



Center for Collaborative Education

Transforming schools for student success

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Two Massachusetts Schools Awarded Planning Grants to Lead Personalized Learning

Next Generation Learning Challenges names Center for Collaborative Education one of seven NGLC Regional Fund partners to scale up personalized learning schools across the United States

Boston, MA — As part of a nationwide effort to foster local, educator-led innovation and to scale up personalized learning schools, [Next Generation Learning Challenges](#) (NGLC) has selected the [Center for Collaborative Education](#) (CCE) to serve as a regional partner for Massachusetts. NGLC have awarded CCE a \$450,000 grant towards the launch of a new initiative called the [Massachusetts Personalized Learning Network](#) (MA PLN.) The new initiative will work with local school and district leaders to generate a critical mass of urban schools that exemplify personalized, competency-based, and engaged learning approaches in educating students.

“As the state’s student population grows more diverse, the one-size-fits-all model of schooling from the past will not close achievement gaps or produce citizens who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial spirit that will be necessary for success in the 21st century,” explains Dan French, Executive Director of the Center for Collaborative Education. “With the passage of the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), schools, districts and states have the opportunity to shift away from the traditional approach of schooling to one that enables the increasing diversity of our students to excel in relevant and rigorous instruction and real-life assessments of progress.”

Through a competitive application process, CCE selected [Walsh Middle School](#) of Framingham Public School District and [Garfield Middle School](#) of Revere Public School District as the founding schools for the first MA PLN cohort. Each will receive a \$25,000 planning grant to support school-based design teams, comprised of school leaders, teachers, and community members, through an intensive planning phase. CCE will provide these teams with resources, tools, and intensive technical support that will help ensure the development of innovative and sound personalized learning school designs, strategic school implementation plans, ample preparation for school start-up, and a successful launch. Upon completion of the planning phase, schools will have the opportunity to apply for an additional grant and further technical support provided by CCE to implement their plans.

“Teaching students of the 21st century involves a new mindset and skill set,” notes Jodi O’Rourke,

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English Language Arts Department Head at Walsh Middle School. “It is exciting to think that we are charged with educating productive citizens to be able to problem solve, think critically, collaborate, make good decisions, be empathetic towards others, and be persistent and resilient.”

CCE will also provide a blended professional learning course of study (online and in-person) for all network schools working collaboratively to learn, practice, and design strategies for bringing personalized learning experiences into their schools. The course will be coupled with individualized coaching and technical assistance as each school works to design a plan to offer an educational experience for their students that is individualized, project-based, and attuned to the unique academic and social-emotional needs of students.

As more districts and schools participate in the network, CCE seeks to create a “tipping point” for urban schools that changes the public discourse about what constitutes excellent schools for the full diversity of students in Massachusetts. When fully implemented, these high performing personalized learning schools in MA PLN can provide “proof points,” demonstrating how schools can be redesigned around long-established research on how students learn well – through purposeful, active engagement in varied forms of learning that carry relevance and meaning to the learner – rather than traditional models of school design that were primarily organized around principles of efficiency.

“Massachusetts led the way in the thoughtful, well-supported implementation of the first incarnation of standards-based reform,” states Andrew Calkins, Deputy Director of NGLC. “But even its relative success compared to other states has produced inadequate results in terms of achievement gaps and lack of genuine preparedness to persist and succeed in college. The new MA PLN promises to help the Commonwealth vault beyond good execution of an obsolete education model into a leadership position on next gen learning: student-centered, personalized, competency-based, blended, experiential, and proactively designed around richer, deeper definitions of student success.”

Ramona Treviño, Senior Director of District and School Design at CCE, remarks, “We are thrilled to be working with such innovative thinkers from these two pioneering schools. We look forward to watching their ideas for new school models that provide more personalized learning opportunities in the classroom for each student take shape, so that we can provide demonstration sites for schools in Massachusetts to follow. ”

MA PLN is led by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) and in partnership with [LearnLaunch](#), the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) (DESE), [Agilix](#) and the [National Center for Time on Learning](#) (NCTL). CCE is a regional partner with NGLC, an initiative of EDUCAUSE to scale up personalized learning schools nationwide. MA PLN is funded in part by a grant from [NGLC](#). Additional funding has been provided by the [Barr Foundation](#), [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#), [W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation](#), and [IBM](#).

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About the Center for Collaborative Education

The [Center for Collaborative Education](#) has a rich history of supporting in-district public schools that have autonomy to be more innovative, believing that schools have the best opportunity for educating a diverse enrollment of students when they are provided maximum control over their resources and decisions, paired with a strong accountability system and expectations of high performance on multiple measures.

To learn more about CCE's work of developing and promoting innovative models of schools, where students are engaged, challenged to excel, and encouraged to have fun in their learning, please visit: www.cce.org.

About Next Generation Learning Challenges

[Next Generation Learning Challenges](#) (NGLC) accelerates educational innovation through applied technology to dramatically improve college readiness and completion. NGLC is managed by [EDUCAUSE](#), a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education through the use of information technology. Since 2011, NGLC has provided more than \$65 million in investment capital to foster the development of transformational K-12 and postsecondary models aimed at improving the quality and depth of learning outcomes in the U.S., particularly for low-income students. Funding for NGLC has been provided by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), the [Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation](#), the [Michael & Susan Dell Foundation](#), and the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#).

