INNOVATION PATHWAYS SITE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

This self-assessment tool has been created to act as a guide to support the development, implementation, and improvement of Innovation Pathways. It is organized around five guiding principles with its own subsections or elements:

- *Equitable access for all students*
- *Guided academic pathways (which are related to one of five specified broad industry sectors)*
- *Enhanced student supports*
- *Relevant connections to career*
- *Effective Partnerships (between high schools, employers for workforce development board, post-secondary partners etc.)*

Each principle represents a broad area of focus that each school/designee should address in its pathway implementation and improvement work, and consists of various elements that provide guidance into specific, key aspects of implementation. Under each element is a list of indicators, though while not exhaustive, is intended to be representative of high-impact areas/practices and can assist you in assessing the implementation of your pathway(s).

How to Use This Tool

Teams can use this tool to identify where the work currently exists with respect to the five principles and collect sample evidence to support their assessment. Teams can use the tool during the planning process (i.e. before you get started implementing a pathway) and/or to assess the implementation of a current pathway(s). The initial assessment can be used as a baseline and periodic assessments used (annually or semi-annually) to keep track of your implementation progress and improvement.

Working as a team, read the description of the three performance levels and align the current status of your pathway to the indicators under each element to determine where your pathway implementation lies along the spectrum (as an option some teams may choose to have each team member score your pathway individually and use those individual assessments to come to a consensus). The rating scale identifies what initiating, emerging/developing and established/sustaining practice looks like in under each element. We also provide the kinds of evidence (not an exhaustive list) that you can gather and refer to in order to help inform your assessment and ratings. The ultimate goal is to move your pathway program to established/sustained practice in all five principles. For designees with more than one pathway, a separate assessment should be completed for each.

As your team completes each section, you can use the scoring guide (at the end of this tool) to record and keep track of your scores. The guide is merely a graphical aid to give teams a visual overview of how each individual element was scored, which can be helpful in determining an overall score for each of the five key principles. Ideally, your overall score for each of the five principles should reflect a collective consensus that has resulted from an open, honest, and frank discussion. Additionally, the guide includes a few discussion/reflection questions that can help teams determine their improvement priorities and next steps.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Center for Collaborative Education

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Designated programs should prioritize students underrepresented in education enrollment and completion. To facilitate this, programs should be structured to eliminate barriers to student participation. Design might therefore include, but not be limited to, tuition-free participation, open enrollment without regard to prior academic performance, student supports to promote success, scalability, multiple entry points for students, and student supports to prepare students for entry into the program.

Initiating Practice	Emerging/Developing	Established/Sustained Practice
Equity and access in recruitment of students	***Equity and access in recruitment of students***	***Equity and access in recruitment of students***
• Students, families and community members are unaware of pathway options and there is little or no parent/caregiver engagement. • There are no materials/social media or a communications/recruitment activities plan in place to support efforts to raise awareness and understanding of pathways opportunities among students and families.	• Students, families and community members are somewhat informed about the pathways work, but information may not be tailored to various audiences. • There is limited awareness of pathways among students, parents/caregivers from historically underserved communities. • Materials and recruitment/awareness activities have consistent messaging and are not tailored to various audiences. • Promotion of pathways to students, families and community members begins in high school.	• Promotion of pathways to students, families and community members begins in middle school and continues throughout high school. • Materials and recruitment/ awareness activities include specific strategies to reach historically underserved populations who understand the available pathways, how to enroll as well as supports available. • Pathways offer multiple entry and exit points to enable students to change paths as their interests and goals evolve.
Enrollment and completion of students across diverse student populations	***Enrollment and completion of students across diverse student populations***	***Enrollment and completion of students across diverse student populations***
• There are no established goals for recruitment and/or enrollment. • There are policies or practices in place that restrict or limit participation (e.g. a GPA minimum, recommendation from a teacher/counselor etc.) and/or some courses charge tuition. • Pathways currently enroll only a cross-section of students that is not representative of school/school district demographics.	• There are goals for recruitment and/or enrollment, but they do not include goals for different student populations. • All pathway courses are tuition-free, but there are policies or practices in place that restrict or limit participation. • Pathways enroll a range of students representative of school/school district demographics.	• All pathway courses are tuition-free and offer open enrollment to ensure that pathways enroll a range of students representative of school/school district demographics. • Completion of pathways is equitable across student populations (e.g. by gender, race/ethnicity, student income background, disability and English Learner status)

Sample Evidence Examples (refer to these to inform assessment and ratings)

 • Pathway recruitment and marketing materials, including marketing and communication strategies for underserved student populations
 • Events for parents/caregivers and community
 • Student enrollment, performance (e.g. credits earned, gpa) and completion data, disaggregated by student population

Current Status of Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access for All Students

 Indicate your current overall score on this guiding principle: _____

1= Initiating practice: This is not yet a priority for designee. Currently, there is either very little activity or no significant effort to address this criterion.
2= This is becoming a priority for designee. There has been some early work to lay the foundation to achieve this criterion, but progress is limited.
3= Developing or emerging practice: This is a priority for designee and school is currently focused on strengthening this practice, including by identifying and testing out various strategies.
4= This is a priority for designee and demonstrable progress has been made using specific strategies or practices.
5= Established or sustained practice: Designee has met this criterion. Practice/policies have taken root and no major additional work is needed.

Evidence for Ratings	Key Challenges	Proposed Next Steps

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: GUIDED ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Designated programs should be structured around clear and detailed student academic pathways from secondary to postsecondary education with regard to coursework, sequencing, and experiences beyond the classroom. Programs should offer students substantive exposure to career opportunities in high demand fields, allowing them to make an informed decision about which career pathway to pursue. Students should also be exposed to the authentic experience and academic rigor of postsecondary education.

Initiating Practice	Emerging/Developing	Established/Sustained Practice
Curriculum Scope and Sequence • A scope and sequence either does not exist OR if 9-12 programs of study exist, they are neither aligned to each other (vertical-alignment) nor to postsecondary offerings, local/regional labor market trends or workforce needs. • Either no postsecondary options or just ONE postsecondary option (e.g. AP, IB, dual enrollment). • Any postsecondary options that may exist as part of the pathway are not aligned to local/regional workforce needs.	**Curriculum Scope and Sequence** • A 9-12 and postsecondary sequence of courses is defined and implemented, but it is followed inconsistently due to logistical (scheduling) issues, lack of planning etc. • A limited number of postsecondary credit opportunities (e.g. AP, IB, dual-enrollment) exist at the high school that are relevant to the pathway(s). • Postsecondary options are aligned to local/regional workforce needs in some but not all cases.	**Curriculum Scope and Sequence** • A 9-12 or 9-14/16 sequence is clearly defined and implemented, and it aligns to labor market trends and workforce needs. • Students have access to the sequence and use it to select courses. Courses in sequence are offered regularly to minimize if not eliminate logistical (scheduling) conflicts etc. • Work-based learning, postsecondary credit opportunities (including in a CTE program of study, in areas of study aligned with chosen the industry sector) and aligned industry credentials are all available to students within the pathway. • All career pathways begin broadly, focusing on career awareness and exposure; progress to more sector-oriented courses that are aligned to local/regional workforce needs.
Career Development Education • Disconnected career development education (CDE) activities exist but are not systematically reflected upon to build towards deeper forms of CDE.	**Career Development Education** • Some forms of CDE are available at all grade levels (9-12 or 9-14/16), a structure exists to support students engaging at all grade levels, and students have the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences.	**Career Development Education** • A range of CDE opportunities are available across all grades and provide continuity between experiences for students. • There is strong alignment between work-based learning opportunities, pathways curriculum and prioritized industry sector needs • CDE opportunities progress from awareness and exploration to preparation and training to give students insight into the range of careers available and associated entry requirements to help make informed choices about long-term goals. • CDE experiences culminate in a capstone, internship or other work-based learning experience that aligns with students' pathway and postsecondary plans. • WBL experiences, as applicable, include authentic assessments of the experience by employers.

Sample Evidence Examples (refer to these to inform assessment and ratings)

- Documented pathway program of study course sequence (and course codes, if applicable) from 9-12 or 9-14/16
- Curricular materials
- Articulation agreements with local colleges/universities, if applicable
- Documented examples of CDE across grades

- Number of students participating in work-based learning experiences (e.g. internships, capstones), disaggregated by student populations
- Student individualized college and career planning (MyCAP) documents
- Career Development Education scope and sequence/continuum
- Completed student WBL plans
- Employer evaluations of students

Current Status of Guiding Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways

Indicate your current overall score on this guiding principle: _____

1= Initiating practice: This is not yet a priority for designee. Currently, there is either very little activity or no significant effort to address this criterion.
2= This is becoming a priority for designee. There has been some early work to lay the foundation to achieve this criterion, but progress is limited.
3= Developing or emerging practice: This is a priority for designee and school is currently focused on strengthening this practice, including by identifying and testing out various strategies.
4= This is a priority for designee and demonstrable progress has been made using specific strategies or practices.
5= Established or sustained practice: Designee has met this criterion. Practice/policies have taken root and no major additional work is needed.

Evidence for Ratings	Key Challenges	Proposed Next Steps

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORT

Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and course completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.

Initiating Practice	Emerging/Developing	Established/Sustained Practice
Academic Supports • There is not a clear process in place to identify and provide intervention/supports for students who are struggling academically or in need of acceleration and/or for English Learners (ELs) or students with disabilities (SWDs). An informal process for decisions about supports and interventions may exist. • Isolated systems or opportunities for support exist (e.g. within individual classrooms) but not universally, multiple stakeholders are not involved in decisions around intervention/support. • There is not a system or systems in place to collect and review student outcome data –disaggregated by student population-- for use in identifying and developing an intervention/support plan to support student learning. ***Social and Emotional Learning and Support*** • There is either no process to address students' social and emotional concerns as needed or process in place is very limited. Individual counseling is available. • Effectiveness of supports for social emotional learning/health is not evaluated.	***Academic Supports*** •A process is in place to identify students who are struggling academically or in need of acceleration, ELs and SWDs, but the process to create an intervention/support plan may not include all stakeholders and includes limited intervention opportunities •Intervention/support plans are not consistently implemented with fidelity. • Student outcome data is being collected, and disaggregated by student population, but a systematic review of data by a team to assess effectiveness of interventions/support strategies, is not in place. ***Social and Emotional Learning and Support*** •Processes and supports are in place to address students' social and emotional needs. •Referral processes are clear and reviewed with faculty and staff. Students are referred to counseling when behavior interrupts their learning. •Administration sometimes utilizes counseling services as an early intervention for discipline referrals. •Effectiveness of programming is infrequently evaluated.	***Academic Supports*** •There is a clear and coherent process for developing an intervention/support plan for students who are not meeting academic and/or college/career benchmarks, ELs and SWDs that involves multiple stakeholders and is based on the student's associated area(s) of need. • Intervention/support plans are implemented with fidelity and outcome data is available to assess the effectiveness of intervention/support strategies. ***Social and Emotional Learning and Support*** • All students have access to high quality social and emotional prevention and intervention support that could include individual and group counseling, large group/classroom activities, mentoring, participation in student activities aligned to their interests/abilities and service learning. • Faculty and staff regularly consult with counseling staff regarding the social and emotional needs of their students. • Administration regularly utilizes counseling services as an early intervention for discipline referrals. • A variety of research-based supports are available and effectiveness of intervention/support strategies is regularly evaluated.

Sample Evidence Examples (refer to these to inform assessment and ratings)

• Student performance data used by teams
• Student data protocols (e.g. Data-based inquiry)
• Intervention plans and/or intervention materials used to support students
• Participation rates for individual and group counseling
• Counseling referrals
• Discipline referrals (including suspension/expulsion rates)

Current Status of Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support

Indicate your current overall score on this guiding principle: _____

1= Initiating practice: This is not yet a priority for designee. Currently, there is either very little activity or no significant effort to address this criterion.
2= This is becoming a priority for designee. There has been some early work to lay the foundation to achieve this criterion, but progress is limited.
3= Developing or emerging practice: This is a priority for designee and school is currently focused on strengthening this practice, including by identifying and testing out various strategies.
4= This is a priority for designee and demonstrable progress has been made using specific strategies or practices.
5= Established or sustained practice: Designee has met this criterion. Practice/policies have taken root and no major additional work is needed.

Evidence for Ratings	Key Challenges	Proposed Next Steps

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: CONNECTION TO CAREER

Designated programs should expose students to a variety of career opportunities, including greater depth in careers relevant to their selected pathway, by providing, for example, opportunities for targeted workforce and career skills development, career counseling, and elements of experiential and work-based learning.

Initiating Practice	Emerging/Developing	Established/Sustained Practice
College and Career Readiness • Systems and structures for delivering high-quality college and career counseling and advising either do not exist or are in early development. • If available, counseling and advising in college and career development is limited and/or advising is focused on college-going only and typically begins in grade 10 or later. • A process for students developing a postsecondary plan for college and/or career may be in place, but it is not used consistently for all students, and/or not regularly reviewed or referred to.	***College and Career Readiness*** • Systems and structures to ensure students receive high-quality counseling and advising services are in place, but services may not be reaching all student populations especially historically underserved student populations, including ELs and students with disabilities. • Counseling and advising for college- and/or career-readiness happens throughout high school. • Students who receive counseling have postsecondary plans for college and/or career that are reviewed annually during scheduling to reflect growing/evolving interests to align coursework for the next year, but not all students in pathways have documented postsecondary plans. • School culture is primarily focused on college-going with less attention paid to career development. • College-going is considered to be a 4-year program while other postsecondary options are not actively promoted to students. • If both a college-going culture and a focus on career-readiness both exist, students and staff demonstrate and/or express that one is more highly valued than the other.	***College and Career Readiness*** • There are robust and active systems and structures in place to ensure all students receive high-quality counseling and advising services. • Counseling and advising services are available as early as middle school and continue throughout high school. • All students in pathways receive counseling and advising for both college and career, and have developed postsecondary plans for both college and career, which are reviewed are referred to for scheduling as well as meeting academic and college and career benchmarks. • School culture is focused both on college-going and career-readiness. College-going includes attendance at both 2- and 4-year postsecondary options. • There is a strong postsecondary-going culture and a sharp focus on career readiness among staff and students. • Postsecondary options for work/career and college-going are equally promoted and ingrained in the school culture. • Evidence-based, scalable career advisement models are in use in school/district to help all students -especially historically underserved students-beginning in middle school make sound, well-informed decisions about course and pathways participation.

Sample Evidence Examples (refer to these to inform assessment and ratings)

• Counseling and advising schedules
• Documented individualized college and career plans for a diversity of students
• School plan/framework for counseling and advising
• Counseling materials used with/distributed to students
• Posted materials
• Surveys

Current Status of Guiding Principle 4: Connection to Career

Indicate your current overall score on this guiding principle: _____

1= Initiating practice: This is not yet a priority for designee. Currently, there is either very little activity or no significant effort to address this criterion.
2= This is becoming a priority for designee. There has been some early work to lay the foundation to achieve this criterion, but progress is limited.
3= Developing or emerging practice: This is a priority for designee and school is currently focused on strengthening this practice, including by identifying and testing out various strategies.
4= This is a priority for designee and demonstrable progress has been made using specific strategies or practices.
5= Established or sustained practice: Designee has met this criterion. Practice/policies have taken root and no major additional work is needed.

Evidence for Ratings	Key Challenges	Proposed Next Steps

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Innovation Pathway programs require a formal partnership with a workforce development board (MassHire) and or one or more employers or an employer association. Programs should be sufficient in size to capture economies of scale goals and to ensure long-term sustainability.

Initiating Practice	Emerging/Developing	Established/Sustained Practice
Relationships with Partners • No formal relationships with partners (e.g. employers or employer associations, workforce development board) currently exist. • Informal relationships with 1-2 local partners may exist but are not currently leveraged to support the development and implementation of a pathway.	***Relationships with Partners*** • Relationship with workforce development board exists • A few (at least 2-3) formal relationships exist with employers or employer associations, that can be leveraged to support the development and implementation of a pathway.	***Relationships with Partners*** • Several supportive and formal partnerships exist and partners are willing to help to expand network of partners to support implementation of pathways on a small scale. • Supportive partnerships exist with a diverse set of partner groups (e.g. higher education institutions if applicable, employers or an employer association etc.) that support and engage with students along the whole pathway. • Various partners (e.g. postsecondary educators, employers, workforce development leaders, and other key stakeholders) provide input on the indicators used to assess students' career readiness to ensure that they are aligned with the needs of the postsecondary communities.

Sample Evidence Examples (refer to these to inform assessment and ratings)

• List of partners with description of services/support provided
• MOUs, articulation agreements
• Meeting agendas/notes
• Graduation requirements

Current Status of Guiding Principle 5: Effective Partnerships

Indicate your current overall score on this guiding principle: _____

1= Initiating practice: This is not yet a priority for designee. Currently, there is either very little activity or no significant effort to address this criterion.
2= This is becoming a priority for designee. There has been some early work to lay the foundation to achieve this criterion, but progress is limited.
3= Developing or emerging practice: This is a priority for designee and school is currently focused on strengthening this practice, including by identifying and testing out various strategies.
4= This is a priority for designee and demonstrable progress has been made using specific strategies or practices.
5= Established or sustained practice: Designee has met this criterion. Practice/policies have taken root and no major additional work is needed.

Evidence for Ratings	Key Challenges	Proposed Next Steps

SCORING GUIDE

Use this table to track your score for each element under the five principles and to arrive at an overall score for each principle.

Principle 1: Equitable Access for All Students		
• Equity and access in recruitment of students	Score:	Total:
• Enrollment and completion of students across diverse student populations	Score:	
Principle 2: Guided Academic Pathways		
• Curriculum scope and sequence	Score:	Total:
• Career development education	Score:	
Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support		
• Academic supports	Score:	Total:
• Social and emotional learning and supports	Score:	
Principle 4: Connections to Career		
• College and career-readiness	Score:	Total:
Principle 5: Effective Partnerships		
• Relationships with partners	Score:	Total:

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

Once you've complied your ratings, consider these questions:

• How robust is your implementation under all principles?
• Is there a particular principle where you are noticeably stronger than others?
• Are there areas that seem critical to continued growth?
• What kinds of assets currently exist?
• What assets will you need to improve?