Council. The Franklin County coordinator worked with Greenfield Community College to facilitate their annual "Reality Fair," a financial literacy event that was attended by 327 students from seven high schools and engaged 61 community volunteers. Going forward, background labor market information for Franklin County students attending that event will be gathered by Connecting Activities staff. The Franklin coordinator also provided after school and summer job support to youth at two low-income housing complexes in Greenfield.



Other promising practices include the creation of a Valley Leaders group (Amherst) and a collaboration with local artists (Easthampton). The Hampshire County Coordinator teamed with Easthampton staff including the graphics instructor to formulate a plan for business outreach to area graphic artists. The artists engaged as mentors and career speakers to Easthampton High students, with the intention that internships, job shadows, studio visits, or jobs will result from the connection.

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The Hampshire County coordinator also worked with an Amherst High School staff member to plan a career speaker day, recruiting area employers to participate. The Hampshire Coordinator met with the Valley Leaders business advisor group to take the next steps in working with Amherst High School to deepen and expand their career development education offerings. The long-term goal is to connect the Valley Leaders group to Hampshire County School To Career as county-wide supporter in business advising and recruiting.

### **Student Profile: Sarah**

Sarah is an Easthampton High School senior with a work-based learning placement with CT Biological. There, she has learned how to handle an essential aspect of bio-medical research, namely embalming pigeons, rats and mice for lab analysis. She has learned to prepare these animals for the process of euthanasia using standard lab equipment. The first time she euthanized pigeons she was startled and upset, but she gained perspective and has mastered the job. Wearing a lab coat with her name on it and a surgical mask at work, Sarah had the same uniform as her adult colleagues and felt a part of the team. Seven months into this powerful experience, she has developed some of the core lab skills needed to approach her task as a scientist. All the animals that she prepares are sent to labs throughout the country for wide-ranging medical research. She knows her work is making a contribution to advances in health care.

In the fall, Sarah will attend Simmons College with a Pre- Med major. Her lab coat with her name on it along with so much learning and practical applications, lab behavior, and professional experiences (she can also stick a good needle) will be going to college with her.

Districts: Amherst-Pelham; Athol-Royalston; Easthampton; Franklin County Regional Vocational Technical High School; Frontier Regional; Gill-Montague; Greenfield; Hadley; Hampshire Regional; Hatfield; Massachusetts Virtual Academy; Mohawk Trail Regional High School; Northampton, Pioneer Valley Regional; Ralph Mahar Regional High School; South Hadley; Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School

### **Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [glwib.org](http://glwib.org)

A particular highlight in FY16 in Greater Lowell for its Connecting Activities work was the increase in financial literacy offerings for students, and the related collaboration with the FDIC and local banking and credit union institutions. Through workshops and bank fairs, the youth were able to learn the differences between a bank and credit union and the benefits of both. Being introduced to financial representatives, the youth became comfortable talking with them about opening accounts and asking about the services they offer. This experience for them is hoped to be the start of a strong financial relationship with the youth and the financial institution that they chose. It also seemed to spark many young people's interest in the financial industry because they were able to talk and ask questions about what the representatives did in their jobs as well. The more

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positive and realistic exposure the youth have to the financial world, the more apt they are to see the importance and impact it can have on their future, whether it be personal financial stability or a career in that field.

In general, the WDB sustained its supports for its partner high schools, especially the Lowell High School Career Academy, an exciting setting for students who have not been well-served in traditional high schools.

As in prior years, the CA staff also supported the roll-out of Lowell's summer YouthWorks program. All of the youth that were enrolled in the Summer Youth Program had direct deposit of their weekly paychecks to the institutions of their choosing.

### **Student Profile: Destany**

Destany Medina is a student at the Lowell High School Career Academy, which is a full service community school. CA Staff first met Destany while providing work readiness sessions there, including resume writing, application assistance, and interview techniques. Participating students were required to attend all of the workshops, fill out a four page application, and get parents' signatures and other documents, to prepare for possible employment. Destany got a lot of support from CA staff; they encouraged her to fill out the application for the summer program and to attend the Annual Job Fair at Lowell High School. Destany never missed a Friday workshop, always actively participated and encouraged the other students to do the same.

In May, Destany attended the Annual Youth Job Fair and was promptly hired by Heritage Ice Cream/Restaurant. A few weeks later she was also selected to work for the Summer Youth Program at the Career Center of Lowell. She was thrilled to have two jobs and start saving money.



Mill City Grows, a local food project, came to the WDB with the idea of the "J-Squad," a food justice squad with four young people from the summer work experience program. Destany was chosen to join that team. During the summer, she rotated through its different projects: the large farm, urban farming, mobile market and community education. The "J-Squad" also researched local consumer preferences relating to fresh produce, found that there was resistance to the healthier options, and turned their results into a marketing campaign for Mill City Grows to promote the use of freshly picked foods.

Upon the completion of their time at Mill City Grows the "J-Squad" hosted an event at the large Mill City Grows Farm which included a tour and taste test of foods each young person created from fresh food off the farm. Destany was a strong performer, receiving glowing comments on both

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reviews on her WBLP, e.g. “Destany is one of our emerging leaders of J-Squad, we can’t imagine days without her” and she is “the uplifting spirit and motivator of the group.”

Districts: Dracut; Greater Lowell Regional Technical High School; Lowell; Tewksbury; Westford

### **Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [gnbwib.org](http://gnbwib.org)

The Greater New Bedford Connecting Activities Partnership (GNBCAP) has support from district superintendents, high school principals, school staff, community organizations, and area employers, allowing the region to succeed with its college and career readiness initiatives. Leveraging related funding from the Workforce Development Board, New Directions Southcoast, Inc., community grants, and partner schools allows CA staff to provide many students with a wide range of career development education opportunities. The unique partnership between the Workforce Development Board, Mayor’s Office, Bristol Community College (BCC) and the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce allows staff to work collaboratively for all program outcomes.

Our region’s proven success in providing Career Immersion activities to our partner schools, centered on internship classes, resume writing, and job readiness/preparation, is the pillar of the GNBCAP. BCC staff also collaborated with New Directions Southcoast, Inc., and with area businesses to provide Work-Based Learning experiences for our area students and youth. The GNBCAP had a total of 477 participants at 152 employer sites with 459 Work-Based Learning Plans in FY16. The growth in student skill level was apparent, as the overall average skill gain of 0.53; the most frequently utilized Work-Place and Career Specific skills are Active Learning, Collecting and Organizing Information and Classroom Management.

In FY16, the GNBCAP staff succeeded with the implementation of career awareness and exploration activities for middle and high school students, including a career fair at Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School (which linked 12 employers with over 250 students). The GNBCAP also partnered with Junior Achievement of Southern MA, Inc. to co-sponsor the first annual "Career Academy Fair" for New Bedford High School freshman. The purpose of the event was to help assimilate ninth graders at the high school into the National Academy Foundation (NAF) career academy. Over 45 local employers participated in the event. Prior to the event, dozens of Junior Achievement community volunteers, including CA staff, conducted workshops in order to prepare students through lessons on career clusters, job interviewing and resume writing.

The GNBCAP has continued to play an important role this year in aligning with New Bedford High School’s National Academy Foundation, sitting on the board of the Education & Industry Coordinating Council (EICC) and serving as advisors to both the Engineering and Finance committees. CA staff also designed and implemented paid internships for rising seniors. Of note, the Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Meeting and presented an Education Leadership Award to New Bedford Festival Theatre for outstanding support for area education initiatives.

**Student Profile: Danielle**

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Danielle Guimont, a student at New Bedford High School, interned at the New Bedford Festival Theatre, which proved to be a perfect opportunity to learn about the production office and how it plays an integral part in the operation of a theater. Acting as a stage manager apprentice, her tasks included casting calls, membership data collection, and preparing collages of photos and graphics for grant funding opportunities, as well as offering technical assistance backstage during the shows.

The internship "helped me to develop my professionalism, prioritize responsibilities, time management, and I enjoy being behind the scenes at shows," said Danielle. She recommends workplace internships to all, since they teach skills to students that will hold true and valuable in their future careers. Regardless of whether or not the placement was their desired placement, all students can benefit from learning transferable skills for their future, helping them become college and career ready.



She is currently working at the Festival Theatre under the direction of George Charbonneau and Armand Marchand, who were the recipients of the Education Leadership Award for their years of commitment to hosting interns. Danielle is also pursuing her Associates degree at Bristol Community College and is enrolled in the Arts MA Transfer Program for the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Theater and Fine Arts Bachelor's Degree.

Districts: Dartmouth; Fairhaven; New Bedford; Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical; Old Rochester; Wareham

### **Hampden County Regional Employment Board**

For more information, visit [rebhc.org](http://rebhc.org)

The Hampden REB continues to structure its Connecting Activities efforts through partnerships with the area's large urban districts, and through regional School to Career Partnerships. Some of the highlights of the Hampden REB's performance in FY16 included enhanced employer engagement, increasing the number of CA network partners, developing a better understanding of career pathways, and training staff to connecting with millennials.

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In August, partners attended a REB-sponsored workshop on Social Media and Employer Engagement, headlined by national speaker Eric Rowles. As a result of that workshop, Mr. Rowles was brought back to present at RiverEast School to Career NetEvent in the fall with over a 100 people including employers, school superintendents, youth providers and young people.

During the month of November, over 150 students from Hampden and Franklin and Hampshire counties attended a career fair focused on the life sciences. The fair was held at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The event was a huge success. Following the event, students commented that they realized that science fields include interesting career paths, such as biotechnology.

During a March REB Board of Directors meeting, Christine Abramowitz presented an overview of the CA framework as developed by ESE for Connecting Activities programming, showing the linkages between CA and other youth programs the REB either funds or is a partner in; specifically WIOA Youth, YouthWorks, Career Pathway pilots and various private sector internship programs. Christine noted some key connections; e.g., YouthWorks and WIOA subsidize work experience placements in regional pathway pilots and in some private sector internships.

The Hampden REB aspires to continual improvement of its CA initiative. On the horizon for FY17 is the creation of training materials for new Career Facilitators in order to quickly acclimate them with CA data reporting requirements. A goal is to ensure the thoroughness and quality of data reporting, to be able to capture all of the important career preparation work the region supports.

### **Student Profile: George**

George Anderson, 17, is a student at Commerce High School and participates in the School to Career (STC) Connecting Activities program. Through STC, he landed an internship at New England Public Radio Lab Media. This internship supported his career goals and allowed George to learn in a real-world environment. “My internship at NEPR was a very valuable experience. I learned a lot about myself as well as about the audio broadcast industry. I have always been interested in this industry and really value the first-hand experience I was able to gain during my internship. Having this opportunity allowed me to meet people in the industry and make connections into a potential career opportunity.”

George is highly involved in his community. When he isn't in school, he volunteers his time. He works at an open mic on Wednesday nights at International Biergarten on Main Street, where Springfield residents express themselves through art forms such as rapping, singing, reading poetry, and doing stand-up. He believes it is important for people to have a space to express themselves. “It showcases that Springfield has a lot of talent,” he said.



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On the radio, he likes to talk about topics like inner city art and artists, music, events around the world, and people who share a similar life experience to him. He has plans to go to college and eventually become a public speaker. "I just want to be in front of a screen, make sure everybody knows my name," he said.

Districts: Agawam; Belchertown; Chicopee; Gateway Regional; Hampden-Wilbraham; Holyoke; Lower Pioneer Valley Career Technical Education Center; Ludlow; Monson; Palmer; Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School; Southwick-Tolland; Springfield; Ware; West Springfield; Westfield

### **Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [mvwib.org](http://mvwib.org)

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) Connecting Activities service delivery model is designed to support core career preparation elements that ensure college and career readiness for Merrimack Valley youth. The CA staff deliver Connecting Activities (CA) services through close partnership with the ValleyWorks Career Center (VWCC), partner schools, educational programs and employers. The CA Student Career Specialist co-locates at the Career Center and partner schools, maximizing her ability to connect youth with VWCC's youth programming and other community resources. CA staff recruit participants and coordinate career development activities in collaboration with school administrators, guidance and other staff. The MVWIB will continue to foster employer-student relationships that lead to work and post-secondary education opportunities.

#### **Student Profile: Yulainy**



Yulainy was a High Honor Roll student from the Health and Human Service High School in Lawrence Massachusetts. She graduated in 2016. During her high school years, Yulainy was an engaged student determined to obtain valuable experiences and life skills. She volunteered at the local food pantry, elderly care services and other school-to-community outreach, and was an active student leader at her school.

She reached out to the Connecting Activities staff during the spring of 2016 after she learned about a job shadow opportunity sponsored by CA from her guidance counselor. Yulainy was eager to learn about careers in Business Administration and Sales, and was matched to shadow at the corporate offices of Solectria Renewables, LLC in Lawrence. There she learned the importance of understanding one's role within a company and how it affects other jobs and departments.

Also through Connecting Activities she was able to apply for a career immersion opportunity and was selected to work at Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, a

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community organization where she put her humanitarian and leadership skills to work on behalf of local children. Yulainy shares that she enjoyed the summer job because she learned how to become a worker and understand workplace expectations. Among other things, she realized that all the skills learned through both the summer experience, and the job shadow day have direct connection with her future career decisions. When asked about what skills she is referring to, she responded: “Be on time, love what you do and work in a team.”

As a young immigrant student, she faced and overcame challenges in learning how to adapt to a new education system, and to develop the necessary language skills to succeed academically. Yulainy Diaz remains motivated to move forward, and the CA staff is proud to have connected her with these opportunities.

Districts: Greater Lawrence Technical High School; Haverhill; Lawrence; Methuen; Newburyport

### **Metro North Regional Employment Board**

For more information, visit [mnreb.org](http://mnreb.org)

The Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB) serves a large region with twenty cities and towns. It has forged particularly strong partnerships with the school districts of its larger urban areas: Somerville, Woburn, Chelsea, Revere, and Malden. In FY16 the Metro North Connecting Activities program served 135 youth with work based learning experiences. To efficiently offer career development services to students, the REB contracts with The Career Place (TCP), one of its one-stop career centers, to provide direct service to students. TCP staff work with job coaches in five schools to help increase employability skills for students and place them in jobs and internships. Through referrals and office hours, TCP staff were able to meet with many students eager to gain employment. TCP staff and job coaches built collaborative relationships so that the Connecting Activities initiative was differentiated by each school’s needs.

In FY16 for the first time, students from Chelsea High School attended the Children’s Hospital SCOOP Medical information session and tour, along with students from Malden, Revere, Somerville and Woburn High School. Successful annual career fairs were hosted at Malden and Somerville High School, and Revere activities included working with the alternative school at Coast Collaborative by providing one-on-one sessions for the full range of workforce readiness services. At Woburn High School an evening interview preparation workshop, a hiring event, and an industry panel discussion which attracted 100 students were held. The career center staff are an integral part of the planning and implementation teams on all these initiatives.

As an aspect of the REB’s Connecting Activities work, the REB staff also pays close attention to important related programs and initiatives that are ongoing in their partnering districts, and collaborate with those when appropriate. The Metro North REB has also been very active in support of STEM initiatives, in light of the strong presence of STEM-related employers in the region, bringing STEM career awareness opportunities to students of its partner districts. The Metro North Connecting Activities program will continue to provide work readiness training and employment

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opportunities to students. These employment experiences start the participating students on a lifetime of employment, since it is well-understood in the region that students must get their foot in the door to be able to start to build a career record. The partnership with the high schools and the career center created through CA has often expanded beyond the program to support both the youth and their families.

### **Student Profile: Max**

Woburn High School senior Max Marshall was hired as an Instructor at Zaniac Learning in Winchester last spring through the CA Program. Instructors like Max teach STEM related curriculum to students in grades K-8 in a fun and engaging environment. According to Zaniac Learning Co-Owner, Katie Comtois, Max has proven to be a strong role model to the younger students and really keeps them engaged.

Katie also mentioned that Max grasped their “Tinkering” curriculum extremely well. “Tinkering” as defined on the Zaniac Learning website is “a powerful way to inspire interest in the many applications of real-world technology.” Students learn by working through electrical engineering projects that use accessible cutting-edge hardware while gaining valuable 21st Century skills. Zaniac’s engaging instructors focus on learning through hands-on prototyping, putting the power of electronics in the hands of every student, and making everyone an inventor. Max was one of several students placed at Zaniac Learning as an Instructor via the Connecting Activities Program in the past two years. Instructors earn \$12/hour during training and following that receive an increase to \$15/hour.



Districts: Chelsea; Everett; Malden; Medford; Revere; Somerville; Woburn

### **North Central Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [ncmwib.org](http://ncmwib.org)

The main focus of the North Central Workforce Development Board is to work with its partner schools to insure that the internship programs of the schools provide a meaningful look into various career choices. Many students find that what they thought would be an ideal career is not quite what they expected. This is just as important as finding a great career match.

The North Central WDB is now in its fourteenth year working with Tyco and Simplex/Grinnell implementing the Women in Technology (WIT) program. There were twenty-two students from six area high schools who participated in seven real world projects at the company in FY16. They met one day a week every other week throughout the school year. The projects are led by Tyco and Simplex employees. The projects run the gamut of what the students might experience in the business world. Some of the projects this year included CAD, network connectivity and communications. The young women in the program are offered the opportunity to experience

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working in a large corporation, as well as developing team building skills, and enhancing their communication skills and time management. In the process, they gain an understanding of career opportunities in non-traditional careers.

Overall, the region had another very successful year with over seven hundred placements. The Goodrich Academy and Narragansett Regional High School continue to be our leaders in their involvement in Connecting Activities. Goodrich Academy, an alternative high school that is committed to placing all of its students in meaningful work experiences, has developed a class schedule to accommodate students to be able to take advantage of all work experiences. Narragansett Regional High School is committed to providing meaningful work experiences for its students as well. Because of its location, many Narragansett students have to travel outside of their community to find work sites but this has not been a barrier.

### **Student Profile: Lauren**

Lauren is a member of the Class of 2018 at Oakmont Regional High School. Lauren is an exceptional student and role model, with a high class rank and strong GPA. She received the Spartan Scholar recognition award for receiving higher than a 3.7 GPA and has been on the honor roll all three years. Active in a wide range of student activities, she also had the opportunity to join the Women in Technology program.

According to Lauren, the WIT program has been one of the best experiences she could have chosen. The projects that she worked on there have given her insight into the job of a CAD technician. In her words:



“I chose to do Women in Technology because I thought it would be a great way to learn new skills that I could utilize in my transition to college, and later when I become a working professional. WIT has allowed me to get the perspective of a corporate environment, and to work in teams to utilize what we have learned to achieve a common goal . . . I have grown from this experience because I have become familiar with new software, and I have acclimated to working in the professional environment of a workplace. This experience has helped me make the decision of going into the field of engineering when I'm older, and has given me new knowledge that will be beneficial in the future.”

Districts: Ashburnam-Westminster; Fitchburg; Gardner; Groton-Dunstable; Leominster; Lunenburg; Montachusett Regional Vocational School; Narragansett Regional High School; Nashoba; Quabbin Regional High School; Ralph Mahar Regional

### **North Shore Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [northshorewib.com](http://northshorewib.com)

FY16 was a strong year for the North Shore WDB. Its staff assisted 549 youth to gain employment. This represents an increase of 108 youth from 2015, without additional staff or resources. This year, the region put more emphasis on building relationships with employers, and increased its employer base from 107 in 2015 to 127 in 2016. The CA staff continued work with its partner schools: Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, Fecteau-Leary Junior/Senior High School, Salem High School, New Liberty Charter School, and Peabody Learning Academy. In addition, it provided workshops, job search assistance and general work readiness to its 14 member schools.

The CA staff assisted in 8 different career days/career fairs and organized field trips to four different STEM companies on the North Shore. Members of the WDB Board and partner organizations representing the region's critical industries spoke at a Career Speaker Presentation at Eastern Bank for 45 youth from Lynn Vocational Technical Institute. Employer speakers represented Financial Services, Manufacturing, Construction, Health Care, and IT.

In FY16 the region began a long-planned internship for female students interested in engineering. Six female students from 3 different schools completed a year long internship at Medtronic, an international medical device company specializing in plastics engineering and the development of cardiac catheters. Medtronic hired 9 female interns for the 2016-17 school year as well.<sup>6</sup>

Its Amp it Up program, a professional development opportunity for teachers in STEM to visit manufacturing/STEM companies, had another successful year. This program is designed to improve math and science instruction by providing an opportunity for teachers to see the work being done at the companies, and create lesson plans based on their experience. This year, seven teachers completed lesson plans based on their externships. Business partners included Applied Materials, Cell Signaling, General Electric, Microline Surgical, and Medtronic. The region followed up with a teacher who visited Medtronic a year prior who not only had used his lesson plan successfully in the classroom, but also had demonstrated his lesson with the Medtronic engineers. In addition, this teacher signed on to complete another externship at Microline Surgical.

The summer jobs program was another success, with the region's 11th year of "F1rstjobs." In FY16, its staff placed 598 youth in subsidized and private sector jobs. Partners Health Care, our strongest private sector employer for F1rstjobs, played an especially valuable role as they hired 22 young people who have never held a job before, setting them on the path to future success.

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<sup>6</sup> This exciting development is a reflection of the power of the CA network, since this program was inspired by the Women in Technology program that CA has supported for years in the North Central region, discussed in its profile.

## Regional Profiles

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### **Student Profile: Abitalib**

Abitalib Girdia has worked with the Connecting Activities staff at the North Shore Youth Career Center for a little over a year. He came to the US from Libya in 2013, and set his sights on college right away. Learning a new language and adapting to a new country were huge challenges that Abitalib took in great stride, graduating from Lynn Classical High School in June 2016 with a 3.1 GPA, despite being in the United States only 3 years. Additionally, he was honored as the MVP for the high school soccer team.



He continuously worked with the CA staff, preparing for interviews and developing his resume, and was hired by Lynn Economic Opportunity. The staff there found that Abi "had such a positive energy, and always smiled. He was such a team player, and willing to learn and take on new initiatives." His efforts, with the supports he found in the community, have paid off for him. Abitalib is enrolled to begin college at Salem State University next semester.

Districts: Beverly; Danvers; Gloucester; Lynn; Marblehead; New Liberty Charter School; Peabody; Salem

### **Partnership for a Skilled Workforce ("PSW")**

For more information, visit [pswinc.org](http://pswinc.org)

In the Metro South/West region, PSW Youth Careers staff were busy in FY16 with their five partner schools: Bellingham, Framingham, Marlborough, Norwood and Waltham. This was another challenging year as the region was collaborating with new administrations in all schools except Waltham. Amidst these challenges, PSW exceeded its annual goals, brokered jobs and internships for 441 students, and provided 1,467 students with career activities. The focus for FY16 was two-fold: Engaging new school administrations to understand the value of incorporating work and learning opportunities for students, and employer outreach.

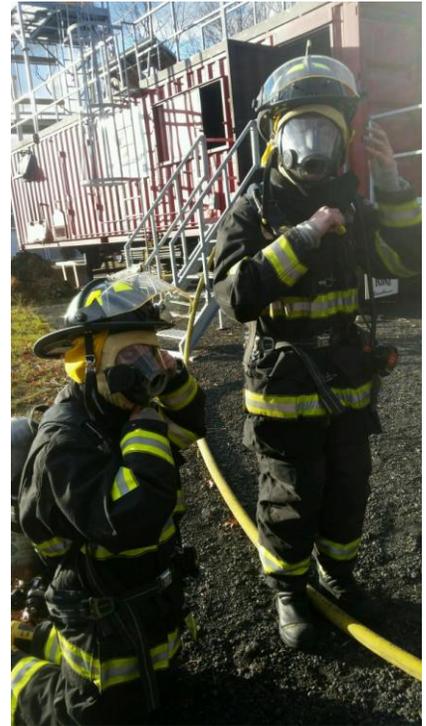
Framingham High School is a good example of engaging new school administrators. The school was in the middle of finalizing a strategic plan to create a K-12 career development plan to be implemented over the next several years. School leaders were also working with the local community college, Mass Bay, to offer limited dual enrollment for FY17. As the Framingham Public Schools revamped how they offer career development, PSW lent its expertise and support to focus on work experience.

## Regional Profiles

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PSW worked with Framingham to pilot a new internship program that enables students to learn how to research and find their own summer internships. This process began in the winter; students were supported through workshops and individual support. Fifteen of the 20 students in the pilot successfully found and completed internships during the summer. There were good lessons learned in this pilot. Teaching students to find their own internships with PSW guidance and support will help the WDB increase the number of internships in the future. It will also broaden the base of community partners by including student and parent networks, at the same time giving students lifelong tools for career growth. PSW now plans to expand this approach to Marlborough High School in FY17.

At Bellingham High School, the focus was creating a senior project class that included possible internships. The career specialist worked with the teacher to provide students with job readiness skills and help them research internships. The most exciting internships were created with the Bellingham fire and police departments. Students interned for the semester and full year.



Generally, PSW Youth Careers continues to work with its partner schools to identify their priorities for career development and help to align them with both the mission of PSW and ESE. The program's success relies on keeping the schools and employers engaged and inspired in a meaningful way with leadership, measurable goals and strong communication.

### **Student Profile: Dylan**

Dylan, a senior at Bellingham High, used his Senior Project to pursue a career interest he had nurtured for awhile. He hoped the career specialist could help him find an internship in fire science. The career specialist and the deputy fire chief sat down together and wrote a ten-week internship plan. The manual they developed enables interns to explore each position at the fire department and really learn about all the different functions.

The career specialist helped Dylan make the contacts he needed to get his internship going, and it was both rewarding and fun. Interacting with the lieutenants, deputy chief, chief, dispatchers, paramedics and EMTs was fascinating to Dylan. One of the other interns and Dylan went even further and started a new internship opportunity, taking their practical tests at the completion of their 100-hour, 10-week program. Dylan reported, "We were tested on the laws, the procedures and how to handle each situation . . . to my surprise I scored a 92!"

Dylan comes from a long line of firefighters, and he feels the career suits him well. He further reports "I am not sure of another career that would make me happier. The thought of following in my family's footsteps is exciting. Thanks to my internship I now know what working in a fire

## Regional Profiles

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department would be like, and how a typical academy experience would be structured. I can now confidently apply for the fire academy and pursue my dream of becoming a firefighter once I graduate from Bellingham High this upcoming June.”

Districts: Bellingham; Brookline; Framingham; Holliston; Marlborough; Norwood; Waltham

### **South Shore Workforce Development Board**

For more information, visit [southshorewib.org](http://southshorewib.org)

Connecting Activities funding allowed the South Shore Workforce Investment Board to support the work of program coordinators located in schools in Randolph, Weymouth, Carver and Middleborough and to provide general work and learning resources and support to other schools within our region.

At Weymouth High School a new extended homeroom schedule allowed for an increase in college and career readiness activities during that period school wide. In Middleborough, continued emphasis on creating career pathway dual enrollments programs saw success in the fire science, early childhood education and business programs, in particular. In Randolph, work with the AIM Academy students intensified and resulted in an increase in opportunities for the students in this alternative program to visualize future educational and career options.

In FY16 the region developed a new Youth Employment Specialist position at the South Shore Career Centers to support the entire region with a focus on developing employer relationships. The WDB appreciates the Connecting Activities funds that enabled the region to fund this important role, enabling the region to do a much better job of recruiting private employers.

The region also began to utilize social media as a way to disseminate information about youth friendly job openings as well as information about career pathways and other programming. It has received very positive feedback about use of this tool.

#### **Student Profile: Jaycie**

With the support of the South Shore Workforce Investment Board and Connecting Activities, Middleborough High School is able to offer a variety of student internship experiences that take place during the school day for academic credit. Senior Jaycie DiCarlo knew she loved animals and science, but wasn't sure she had the intestinal fortitude to pursue a career in veterinary medicine until she began interning at Middleboro Animal Clinic with Dr. David Johnson, DVM.



## Regional Profiles

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Jaycie, a quiet and reserved student, has flourished under the guidance of Dr. Johnson. “She is a welcome addition to our staff, and she takes notes and absorbs information like a fourth year medical student. She’s a real pleasure,” commented Dr. Johnson.

Jaycie has worked in the lab sterilizing equipment, viewing samples under a microscope and preparing immunizations. In the hospital, Jaycie has observed several c-sections, removed stones from a dog’s bladder, and has assisted with ultrasounds and routine surgeries. Jaycie is now confident with her decision to pursue a career as a veterinary technician, applying for programs at Becker College, University of New Hampshire and Massasoit Community College.

Districts: Carver; Hull; Marshfield; Middleborough; Randolph; South Shore Regional Vocational Technical; Weymouth

## Conclusion

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In FY16, the Connecting Activities efforts supported a wide array of career development activities, involving several thousand employers, several hundred high schools and well over 10,000 students (combining career awareness, exploration and immersion activities). CA continues to be a critical infrastructure for student college and career readiness (CCR) across the state.

In keeping with its longstanding commitment to work-based learning, staff involved with the Connecting Activities initiative helped broker placements for 10,258 students. In the Regional Profiles section of this report, we have presented the stories of 16 of those 10,258 students.

There is consistent theme in all of their stories; all of them gained not only new skills, but also greater certainty about their plans for college and career. In fact, those seniors in FY16 are all in college, with plans significantly affected by their internship experiences. Those students who have not graduated yet are zeroing in on a clear direction for their postsecondary plans. The work-based learning experiences, supported by the Connecting Activities initiative, have offered a powerful and sometimes even transformational input into these students' future success. These students will be stepping more confidently into their futures than many who have not had these formative experiences.

For an accurate sense of the scale of these work-based learning experiences, the proper denominator is the size of the state's graduating cohort of 75,000 students. Our numerator is the 10,258 placed. Thus, CA brokered work-based learning for about 1 in 7 (close to 15%). A goal is to scale up the work so that an even higher percentage of our high school students graduate with at least one powerful work-based learning experience under their belts. ESE has adopted a set of trajectories and benchmarks for growth of college and career readiness for all students that includes the ultimate goal of work-based learning experiences for all.

CA's substantial network of practitioners is fully prepared to scale up their efforts, and continually improve their systems for brokering all the relationships and systems needed to accomplish this.

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is pleased to offer this report to present information about Connecting Activities in FY16.



## History of Connecting Activities Funding and Participation since 1998

Fiscal Year	State Funds (7027-0019)	Total Employer Wages Paid	Number of Student Internships	Number of Participating Employers
1998	\$3,000,000	\$17,788,585	6,030	3,486
1999	\$4,500,000	\$32,522,787	20,206	7,985
2000	\$5,000,000	\$36,847,721	22,614	8,591
2001	\$5,000,000	\$42,418,956	22,239	11,233
2002	\$4,653,000	\$43,508,097	23,142	10,028
2003	\$4,129,687	\$45,306,969	20,129	7,903
2004	\$4,129,687	\$39,705,514	12,907	6,879
2005	\$4,129,687	\$34,762,571	12,656	5,610
2006	\$4,129,687	\$36,804,581	12,612	5,288
2007	\$7,129,687	\$42,139,183	17,547	6,590
2008	\$4,129,687	\$37,711,412	14,729	5,624
2009	\$2,000,000	\$29,335,507	13,051	5,531
2010	\$2,000,000	\$14,812,944	11,033	3,876
2011	\$2,000,000	\$12,246,889	10,046	3,526
2012	\$2,750,000	\$13,141,543	9,819	3,529
2013	\$2,870,000	\$11,900,000	9,832	3,530
2014	\$2,750,000	\$13,962,000	10,324	3,510
2015	\$2,708,750	\$14,690,000	10,487	3,477
2016	\$2,800,000	\$14,024,114	10,258	3,679

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### Additional Resources relating to Connecting Activities:

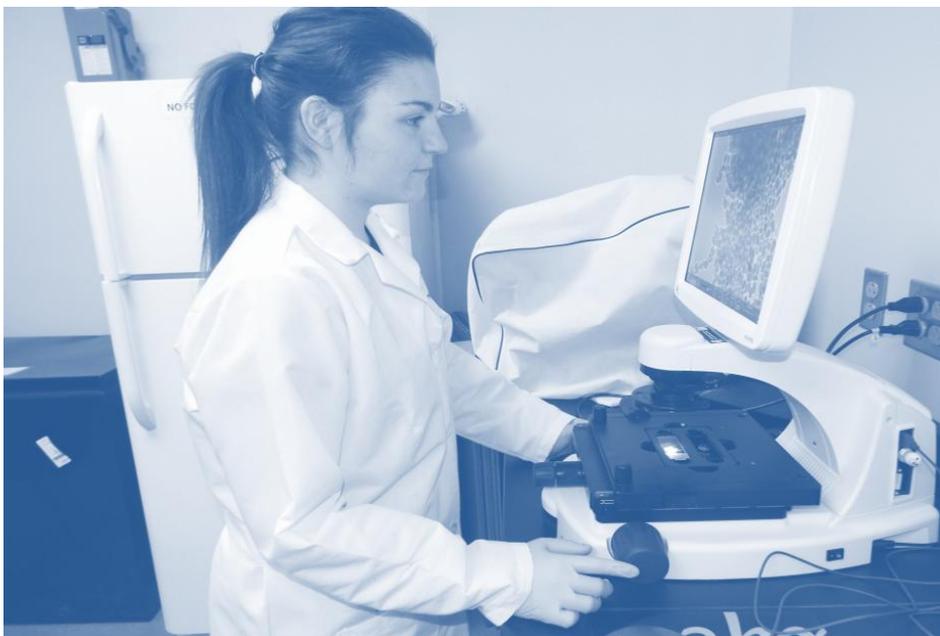
- The Connecting Activities web site, for data entry about WBLPs: [massconnecting.org](http://massconnecting.org)
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education web page dedicated to Connecting Activities initiative: [doe.mass.edu/connect/](http://doe.mass.edu/connect/)
- Website with supporting materials about the MA Work-Based Learning Plan: [skillslibrary.org](http://skillslibrary.org)
- Website offering a peer-sharing platform for a wide range of curricula and activities for project-based and work-based learning: [Contextual Learning Portal](http://Contextual Learning Portal)
- The Future Ready website, for messaging and marketing to adults who are influential in the lives of youth, about the steps needed to be ready by the end of high school for college and career: [futurereadyma.org](http://futurereadyma.org)





# Connecting Activities

*Offering students  
work experience and  
career development education  
through partnerships between  
the state's education and  
workforce development systems  
since 1998*



**SUCCESS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

