



OFFICE OF EARLY COLLEGE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

MASSACHUSETTS

Department of
Higher Education

Designation Leadership Webinar

June 16, 2026

10:00 -11:00 AM

Agenda

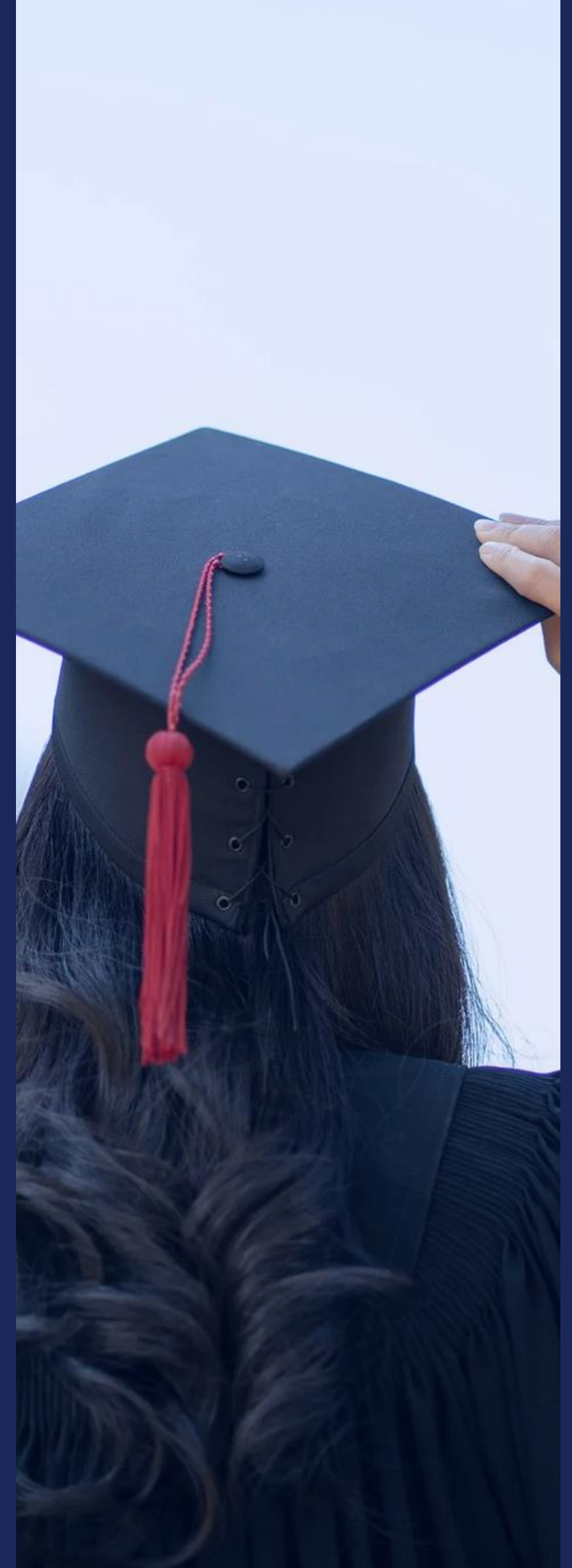
1. Early College in Massachusetts

1. Essential Designation Information for Leaders

1. Planning Phase Process and Timeline

1. Planning Phase Funding

1. Questions & Discussion



Purpose and Goals

Purpose

Ensure program leaders have clear information about Early College Designation and the Planning Phase ahead and understand their role in process.

Goals

- Build background on Early College in the state, it's purpose, impact and direction.
- Describe what it means to be Designated, including the Guiding Principles, the Phases and leadership implications.
- Clarify activities and timelines for the Planning Phase.
- Describe the key roles for leadership and the work of the team in the process.



Early College in MA



New Heights Charter of Brockton at the EC Student Summit

Early College Program Definition

Early College refers to a structured program of study and supports that increases college success and career readiness, prioritizing economically disadvantaged, students of color, and first-generation college goers.

Early College high school students:



Take strategically sequenced college classes, earning at least 12 transferable credits



Participate during their regular (or intentionally redesigned and integrated) high school day, at no cost to themselves or their families



Receive comprehensive academic and guidance support before starting and throughout college coursework



Experience the unfamiliar, sometimes daunting, college environment

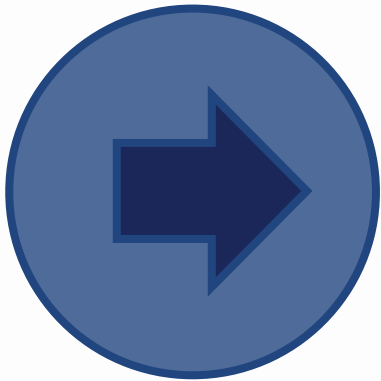


Graduate from high school with a significant number of college credits, habits, and skills needed to be successful in college and career

Early College Participant and Completer Definitions

An Early College Program Participant is a student who is:

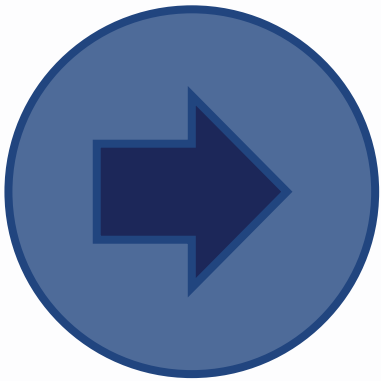
- Is in grade level 9, 10, 11, or 12
- Is enrolled in a high school that has a designated early college partnership
- Is identified as participating in early college by the district in October SIMS
- Signed a program commitment form



SY22-23: 6,054
SY23-24: 8,241
SY24-25: 8,795

An Early College Program Completer is a student who:

- Graduated from a high school with a designated early college partnership
- Was identified as participating in early college by the district in October SIMS in 11th and 12th grade (at a minimum)
- Earned 12 or more transferable college credits
- Completed 100% of MassCore block
- For updated criteria: looking to add FAFSA, MASFA or waiver and completion of 1 or more college applications)



Class of 2022: 426 (22%)
Class of 2023: 469 (20%)
Class of 2024: 822 (28%)
Class of 2025: 1,134 (42%)

MA Early College Priorities

These priorities enable Early College to achieve its potential of transforming student outcomes in the state and align with the EC definitions.



ACCESS

Expand access to designated Early College programs.

Expand **EC participants** across the state.



QUALITY PROGRAMS

Promote high quality programs with supports to close disparities and ensure EC completers.

Support high rates of **EC completers** who earn 12+ credits.

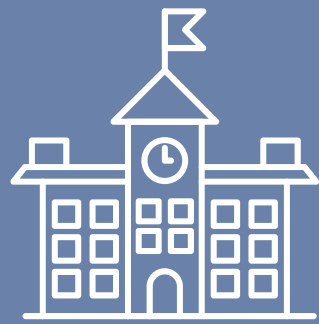


ATTAINMENT

Increase college matriculation, persistence and attainment to expand degree completion.

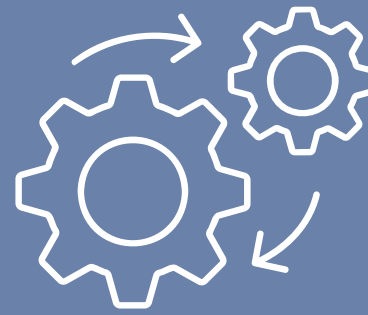
Support high rates of **EC degree earners**

Blending High School and College



Traditional High School

Students earn high school credits to complete their high school diploma. With their high school diploma, students can go onto college.



Dual Enrollment

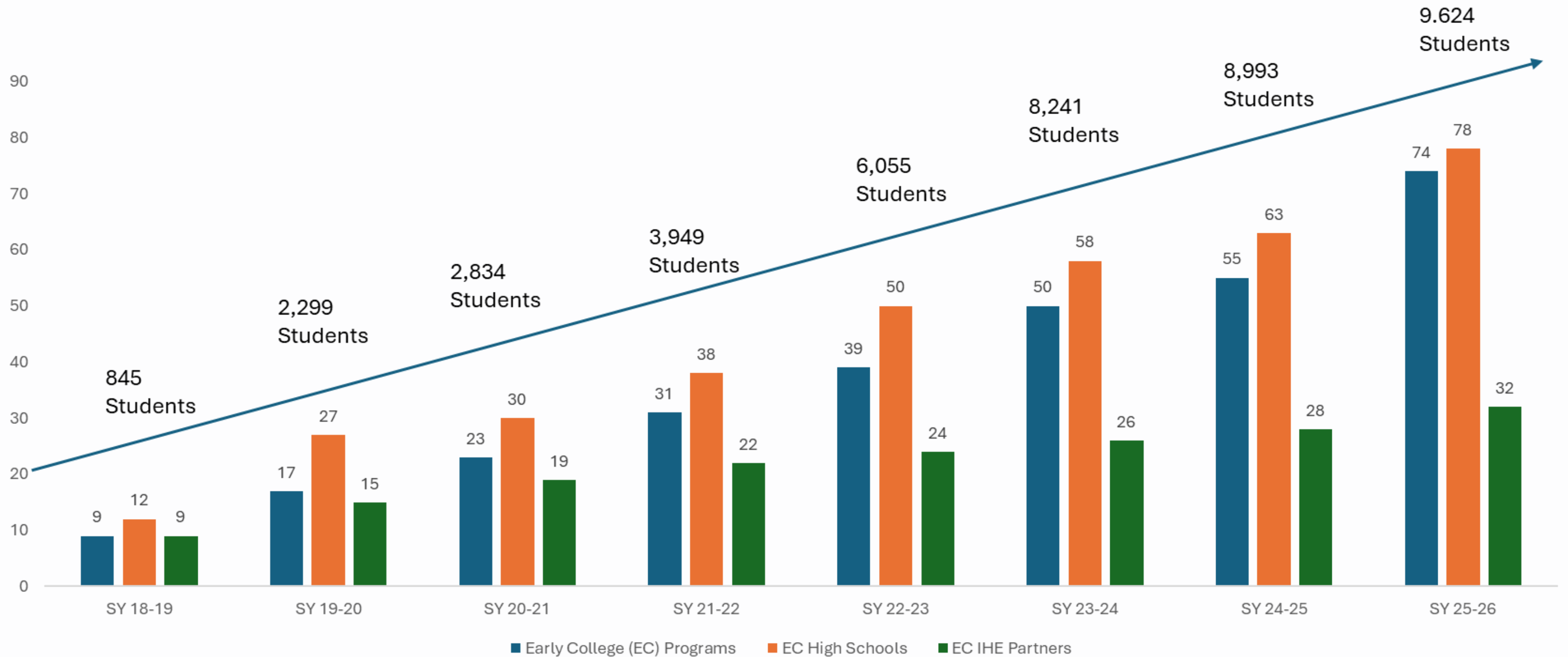
Provides opportunities for MA High School Students to take individual college-level courses for free or at discounted prices, earning credit toward high school completion and future college degrees.



Early College

Early College programs blend high school and college, offering free, supported access to sequenced, transferable college-level courses that help students accelerate degree completion.

Early College Program Growth Over Time



Early College Programs Across the Commonwealth

- There are 102 Designated Early College partnerships
- These partnerships are comprised of 101 high schools and 35 higher education partners
- Approximately 12,000 Early College students will be enrolled this Fall





Key Designation Information for Leaders

Co-host for 2026 Early College Student
Summit

East Boston / Fisher College Students

DESIGNATION PROCESS & PHASES

In 2025, a streamlined process for Designation was approved for FY27 Programs and beyond.



The Early College Five Guiding Principles remain the foundation of all programs

Equitable Access

Intentional recruitment and enrollment strategies that encourage more students to pursue higher education

Guided Academic Program of Study

The development of individualized student plans to outline articulated academic pathways

Enhanced Student Supports

Wraparound academic and social supports aimed at providing timely and tiered support

Connection to Career

The connection of academic courses to career choice through exploration and immersion opportunities

Effective Partnerships

Building a fully integrated partnership between the school, district, and postsecondary institution





EQUITABLE ACCESS



Description of Program Scale

Projected enrollments for 5-years relative to school/school district size and to the proportion of historically underserved students



Outreach and Recruitment Plans

Description and timeline of recruitment and enrollment events, recruitment materials for distribution, communication plan for targeted audiences (e.g., students, parents, community, school board, industry)



Enrollment Policy

When and how to apply and enroll in the Early College program, how a student would exit the program, potential lottery process applications exceed capacity

Equitable Access: Leadership Implications

How can we achieve a meaningful Early College scale, expanding access to students who wouldn't otherwise attend college?

- ✓ What leadership actions should you consider?
- ✓ What stakeholders will you need to engage with?
- ✓ Who will you need on the team?
- ✓ What resources and supports will you need?

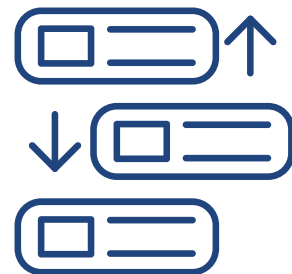


GUIDED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



Comprehensive Guided Pathway Plan

A comprehensive description of the guided pathway plan that outlines the scaffolded sequence of experiences and courses from the time students formally enroll in the program to graduation.



Scope and Sequence

The high school and college coursework that allows students to meet MassCore, local high school graduation requirements, and earn *a minimum of 12* transferable college credits.



Policy on College Course Placement

Policies should be as broad as possible and to support and encourage those who might not otherwise attend college. Programs are strongly encouraged not to determine college course readiness by solely one measure, such as GPA or Accuplacer.

GUIDED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



Course and Program Schedules

Sample students' schedules, identifying college coursework and integrated academic supports. This may require schedule changes.



Evidence of Curriculum Alignment

To bridge academic skills between high school and college courses.

Early College Program Description

Program outlines, course descriptions and syllabi when available

Guided Academic Programs: Leadership Implications

How can K12 & IHE partners collaborate to build strategically sequenced courses and align academic policies and practices?

- ✓ What leadership actions should you consider?
- ✓ What stakeholders will you need to engage?
- ✓ Who will you need on the team?
- ✓ What will your team need from you?



ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORTS



Comprehensive Plan of Academic and Non-academic Supports

A detailed master calendar of academic and non-academic support activities for students; confirmed staffing plans



Policy on Course Requirements and Failure Policies

Supports include those for helping the student get back on track, and actions that may be taken if a student fails a course or multiple courses



Student Conduct Expectations

Expectations around behavior, health, and safety procedures for Early College students on college campuses

Enhanced Student Supports: Leadership Implications

How can K12 and IHE partners work together to create a shared system of intentional, robust academic and non-academic supports aligned to student need?

- ✓ What leadership actions should you consider?
- ✓ What stakeholders will you need to engage?
- ✓ Who will you need on the team?
- ✓ What resources and supports will the team need?



CONNECTION TO CAREER



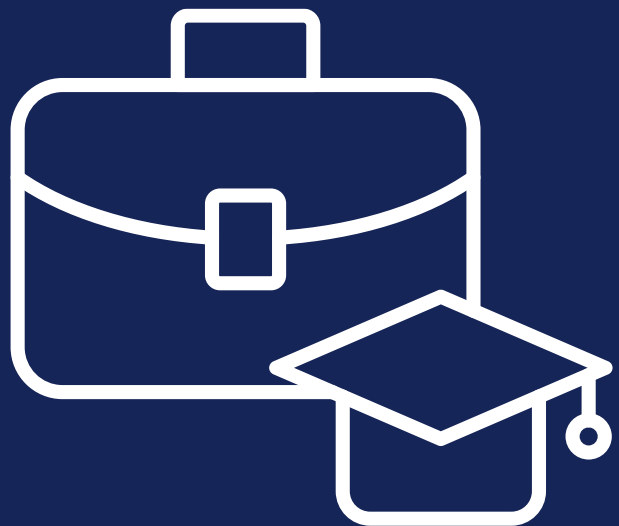
Comprehensive Plan for College and Career Counseling and Career Development Activities

The activities by grade level, including awareness, exploration, and/or immersion (internships, coops, etc.)



Employer Partner Contacts

Relevant specific employer contacts in order to demonstrate a commitment of community businesses and other partners



Connection to Career: Leadership Implications

How can Early College pathways include meaningful career-connected learning and experiences?

- ✓ What leadership actions should you consider?
- ✓ What stakeholders will you need to engage and consult with?
- ✓ Who will you need on the team?
- ✓ What resources and supports will you need?



EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- Roles and responsibilities, both Individual and shared across institutions.
- Financial arrangements, including shared coverage of costs and planned funding sources
- Timeline and duration
- Other relevant clauses and policies

Aggregated Program Information

- Budgets with estimates of start-up costs and ongoing sustainability costs
- Staffing plans

Evaluation Plan

- A clear set of shared goals, benchmarks and progress monitoring plans to reach Full Designation status within 5 years



Effective Partnerships: Leadership Implications

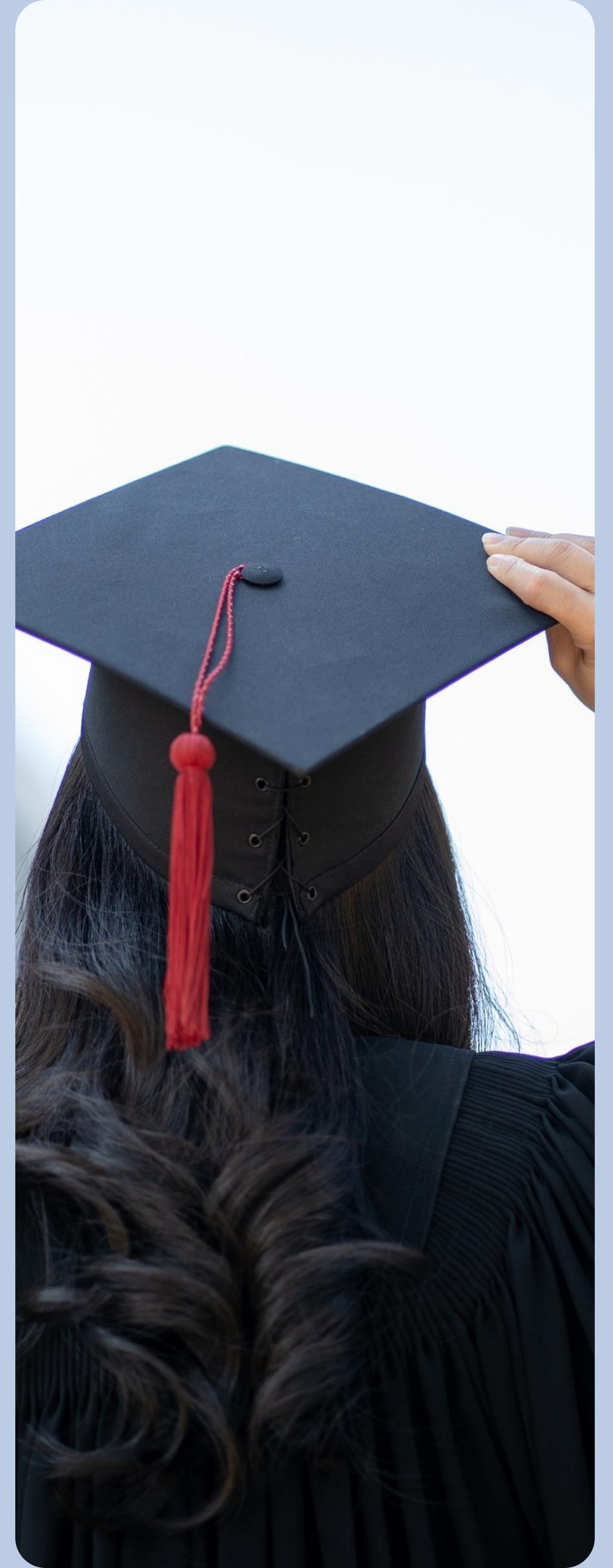
How can we partner most effectively to achieve our goals for students? What key student outcomes are we committed to?

- ✓ What leadership actions should you consider?
- ✓ What stakeholders will you need to engage and consult with?
- ✓ Who will you need on the team?
- ✓ What resources and supports will you need?



DESIGNATION CRITERIA BY PHASE

**The Guiding Principles are broken
down into Indicators by each
Designation Phase**



INDICATORS ACROSS THE PHASES

Designation indicators aligned to the Guiding Principles clarify what is needed to enter each Designation phase.

Designation Criteria: The essential components of	
Indicators and Evidence: Specific examples of how	
Planning Phase	
Includes key evidence and indicators required to enter the Planning Phase	Includ progr

Sample Indicators

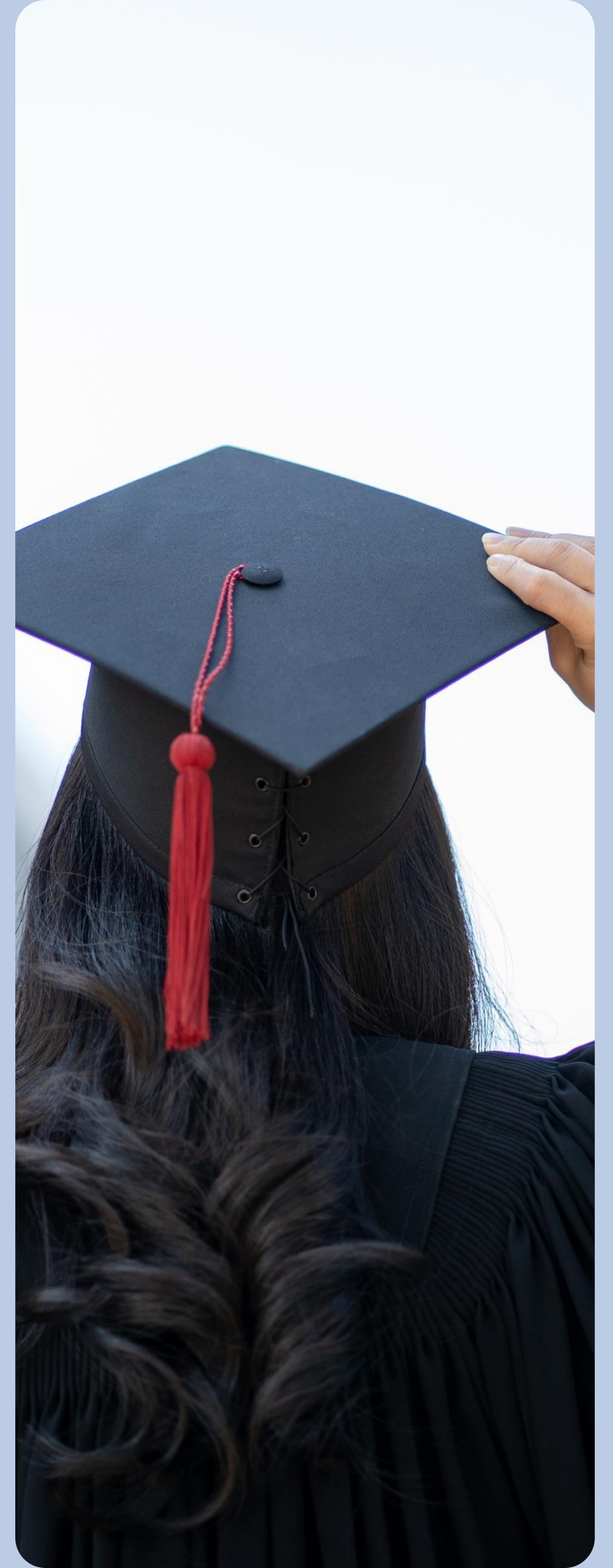
Guiding Principle 1: Equitable Access

(Sample)

1.1 Demonstration of Need: Partners provide a clear plan to increase college-going rates at each partner high school.	
Indicator	
Planning Phase	
In EC Commitment: • Commitment to increasing college participation through targeted strategies. • Clear rationale for program that includes an initial data review.	In Progress: • Data collection plan developed. • Site visits initiated.

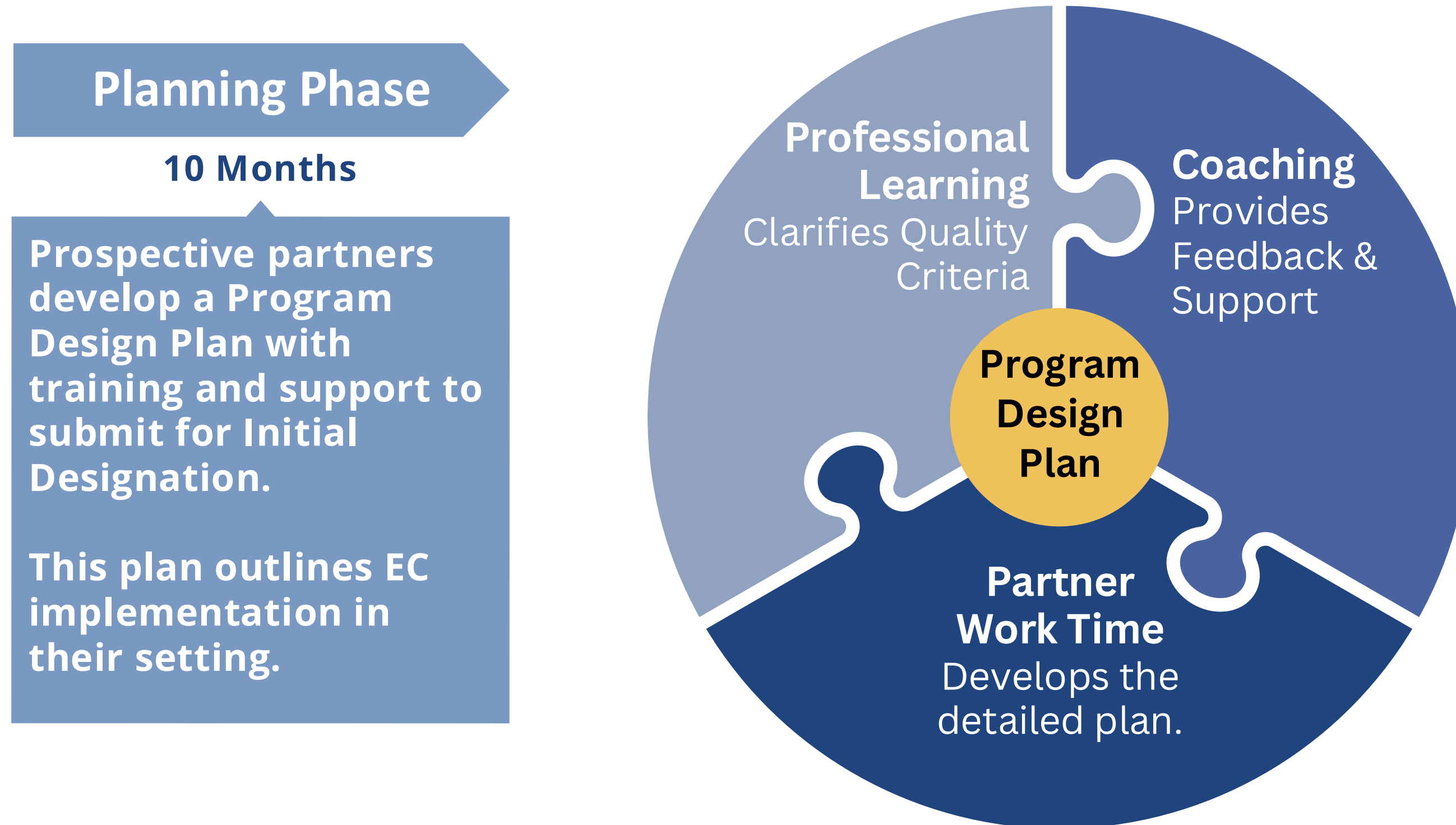
PLANNING PHASE

Process and Timeline



Planning Phase Purpose and Approach

The Planning Phase sets programs up with the information and supports to develop their Program Design Plan - the Early College implementation plan - as a team.



Core Leadership Team: From each institution

- **Leaders with decision-making authority**
Superintendent, Asst Supt, Chief Academic Officer, VP of Academic Affairs, VP of Enrollment
- **Program leads/implementers**
Early College program managers, Counseling Dept Chairs, others leading implementation on the ground.
- **Academic leaders**
Deans, Curriculum Directors.

Additional Design Team Members: Include the following staff from each institution at specific times:

- Data leads
- Fiscal leads
- Specialized support staff
- Subject-specific experts/instructors

Planning Team Members

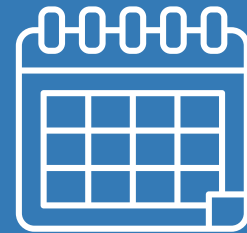


Strategies for Effective Planning

Setting your team up for success.



Strategically timed project plan aligned to the key milestones.



Weekly meetings to collaborate on key design components.



Shared file access and systems.



Integration of additional staff as needed for key program areas.



Consistent preparation for and attendance at all Planning Phase Professional Learning sessions.

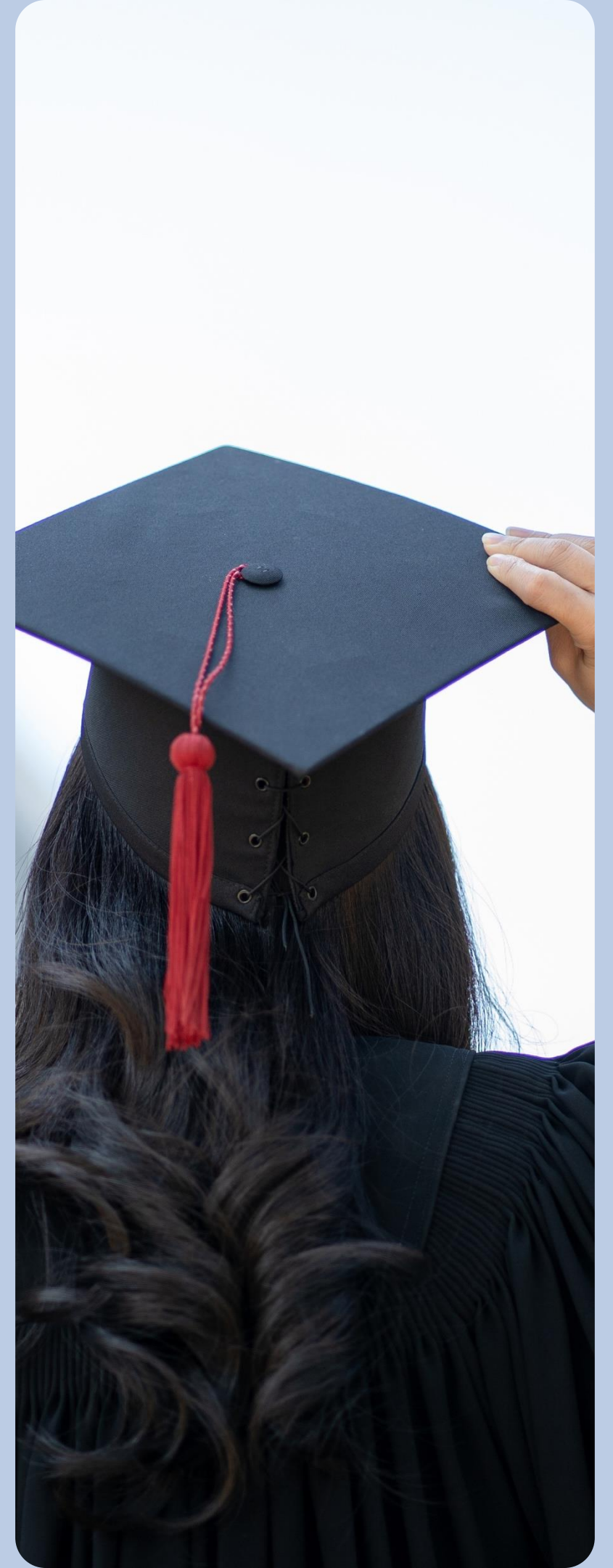
Planning Phase Professional Learning

ITEM/SESSION	Dates	Time
Planning Phase Orientation	Today	9:30-10:30 am
Office Hours and Coaching	Summer/Fall 2026	Based on Appt
PL Session 1: Partnering for Equitable Access	August 18,	All sessions run 9:30-10:30 am on Zoom
PL Session 2: Scaffolded Pathways for Success	September 15	
PL Session 3: Supporting Every Student	October 13	
PL Session 4: Evaluation & Systems for Results	November 10	
Webinar: Are You Ready to Submit?	December 1	
Program Design Plans Due	January 8, 9:30 am	

Optional coaching workshops will follow each professional learning session for additional support.

FUNDING & SUPPORTS

For the Planning Phase



Planning Grant FC461

FC461: The Planning Grant is a targeted grant for K12 schools and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) that seek to apply for an Early College Designation to start in the Fall of 2027.

- Planning for Designation to Launch in Fall 2027
- Eligible for approximately up to \$25,000 as an average award

Early College Program Supports



Community of Practice

- Touch Point Tuesday
- Monthly Working Groups
- Trainings for Data and Fiscal Support



Weekly Newsletter

- Every Friday programs receive a Newsletter with updates and resources



Coaching Support

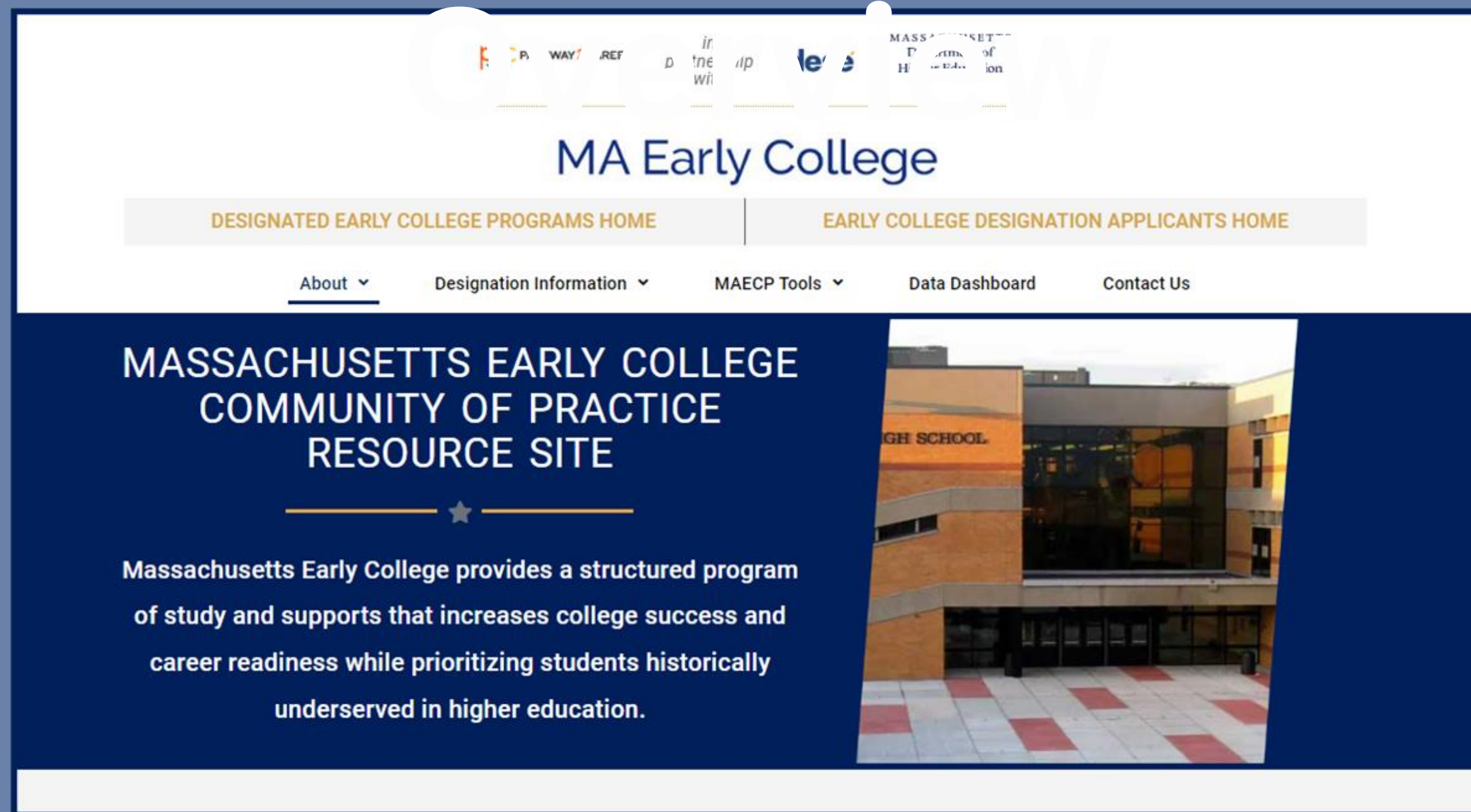
- Designed Programs in years 1 and 2 of programing
- Programs in the designation process
- Programs that require additional supports



Office Hours

- Fiscal office hours offered
- Office hours for programs seeking designation
- Office hours for data support

Resource Site



<https://www.maearlycollege.com>

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Connect with Us

The Early College Team - Designation Applicant Primary Contacts

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Thank you

