



READY FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS

A Call for Collaborative Action On Behalf of Massachusetts' Children and Youth

**Submitted to Governor Deval Patrick
and the Patrick Administration Readiness Cabinet**

by

The Massachusetts Action Planning Team

June 29, 2009



Dear Governor Patrick and Members of the Readiness Cabinet,

We share your belief that lifelong success in the 21st century demands unprecedented cooperation and collaboration between and amongst all those who care for and about children and youth. Moreover, we know that as state, national and global financial pressures increase, it is imperative that our voices carry on behalf of those too young or too vulnerable to advocate for themselves. Nothing less than our collective future is at stake.

While we realize that weathering the current economic storm is a top priority for Massachusetts, we acknowledge that simply weathering the storm is not enough. We must do more. We must strengthen our systems, programs and services for all children and youth from every neighborhood in every corner of the Commonwealth. We must join forces and take action that will enable us all to emerge from these challenging times stronger than ever before.

We offer the following report as a foundation for a shared mission to move Massachusetts forward. Developed with input, advice and ideas from more than 600 citizens from across the state as well the resources, studies and best practices of countless youth organizations and initiatives, this call for collaborative action is rich and relevant. More importantly it is responsive the needs and challenges of individuals, communities and the Commonwealth.

We hope the information and ideas advanced in this report will serve as a universal blueprint for action, providing anyone, anywhere with a glimpse of what is necessary and of what is possible. We will not rest until all Massachusetts children and youth are thriving.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Action Planning Team

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MASSACHUSETTS ACTION PLANNING TEAM (APT)

More than 100 strong, the members of the Massachusetts Action Planning Team resolved to work together to define and advance a set of shared goals and strategies to improve the lifelong odds for all children and youth in our state. Including representatives of nearly all Massachusetts United Ways, 14 state government agencies, 40 local and regional leaders and 19 youth representatives, the Action Planning Team's composition and collaborative approach is unprecedented.

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INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of the work of the Commonwealth Readiness Project, Governor Patrick released an Education Action Agenda that made a new promise for public education in Massachusetts. The new promise—to prepare all students to be lifelong learners and successful, contributing citizens in a world economy and global society—calls for a fully integrated, coherent, seamless 21st century education system that begins at birth and continues through higher education and beyond.ⁱ

On the state’s foundation of high expectations, rigorous standards and strong accountability, the Governor challenged all stakeholders in Massachusetts to confront a series of challenges that include fierce international competition, an outdated curriculum as well as stubborn achievement gaps and the need for stronger external supports for students and families. In fact, the Governor acknowledged that eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps will happen only when all children and youth have access to the educational and other resources and interventions on par with those available to middle-class families.ⁱⁱ

“No single actor”, the Governor’s Education Action Agenda states, “can generate the scale of reform required, and no single action will yield the scope of advancement needed. Working together, however, we can press ahead, implementing actions and strategies that will help get us all ready for success in the 21st century.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Heeding this clarion call, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services joined forces and entered a partnership with the Forum for Youth Investment^{iv} to launch a series of groundbreaking conversations across disciplines, state government agencies, and sectors. This unique and collaborative initiative, guided by the Massachusetts Action Planning Team (APT), drew on the expertise and experience of more than six hundred citizens, activists, educators, youth development workers and young people from around the state.

The APT adopted the Forum’s planning approach and collaboratively defined the desired outcomes for all children, youth and families. Next, the APT collectively identified the barriers to achieving those outcomes as well as a series of indicators by which to measure progress toward the outcomes. Through this work, the APT was able to highlight a series of strategies capable of lifting all children, youth and families toward self-sufficiency and lifelong success. **Finally, the APT also made a new promise: *We will not rest until all Massachusetts children and youth are thriving.***

From the Youth Worker Perspective . . .

“Always believe in the possibilities of young people and strongly commit to an asset-based approach where young people feel their cultures and background are always valued. Help young people connect their lives to the reality of their surroundings and instill in them an unwavering sense of hope. Teach them how to create plans-of-action to take the future head-on.”

— **Mai Du**

American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay

THE CURRENT REALITY

Massachusetts has consistently ranked high among states that provide positive opportunities for youth. For example, our students' educational performance in 4th and 8th grade reading and math was rated the highest in the country by the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress and we have aggressively reduced the number of uninsured through a national model of healthcare reform.^v Moreover, even in these turbulent times, our economy is supported and advanced by a world-class higher education system.

A Message from the Youth of Massachusetts

See beyond our age, the color of our skin, our zip codes and our accents.

Don't be surprised by our intelligence or our aspirations.

Believe in us.

We are capable.

We are here and will reach our potential if you give us the opportunity.

See us. Hear us. Engage us.

Help us to open our eyes and let us help you to open yours.

Encourage us. Push us. Work with us.

We are part of the solution.

Show us how to displace fear and demonstrate courage. And we will gain confidence.

Instill in us an unwavering sense of hope.

Teach us to use our voices, our abilities, our talents.

We are ready.

However, Massachusetts' relative, overall success masks significant, complex and stubborn challenges. Nearly 10,000 students dropped out of high school in the 2007/2008 school.^{vi} While the overall uninsured rate for children 18 and under in Massachusetts is very low (1.2%), the majority of those that are uninsured are from low- and moderate-income families.^{vii} Children from these families are more likely to die as infants, suffer from lead poisoning, asthma and childhood obesity.^{viii} In Massachusetts, "the rate of child poverty persists and, even in better economic times, has proved resistant to change."^{ix} Moreover, Massachusetts has the fourth largest income divide (the difference between what the wealthiest and poorest residents earn) in the nation and ranks third in the nation in how fast the income divide is growing.^x

As unsettling as this data is, it is even more so when disaggregated for subgroup populations. The correlation between income and academic achievement, economic stability and civic engagement remains too strong. Graduation rates, for example, vary widely between urban and suburban districts with affluent districts like Swampscott and Marblehead graduating almost 87% of students in 2007/2008 compared to Lawrence, which graduated only 40% of its students during the same time.^{xi} Moreover, White and Asian students graduate at significantly higher rates than Blacks and Latinos. For example, while the graduation rate for white students was 86% in 2007/2008, it was only 68% for Black and 58% for Latino students.^{xii} Similar differentials face students with disabilities both in MCAS success and in graduation rates.^{xiii} We know that students that do not graduate from high school earn almost half a million dollars less over a lifetime than their graduating peers^{xiv} and those with disabilities will be more than twice as likely to be unemployed without sufficient intervention and support.^{xv} We also know that high school dropouts die at younger ages, experience more health problems, vote less, marry less and volunteer less than their graduating peers.^{xvi} The negative outcomes that ensue are experienced by the individual as well as by communities and the state as the absence of work opportunities and the persistence of unmitigated challenges increase the likelihood of long-term public dependency.

It is important to note that socio-economic and other disparities are not limited to student access to or performance in education. Disparities in service, support, status and outcomes persist for adults and families as well. For example, a higher proportion of African American and Latino children under 18 have insecure parental employment (47% and 51% respectively) than White children (24%).^{xvii} A higher percentage of African American and Latino children under 18 live in single-parent families (58% and 59% respectively) than White children (20%).^{xviii} In addition, 15% of Massachusetts children of immigrant parents are poor compared with 12% of U.S. born parents. And, nearly 40% of children of immigrant parents are low-income, compared with 25% of children with native-born parents.^{xix}

These sobering statistics and the thus far relentless disparities they reveal belie the fact that there are incredibly successful programs and practices throughout the Commonwealth that serve children, youth and families well. Indeed, throughout our state, there is a critical and meaningful network of services and supports that help every day to open opportunities and secure the futures of thousands.^{xx} However, to ensure positive outcomes for **all** children, youth and families, the complementary efforts and resources of many partners—from state and local governments, businesses, community not-for-profits to foundations, advocates as well as youth and families—must rally around common goals.

Working together within the following framework for action, we can link islands of excellence and expand pockets of progress to grow the web of what works to reach and catch those most in need.

GALVANIZING PRINCIPLES

Improving lifelong prospects for youth requires sustained, systems change that begins with a shared vision and a commitment to positive youth outcomes rather than a commitment to any particular program or practice. Here in the Commonwealth and across the nation, there are outstanding examples of efforts and initiatives that are working. However, these successful models are independent, isolated examples reaching a limited audience in a particular place at a particular time. We have yet to break the never ending cycle of addressing symptoms rather than systems.

Galvanizing Principles

- Seek systems change.
- Promote early and sustained investment.
- Address the whole child.
- Focus first on those most in need.
- Remember that learning and opportunities to nurture positive youth development occur everywhere.
- Acknowledge that youth, families, and leaders are part of the solution.
- Focus on eliminating disparities.
- Build cultural competence and improve the quality and reach of programs and services.

With this report, the Massachusetts Action Planning Team has launched a new approach. Thinking holistically and from the vantage point of a child or youth who needs to leverage every opportunity, the Action Planning Team specifically sought to draw a horizontal thread through independent efforts and initiatives to create a clear path to a better future for Massachusetts' children and youth, including those with disabilities. Beginning with a conversation about the outcomes desired for children and youth, the APT was quick to acknowledge the importance of establishing a common language and common principles to ensure the desired results and the greatest return on financial investments. In addition, the APT noted that a collective commitment to positive youth development must begin early in a child's life—at birth—and equally important, it must be sustained over time. A strong early intervention program, for example, must be complimented by a strong primary education experience with the necessary continuing supports and interventions. Without such continuity, research shows that gains and advantages quickly dissipate.^{xxi}

Investments, the APT agreed, must be made with all dimensions of positive youth development in mind because quite simply, all dimensions are inextricably linked. A sleep-deprived student who comes to school cannot capitalize on learning opportunities in the same way that a well-rested student can. A young working parent without consistent, affordable access to high quality childcare is less likely to keep a job much less climb the economic ladder.

From the Youth Perspective...

“I have always had the ability to be a leader but as a youth, can only put that ability—and therefore my voice—to work when I am given the **opportunity**.”

— **Melissa Aybar**

We must, the APT concluded, act on what we know.

We know, for example, that strong investments in early education and care yield future savings. For every \$1 spent on quality early education, we save \$16 by reducing the need for special education, children repeating grades, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, high school dropouts, long-term welfare and incarceration.^{xxii} We know that on any given day in Massachusetts more than 50,000 school-aged children and youth as well as 50,000 younger children are homeless. We also know that homeless^{xxiii} children are more likely to have academic problems because they move frequently from school to school.^{xxiv} We know that immigrants are the fastest growing segment of the Massachusetts population, yet minorities and immigrants comprise a disproportionately high percentage of those experiencing disparities in services and supports.

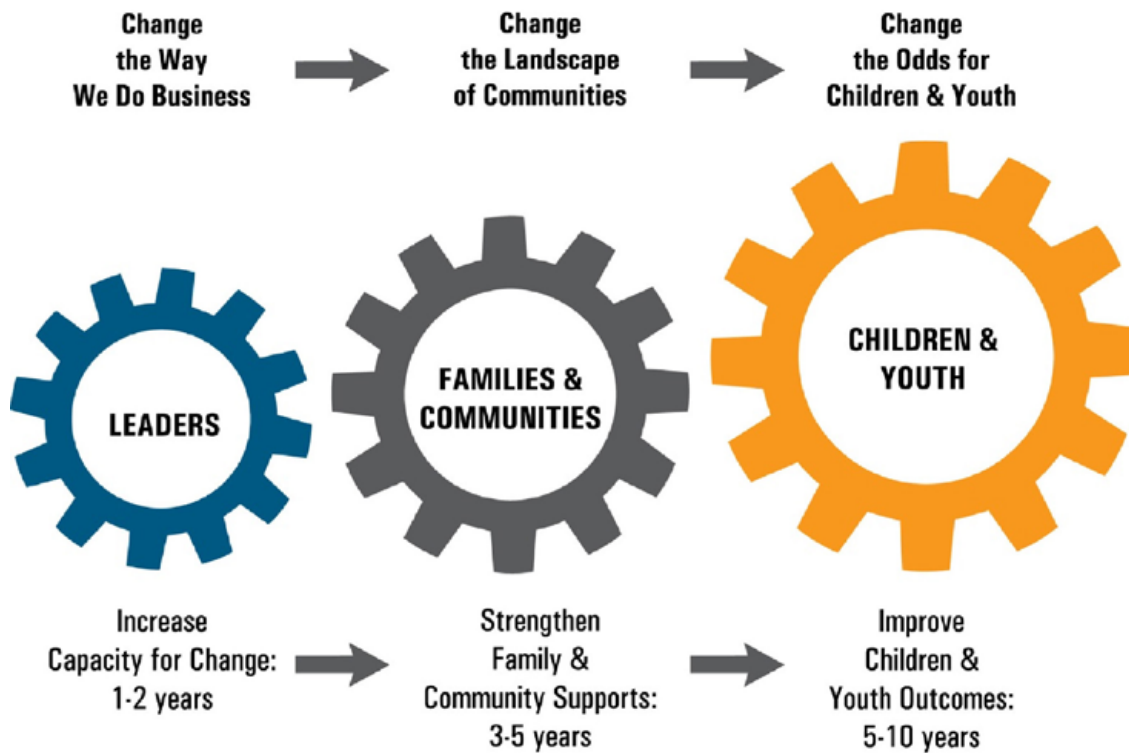
Our capacity to eliminate disparities once and for all depends on our political will and our ability to channel resources, assistance and service to those in our communities that need it most.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION: OUTCOMES & INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

As experts and practitioners in myriad aspects of child and youth development, we recognize the complicated nature the work ahead. Moreover, we acknowledge that we must stand shoulder to shoulder with all partners and challenge them as we challenge ourselves to think differently about what we do and how we do it.

Together we must force a fundamental shift in approach that is driven by the outcomes that all children and youth deserve.

As part of this new approach, we must for example acknowledge that learning and opportunities to steward children toward better futures occur all day, every day, in every place where children, youth and adults interact. From homes, schools and after-school programs to the public library and the corner store, each and every adult has an obligation to give their best to children and youth. Leaders at all levels must be willing to change the way they do business so that the landscape of communities evolves. Leaders must work harder than ever to link together supports and services for families so they leverage one against the other, combining to change the odds for children and youth.



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Giving our best to children and youth requires that leaders, community members, families and youth themselves take action. It also requires that we share responsibility for the results. By aligning interests and resources, the members of the APT are committed to work together to inspire much needed changes in public and private planning and decision making. Working together toward specific outcomes for youth, the APT knows that improvement is inevitable.

Igniting a movement demands a clear vision. For the APT, that vision centers on the following results—***the outcomes***—due to every child, youth and family:

- All **children and youth** will be safe from harm, valued, and afforded critical opportunities to establish relationships with caring adults.
- All **children and youth** will have access to a 21st century education, complete high school and be ready for college, career and lifelong citizenship.
- All **children, youth and families** will have access to quality physical, dental and mental health and needed disability-related resources.
- All **families** will be economically stable, resilient and have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing as well as pathways toward upward mobility.
- All **communities** will be healthy, safe, enriching places to live, work, learn and play and will be rich in social and economic capital.
- All **leaders** will promote social justice, work to eradicate the root causes of racism and discrimination and will foster the development of competent, committed new leaders who will be accountable and responsive to the needs of children, families and their communities.

To achieve these outcomes we must recognize and maximize the unique contributions that each segment of society can contribute. Then, with all of us reaching to improve the odds for children and youth, we must employ progress indicators by which we can hold ourselves and one another accountable.

The statewide system of supports for children, youth and families is intricate and complex. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge that a broad range of actors, actions and initiatives—federal, state and local—can drive simultaneous progress toward multiple outcomes. The value of the systems approach championed by the Forum for Youth Investment and adopted by the Massachusetts APT, is that coordinated—and measurable—action toward consensus outcomes, common goals and shared strategies creates an opportunity for consistency of purpose, concentration of resources and achievement of stronger results.^{xxv}

To that end and with the results for all firmly in mind, the APT collaboratively identified specific indicators—*actual data points*—which consistently collected and analyzed over time, can be used to track collective progress toward improving outcomes for Massachusetts’ children, youth and families. The APT sought public input on measures and metrics through an online survey (see results in appendix), through focus groups with youth, and through the expertise of the APT members. The APT indicators were then analyzed against measures and metrics that have been identified by the multiplicity of state agencies that serve children, youth and families.

To guide organizations, agencies and even individuals to think about the impact of their actions, programs, services, the APT linked each indicator to a particular outcome. The APT calls upon all who care about children, youth and families to use the following data points to track collective progress toward each result. By focusing on the data, we will know how well we are all doing in our work.

Outcome Statement:

All children and youth will be safe from harm, valued, and afforded critical opportunities to establish relationships with caring adults.

Indicators

- Bullied in school
- Skipped school due to feeling unsafe
- Unwanted sexual contact
- Department of Children and Family adoptions
- Children/Youth in foster care
- DYS detentions
- Perceived parent or adult family support
- Youth homicide victims
- Restraint use
- Violent crime arrests for youth ages 10-24
- Youth with formal mentors

Outcome Statement:

All children and youth will have access to a 21st century education, complete high school and be ready for college, career and lifelong citizenship.

Indicators

- Number of licensed early education care programs
- 3rd grade literacy
- 4 and 5 year high school graduation rate
- Percentage of students passing the 10th Grade Math and English Language Arts MCAS
- Percentage of students achieving proficiency on 10th Grade Math and English Language Arts MCAS
- Incidences of student mobility
- Higher education enrollment
- Higher education persistence
- Teens & young adults disconnected from both school & work
- Youth participation in volunteer opportunities
- 688 student adult placement rates
- Voter registration rates for 18-24 year olds
- Summer youth employment

Outcome Statement:

All children, youth and families will have access to quality physical, dental, mental health and disability-related resources.

Indicators

- Uninsured Children & Youth
- Percent of insured Massachusetts by type of insurance
- Overweight/Obesity
- Mental Health/Feeling Sad and Depressed
- Access to and compliance with IEP and related disability supports
- Premature mortality
- MassHealth children and youth (under age 22) that clients that receive behavioral health screenings as part of pediatric visits
- MassHealth children and youth (under age 22) that receive necessary dental care

Outcome Statement:

All families will be economically stable, resilient and have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing as well as pathways toward upward mobility.

Indicators

- Adult employment/unemployment rate
- Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year round employment
- Children and youth living below 200% poverty level
- Homeless families with children
- ABE/ESOL
- Availability of housing/home ownership

Outcome Statement:

All communities will be healthy, safe, enriching places to live, work, learn and play and will be rich in social and economic capital.

Indicators

- Average per capita income in Massachusetts
- Highly qualified teacher retention
- Community unemployment rate
- Aggravated assaults
- Domestic violence homicides
- Availability of afterschool, out-of-school and summer learning

Outcome Statement:

All leaders will promote social justice, work to eradicate the root causes of racism and discrimination and will foster the development of competent, committed new leaders who be accountable and responsive to the needs of children, families and their communities.

Indicators

The Massachusetts Action Planning Team struggled to identify compelling available indicators to measure progress on the leadership results statement. The Forum for Youth Investment is working to address the lack of related data on a national scale. As new indicators become available, we encourage them to be integrated into the ongoing work in Massachusetts.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

As all stakeholders collectively work to support continuous progress toward the defined outcomes as measured by tracking the identified indicators of progress, the APT has adopted the following six consensus goals with the power to put a vibrant and productive future within the reach for every Massachusetts child and youth:

1. Provide a 21st century education;
2. Create pathways for economic security and upward mobility;
3. Promote optimal physical and behavioral health;
4. Strengthen state and local communication, collaboration and data sharing;
5. Build safe and connected communities; and
6. Cultivate shared leadership and civic engagement.

Below, the APT offers a series of strategies to advance each goal and encourages leaders and practitioners at every level to make these strategies their own. Through the implementation of action steps tailored and responsive to the population and community each serves yet consistent in purpose, we will together make a difference. As action plans are developed and implemented, the APT urges all stakeholders to take note and take action to do the following as never before:

- **Listen to youth and their families and make them part of the solution.**
Attention to the thought and counsel of youth and families must not be through a single conversation but rather through an ongoing conversation and partnership. All who serve children, youth and families must make a special effort to engage those we serve so that our work is constantly responsive to real world needs, constraints and opportunities.
- **Tackle racism and discrimination directly.**
Despite decades of focus and attention to improving service and supports for all, the data makes it crystal clear that our efforts are not enough. All who serve children, youth and families must pledge to eliminate racism and discrimination, including discrimination associated with poverty, gender, linguistic capability and sexual orientation. The youth involved with the work of the APT called clearly upon the adults of the Commonwealth to be active partners for social justice and advocates for equality of service.
- **Foster as many quality adult-youth relationships as possible.**
In a rapidly changing world with an evolving social dynamic, strong adult-youth relationships remain a beacon for a bright future. All who serve children, youth and families must work to ensure that every child and youth has in their life the greatest possible opportunity to benefit from these life-anchoring relationships.
- **Seek and nurture a new generation of state and local leaders.**
Civic engagement is essential for children and youth to understand the world around them and their place in it. All who serve children, youth and families must look now at emerging leaders in their communities and mentor them toward ever stronger participation in creating their future and the future of those around them.

With a concerted and collective effort to reach the following goals by employing the following strategies, we greatly increase the odds of transforming lives, strengthening communities and securing the future of the Commonwealth.

Goal #1: Provide a 21st Century Education

Education and schooling can no longer be viewed as one in the same—the world in which we live demands an entirely new perspective and an entirely new approach. Teaching and learning must be encouraged and enabled everywhere for everyone. Emphasizing rigor, relevance and real world connections, education must include a strong emphasis on academic content as well as professional and employability skills. Equally important, all segments of society must work together to eliminate academic achievement gaps and educational attainment disparities to ensure that every student is well-positioned to take advantage of every learning opportunity.

Strategy 1:

Continuously improve the quality, rigor and relevance of education curriculum and ensure that student assessments adequately measure all that is required for success in post-secondary education, work and life.

APT Identified Actions: Ensure smooth transitions from each level of education to the next; Eliminate the need for remedial college courses for entering freshmen; Use international benchmarks to gauge academic performance; Improve the MCAS; Develop appropriate secondary and post-secondary independent living and vocational education opportunities for students with disabilities.

Strategy 2:

Ensure that youth learning seamlessly integrates core academic content with global awareness, financial literacy, health literacy and information, communication and technology literacy.

APT Identified Actions: Build better understanding of the value of a 21st century education; Improve early literacy, ensuring that all children can read by grade 3; Facilitate successful transitions from elementary and middle and middle to high school; Increase rigor and improve relevance of the state's academic standards and frameworks; Align and maximize learning and after school, out-of-school and summer programs.

Strategy 3:

Improve access to quality learning opportunities before kindergarten, in school, afterschool and out-of-school, including summer, that emphasize hands-on, experiential and service-learning to reinforce core academic content knowledge and build the professional and employability skills and capacities necessary to succeed in the world economy and global society.

APT Identified Actions: Increase graduation rates; Emphasize project-based curriculum; Align school and after school learning opportunities; Promote the use of existing and appropriate public facilities for after school and out-of-school time programs; Integrate service-learning, work readiness, summer learning, summer employment and other work exposure opportunities where possible; Generate opportunities for youth voice and leadership at all levels.

Strategy 4:

Increase the quality of, access to, and coordination of professional development opportunities for educators and all those working with youth.

APT Identified Actions: Promote strong, culturally appropriate relationships among youth, teachers, providers and adults; Train teachers and youth workers on youth leadership development; Establish regional centers for professional development; Assure commitment to positive behavioral approaches across education and human service systems; Develop understanding of positive outcomes for youth with disabilities; Institute standards for after school and out-of-school time programs; Allow college credit for participation in high-quality after-school and out-of-school time programs; Improve induction and mentoring for new educators and youth workers.

Strategy 5:

Increase communication, collaboration and coordination of education, health, behavioral health, and other human services and supports to facilitate learning in school and in after-school and summer programs.

APT Identified Actions: Establish mechanisms for local collaborative planning for integrated service delivery; Increase placement of school-based liaisons to foster relationships and connect students and families to services and supports; Expand network of full service schools; Support incentives for schools to collaborate with community-based afterschool programs; Emphasize family engagement initiatives.

Goal #2: Create Pathways for Economic Security and Upward Mobility

Education and schooling can no longer be viewed as one in the same—the world in which we live demands an entirely new perspective and an entirely new approach. Teaching and learning must be encouraged and enabled everywhere for everyone. Emphasizing rigor, relevance and real world connections, education must include a strong emphasis on academic content as well as professional and employability skills. Equally important, all segments of society must work together to eliminate academic achievement gaps and educational attainment disparities to ensure that every student is well-positioned to take advantage of every learning opportunity.

Strategy 1:

Provide and promote multiple pathways to higher education, jobs and careers so that every youth has the best opportunity for economic security and upward mobility.

APT Identified Actions: Eliminate financial barriers to higher education; Create linkages among employers, high school youth and mentoring programs to build supportive infrastructures; Target disconnected youth with strategies that include mentors, wrap-around services, education completion and career guidance; Increase outreach to private sector employers with support services for youth and parents; Expand youth worker credentialing; Guarantee transfer of credit among higher education institutions.

Strategy 2:

Ensure that parents/caregivers have access to educational opportunities to build skills that will advance their role in the current and future economy.

APT Identified Actions: Support financial literacy and individual development accounts; Increase access to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and sector-based skills training and pathways; Support bridge programs to post-secondary education.

<p>Strategy 3: Improve and expand culturally relevant outreach and access to benefit programs related to basic needs.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Promote benefit programs such as Earned Income Tax Credit and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Expand Mass211; Use recommendations from Mass. Asset Development Commission; Address disparities in access to services and supports.</p>
<p>Strategy 4: Reform juvenile and criminal justice systems and policies to enable youth and adults to get on and stay on pathways to economic self-sufficiency.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Support CORI reform that eliminates barriers to employment; Reduce disparities in juvenile/criminal justice system.</p>
<p>Strategy 5: Promote and where necessary develop alternative, affordable and accessible systems of transportation and housing for families in need.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Focus on “housing first”; Use recommendations of Mass Commission to End Homelessness; Focus on vulnerable youth such as homeless and those aging out of state systems care; Invest in public transportation particularly where accessibility is a barrier; Expand affordable and transit-oriented housing.</p>

Goal #3: Promote Optimal Physical and Behavioral Health

Health and well being are fundamental building blocks for successful lives and strong communities. Student achievement, job performance, career success and even effective parenting, depend on physical, dental, emotional and behavioral health. In a comprehensive system, early detection and the services and supports to foster resiliency to trauma and positive decision-making are paramount.

<p>Strategy 1: Ensure universal access to health insurance and culturally appropriate health care services.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Reduce and monitor disparities in access to health care; Use data to monitor disparities and utilization of health insurance and services.</p>
<p>Strategy 2: Create a comprehensive system for early detection, intervention, and prevention regarding physical, mental, behavioral, other disability-related and dental health services.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Make mental health and depression screening, training, toolkits and consultation more readily available to health care professionals; Improve access to early screening and intervention for health, mental health, behavioral health, other disability-related and dental health issues; Support programs/services that increase youth coping/resiliency skills; Use data to monitor across multiple agencies and systems.</p>

Strategy 3:

Establish a family-focused, integrated system of community and healthcare services with the needs of children, youth and families at the center.

APT Identified Actions: Improve school support services (nurses, guidance counselors, social workers, mental health services, school-community coordinators) particularly in low-income communities; Promote collaborative school-community services and supportive school environments for youth and families; Develop common intake/assessments, where applicable.

Strategy 4:

Maximize outreach, education and public awareness of the need and benefit of healthy lifestyles.

APT Identified Actions: Market and promote positive behaviors and resiliency in media; Distribute existing parent resources and information to multi-cultural audiences; Expand parent skill-building opportunities; Support youth-led healthy lifestyles campaigns; Ensure community voice in determining priority issues.

Strategy 5:

Ensure sensitivity to equal access and care for all within the health care industry with a commitment to culturally competent practices.

APT Identified Actions: Require cultural competency training; Promote diversity within the healthcare workforce; Ensure policies and procedures to limit barriers and encourage recruitment and participation of underrepresented populations in the health care workforce.

Goal #4: Strengthen State and Local Communication, Collaboration and Data Sharing

Massachusetts has consistently ranked high among states that provide positive opportunities for youth and our students' academic performance consistently tops that of our national peers. Nevertheless our relative, aggregate success in both domains masks significant, complex and persistent gaps and disparities across demographic subgroups. Cross-sector communication, collaboration and appropriate data sharing are necessary for Massachusetts to ensure that our strong record of service and support reaches every child, youth and family.

Strategy 1:

Create a State of Massachusetts Youth Agenda to be supported, advanced and collaboratively delivered by the state agencies and departments that serve children, youth and families.

APT Identified Actions: Use the work of the APT as a foundation for a state government agenda for youth.

<p>Strategy 2: Develop a comprehensive, integrated child and youth data warehouse and reporting system.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Expand the state’s dropout early warning and prevention pilot to include earlier student data as well as key data elements from sectors beyond education; Develop and implement a tool that will enable student education and other critical information to easily move with the student from school to school.</p>
<p>Strategy 3: Improve the quality and scope of state-collected and reported data.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Standardize race and ethnicity data definitions and collections in throughout state, municipal and community agencies and systems, including MassCourts data; Review and act on the APT data development recommendations included at Appendix 4.</p>
<p>Strategy 4: Apply data to continuously move low-income families toward economic sufficiency and advancement by aligning programs and services with the economic climate, employment trends and client needs.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Leverage regional employment data to direct regional programs and practices; Apply emerging industries and workforce data to development of community college and workforce training programs; Increase access to ABE/ESOL.</p>

Goal #5: Build Safe and Connected Communities

This goal is focused on community-level change. This goal asks the adults and leaders of a community to act in the best interest of their children and youth by modeling caring, nurturing relationships with youth, working together to support common goals, ensuring a welcoming environment and connecting the dots of community assets on behalf of the well-being of its children.

<p>Strategy 1: Connect youth to caring adults and create opportunities—formal and informal—for positive youth/adult interactions.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Support high quality adult and peer mentoring opportunities for youth; Connect high-risk disconnected youth to youth outreach workers, employers, health/mental health caregivers, caring community members and Others; Support youth-police relationships.</p>
<p>Strategy 2: At both the state and community level, provide a comprehensive range of targeted services and supports to high risk, disconnected, and/or court involved youth, and their families.</p> <p><u>APT Identified Actions:</u> Reduce use of secure detention; Create interagency partnerships among state agencies serving this population; Provide comprehensive community-based services to youth in state custody emphasizing sustained success; Ensure access to substance abuse treatment services for youth and adults; Support transition services.</p>

Strategy 3:

Support efforts to create an open and welcoming environment for all within the community.

APT Identified Actions: Improve professional development and organizational policies related to racism and enhancing cultural competency in all sectors, particularly those dealing with high-risk and system-involved youth; Support youth-led and other community initiatives that model positive actions and showcase best practices towards unity; Ensure highest risk youth (particularly court-involved) have access to quality legal services and advocacy to ensure fair treatment and quality defense.

Strategy 4:

Provide meaningful opportunities for youth engagement and leadership within the community at schools, community-based organizations, local government, etc.

APT Identified Actions: Create youth seats on school committees, recreation commissions, mayor’s advisories, statewide coalitions, community-based organization boards and other entities that directly serve youth.

Strategy 5:

Establish community action plans to coordinate public-private resources that reduce the numbers of youth dropping out of school, recover disconnected youth and reduce youth violence in high-drop out and high crime communities.

APT Identified Actions: Implement an annual youth violence prevention training bringing together youth and adults; Support anti-bullying and other school safety initiatives; Extend the reach of the ESE Early Indicator Index; Expand the age of students covered by the ESE Early Indicator Index; Ensure adequate and appropriate interventions and supports for youth identified as at risk.

Goal #6: Cultivate Shared Leadership and Civic Engagement

This goal is a bold statement calling on all leaders to stand up and model new ways to do business that put our children and youth first. As stated earlier, a challenge for Massachusetts and other states is to develop measurable indicators to track progress against this goal. We will work with the Forum for Youth Investment, as they lead a national effort to move the needle within a select group of states. In addition, this goal builds the awareness and skills of all leaders—everyone can be a leader (family heads of household, elected officials, organizational and business leaders, youth, employees, state and local government officers, teachers, faith leaders, etc.)—to shape the future and guide our current youth generation as they advance into leadership positions

Strategy 1:

Leaders will measure every decision and action for its ability to improve the lives of every child and youth in Massachusetts.

APT Identified Actions: Develop performance measures; Set targets for improving indicators; Reinforce the plan; Create tools for evaluating performance; Develop a children’s report card and budget based on the results we want to achieve and youth opinions of where we are.

Strategy 2:

Leaders will support and participate in effective and innovative collaborations and partnerships at all level of communities, organizations and government.

APT Identified Actions: Coordinate and map activities of coalitions/collaborations and engage them in shared sustainability for Action Plan; Share data systems and information; Identify common tool for measuring effectiveness of collaborations; identify gaps and barriers in communities; Use promising practices from around the state and the world.

Strategy 3:

Leaders will create multiple pathways for diverse and representative leadership to emerge.

APT Identified Actions: Funders increase support for leadership training; strengthen intergenerational leader relationships and mentoring; Provide youth empowerment and leadership from early ages; Design internal leadership programs to include new and diverse staff; Embrace a broader definition of leadership.

Strategy 4:

Leaders will foster opportunities for youth to be civically engaged.

APT Identified Actions: Implement an annual youth violence prevention training bringing together youth and adults; Support anti-bullying and other school safety initiatives; Extend the reach of the ESE Early Indicator Index; Expand the age of students covered by the ESE Early Indicator Index; Ensure adequate and appropriate interventions and supports for youth identified as at risk.

Strategy 5:

Leaders will create an inclusive system that values input and feedback from diverse entities and supports a system of governance that values communication, transparency and integrity.

APT Identified Actions: Offer ongoing curriculum on anti-racism and diversity for professionals, leaders and youth; funders require organizational action plans for improving diversity at all levels; Jointly develop “Mass. Gold Standards for Leadership and Diversity.”

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The Massachusetts Action Planning Team commends the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, and United Ways throughout Massachusetts for creating the unprecedented partnership that enabled this work. With their vision and leadership, public and private sector leaders, activists and service providers who share nothing more than a passion for children and a commitment to make a difference, have had the opportunity to collectively create a comprehensive set of reality-based recommendations.

We also thank the following individuals and organizations for their leadership, support and dedication to the project: Elizabeth Gaines and Karen Finn of the Forum for Youth Investment; Peg Sprague, Lisa Pickard, Bithiah Carter, Karley Ausiello, Laurita Kaigler-Crawlle and Annie Chin-Louie of United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley; Tim Garvin of United Way of Central Massachusetts; Kathy Betts and Glenn Daly of Executive Office of Health and Human Service; and Michele Norman of the Executive Office of Education.

Finally, we offer special thanks Karen Pittman whose motivating keynote address at the United Way's January 2008 inspire4life Summit launched this work and what we hope will be a movement for improvement in the Commonwealth. We also applaud the myriad state agencies and departments and the entire Massachusetts Action Planning Team that participated so readily and completely shared research, talent and expertise.

APPENDIX # 1: Summary of the Process

This plan was developed through a series of three two-day retreats between October 2008 and January 2009 utilizing the Forum for Youth Investment’s Ready by 21[®] Approach. The Ready by 21 Approach uses a research based and field tested developmental framework and offers a process and set of tools that brings precision to the passion that many have for preparing young people for college, work and life. The APT organized their work around the Forum’s guided process, Take Aim, Take Stock, Take Action and Track Progress, to conduct a full assessment of the situation for children and youth in Massachusetts and to develop a plan to maximize efforts with collective responsibility and shared accountability. This planning process was also informed by research on what exists in Massachusetts currently, input from over 600 participants in stakeholder webinars, community surveys and discussions with existing coordinating structures (task forces, councils, coalitions, etc.) and of course the expertise of the members of the Action Planning Team.

In order to have real ownership of the plan an extended opportunity to work together, incorporate diverse voices, affirm a set of common principles review data, look at what is already in place and engage young people the following process was used with the APT. Behind the scenes the EOHHS, UWMB/MV and the Forum team worked to incorporate and synthesize the many concurrent Massachusetts children and youth related moving trains—those permanent change structures or existing initiatives that are moving a big issue or effort forward.

<p>Step #1 Create Action Planning Team</p>	<p>Invite key stakeholders across sectors. Identify “moving trains” in Massachusetts that need coordination. Engage other stakeholders and key informants throughout the process.</p>
<p>Step #2 Core Principles and Vision Statement</p>	<p>Develop “Core Principles” as overarching beliefs and create an inspirational vision statement.</p>
<p>Step #3 Outcomes Statements and Indicators</p>	<p>Identify outcomes statements that will get us to our vision. “What we want to achieve for children and youth, families, communities, and leaders.”</p> <p>Identify powerful data indicators to track progress against result statements.</p>
<p>Step #4 Contributing Factors and Goals</p>	<p>Consider what stands in the way of success for each indicator, particularly addressing the gaps when disaggregated. Synthesize to find the common themes and similar factors into goals that impact many of the indicators.</p>
<p>Step #5 Strategies and Action Steps</p>	<p>Account for existing strategies and develop new strategies and action steps that will impact the based on best practices.</p>
<p>Step #6 Shared Accountability and Implementation</p>	<p>Create an implementation and sustainability structure with clear accountability mechanisms and ways of tracking progress.</p>

APPENDIX #2: Indicator Data Set

Outcome Statement:

All children and youth will be safe from harm, valued, and afforded critical opportunities to establish relationships with caring adults.

Indicators

- **Bullied in school**

Twenty-two percent of students reported being bullied at school in the past year. Being bullied included being repeatedly teased, threatened, hit kicked, shunned or excluded by another student or group of students.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs/>

- **Skipped school due to feeling unsafe**

In 2007, five percent of students skipped school at least once in the 30 days before the survey because they felt unsafe either at school or on their way to or from school.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs/>

- **Unwanted sexual contact**

Overall, 11 percent of high school students reported being physically hurt (e.g., shoved, slapped, hit or forced into sexual activity).

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs/>

- **Department of Children and Family adoptions**

In Fiscal Year 2008, the Department of Children and Families legalized 780 adoptions.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/fy09_quarter1.pdf

- **Children/Youth in foster care**

As of September 30, 2008, 8963 children and youth throughout Massachusetts were in foster care.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dss/fy09_quarter1.pdf

- **DYS detentions**

In 2008, there were 4459 pre-trial admissions, a decrease from 5438 in 2006.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dys/annual_report_2007.pdf

- **Perceived parent or adult family support**

In 2001, 76% high school students reported at least one parent or adult family member they could talk to about things that are important.

In 2007, the percent had climbed to 84%.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs>

Outcome Statement:

All children and youth will have access to a 21st century education, complete high school and be ready for college, career and lifelong citizenship.

Indicators

- **Number of licensed early education care programs**

In March 2009, the Department of Early Education and Care reported that there were 168,597 licensed family-based early education and care providers and 59,194 licensed center-based programs in Massachusetts.

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/AAGReport.pdf>

- **3rd grade literacy**

In 2008, 56 percent of all third graders scored proficient or higher on the English Language Arts MCAS exam designed to assess reading comprehension.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2008/results/summary.pdf>

- **4 year high school graduation rate**

For the 2008 student cohort, 81.2% of Massachusetts public high school students graduated in four years. However, there are significant gaps in the graduation rates among different subgroups. Specifically, among the race and ethnicity subgroups for the 2008 four-year cohort, there was a 28.4 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest groups, Asians and Hispanics.

http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/o8_4yr.html

- **Percentage of students passing the 10th Grade Math and English Language Arts MCAS**

In 2008, 93 percent of all students passed the 10th Grade English Language Arts MCAS, 88 percent passed the Math MCAS.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2008/results/summary.pdf>

- **Percentage of students achieving proficiency or higher on 10th Grade Math and English Language Arts MCAS**

75 percent of all students scored proficient or higher on the 10th grade English Language Arts MCAS in 2008. 72 percent of students scored proficient or higher on the Math MCAS.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2008/results/summary.pdf>

- **Incidence of student mobility, high school**

Of the 2008 student cohort, 65,324 students attended one high school, 9,645 attended two high school, 1,818 students attended three high schools and 506 students attended four or more high schools.

http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/o8_4yr.html

- **Higher education enrollment**

In 2008, 41 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds in Massachusetts were enrolled in college.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/42/ac/f7.pdf

- **Higher education persistence**

Sixty-eight percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/42/ac/f7.pdf

- **Teens & Young Adults disconnected from both school & work**

In 2007, six percent of Massachusetts teens and young adults were reported being disconnected from both school and work (down from 8 percent in 2003).

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/stateprofile.aspx?state=MA&group=DataBook&loc=23>

- **Participation in volunteer opportunities**

In 2001, 40% of high school students reporting being involved in volunteer activities. In 2007, that percentage had climbed to 45%.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu.cnp?hprograms/yrbs>

Outcome Statement:

All children, youth and families will have access to quality physical, dental, mental health and disability-related resources.

Indicators

• **Uninsured Children & Youth**

Only 1.2 percent of children aged 0-18 in Massachusetts are lacking health insurance coverage. However, uninsurance among children in Massachusetts was highest for those with the lowest family income. Between 2% and 3% of children with family income less than 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) were uninsured at the time of the survey, while none of the higher-income children were uninsured. In addition, uninsurance was highest among Hispanic children in Massachusetts, with 2.6% uninsured.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dhcfpr/survey/o8his_coverage_rev.doc

• **Percent of insured Massachusetts residents by type of insurance**

Among Massachusetts residents with insurance coverage, the majority of children (70%) and non-elderly adults (81%) had employer-sponsored coverage, while 89% of elderly adults were covered by Medicare. Children were twice as likely as non-elderly adults to be enrolled in public or other coverage (29% versus 15%).

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dhcfpr/r/survey/o8his_coverage_rev.doc

• **Overweight/Obesity**

Eleven percent of middle school students were overweight in 2007; 11% of high school students were overweight in 2007

<http://www.doe.mass.gov/cnp/hprograms/yrbs>

• **Mental Health/Feeling Sad and Depressed**

Seventeen percent of Massachusetts middle school students reported feeling so sad or depressed daily for at least two weeks that they discontinued usual activities.

<http://www.doe.mass.gov/cnp/hprograms/yrbs>

• **Enrollment in MassHealth**

In 2008, 781,000 were enrolled in MassHealth up from 705,000 in 2006.

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dhcfpr/pubs/09/key_indicators_May_09.pdf

Outcome Statement:

All families will be economically stable, resilient and have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing as well as pathways toward upward mobility.

Indicators

• **Adult employment/unemployment rate**

The Massachusetts unemployment rate rose from 8.0 percent in April 2009 to 8.2 percent in May 2009, while the national unemployment rate rose from 8.9 percent in April to 9.4 percent in May, the highest rate since August 1983.

http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/Current_Month_unemploymentnet.asp

Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- **Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year round employment**

In 2007, 32% of children in Massachusetts were living in families where no parent had full-time, year round employment.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/stateprofile.aspx?state=MA&group=DataBook&loc=23x>

- **Children and youth living below 200% poverty level**

In 2007, 26% of children and youth in Massachusetts were living at 200 percent below poverty level.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrosstates/Rankings.aspx?loct=2&by=a&order=a&ind=47&dtm=329&tf=18>

- **Homeless families with children**

In June 2009, there were 2,899 homeless families with children in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

- **ABE/ESOL**

In Spring 2007, the waiting list for ABE/ESOL services reached more than 24,000, 38% of those on the waiting list were males; 62% were females.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Outcome Statement:

All communities will be healthy, safe, enriching places to live, work, learn and play and will be rich in social and economic capital.

Indicators

- **Average per capita income in Massachusetts**

Personal per capita income in Massachusetts (2005 data) was \$46,299 compared to \$36,714 nationally.

<http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/states/25000.html>

- **Highly qualified teacher retention**

In Massachusetts, 96.5 percent of teachers in core academic classes throughout the state are “highly qualified” as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind law. In low poverty districts the percentage is 97.4 percent; in high poverty districts it is 94.7 percent.

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/staterc/enrollment.aspx?fyCode=2008>.

- **Community unemployment rate**

Data available through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

http://lmiz.detma.org/Lmi/lmi_lur_a.asp

- **Aggravated assaults**

Aggravated assault rates are declining after reaching a 40 year high in 1994. Based on 2006 data, there were 18,800 aggravated assaults in Massachusetts which represents a rate of 292.1 incidents per 100,000 people.

http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_05.html

- **Domestic violence homicides**

2003: 19

2004: 34

2005: 16

2006: 28

2007: 42

2008: 25

<http://www.janedoe.org/know.htm>

Outcome Statement:

All leaders will promote social justice, work to eradicate the root causes of racism and discrimination and will foster the development of competent, committed new leaders who be accountable and responsive to the needs of children, families and their communities.

Indicators

The Massachusetts Action Planning Team struggled to identify compelling available indicators to measure progress on the leadership results statement. The Forum for Youth Investment is working to address the lack of related data on a national scale. As new indicators become available, we encourage them to be integrated into the ongoing work in Massachusetts.

APPENDIX #3: APT Data Development Recommendations

The APT encourages consideration of collection and reporting of the following data and information:

- Employment at a living wage for 18-24 year olds
- Information from a youth designed survey on youth perceptions
- Medical home data
- Data about children loving in out-of-home placements
- Parent/caregiver depression
- Educator/youth worker ethnic/racial representation
- Youth perception of police
- Level of access to and consumption of healthy food
- An asset-based measure of the community strength
- Youth tobacco use
- WIC program data included with food stamp data
- Youth STD rates
- Stronger data on type 2 diabetes v. type 1 diabetes
- Premature mortality
- MassHealth children and youth under age 22 that clients that receive behavioral health screenings as part of pediatric visits.
- MassHealth children and youth under age 22 that receive necessary dental care
- Five year graduation rate
- Availability of afterschool, out-of-school and summer learning
- Availability of housing/home ownership
- Access to and compliance with IEP and related disability supports
- 688 student adult placement rates
- Voter registration rates for 18-24 year olds
- Summer youth employment

The APT wishes to thank the Governor's Adolescent Health Council for their assistance in identifying indicators.

APPENDIX #4: Youth Input

The Action Planning Team gathered input from youth via an online opinion poll, focus groups, and Facebook. Two of the focus groups and the Facebook survey were youth driven.

A. Statewide Online Opinion Poll

In this online poll, respondents were asked to rank the top indicators the state should prioritize for youth success. 565 people completed the poll, of which 118 were ages 18 and under.

Top Ten Indicators of Youth Success—

Responses of youth ages 18 and under

Rank	Indicator	# of Responses
1	Perceived Support from Parents or Family	70
2	Safety in School and in Neighborhood	69
3 (tie)	High School Students—Alcohol and Drug Use	57
3 (tie)	Annual Dropout Rate	57
4	Volunteer Participation and Extracurricular Activities by High School Students	53
5	Voting Rates for Ages 18-29	52
6	Youth and Depression	49
7	Youth Not Working and Not in School	47
8	Weapons Related Injuries for Youth	41
9	Overweight	40
10	Sexual Behavior by Grade	39

B. Youth Focus Group at United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

Over 30 youth attended a Youth Voice Session at United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley on October 16, 2008 to discuss the results of the statewide online opinion poll on youth outcomes. Attendees came from the following organizations: Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Roca Youth Star, Sociedad Latina, Teen Empowerment, Hyde Square Task Force, Catholic Charities LaBouré Center, and the Boston Mayor's Youth Council.

Participants were broken into small groups to discuss the top five indicators selected by youth via the statewide online opinion poll. Each group was asked to discuss why the issue is important, what are the barriers to youth success for the issue, what could be done to make it better, and what should the Action Planning Team know about this issue.

Summary of what should the Action Planning Team should know about each issue:

Perceived Support from Parents or Family

- Form groups for parents and kids to talk openly
- Alert parents to problems with relationship
- If there isn't support, everything falls apart

Safety in School and Neighborhood

- Resources should go to the community, not to police
- Youth need stronger role models
- Peer mediation works

Alcohol and Drug Use

- Schools need to be more open to talking about this issue
- Youth care about this issue because they see it everyday
- There is easy access to alcohol and other drugs

Annual Drop-out Rates

- The MCAS needs reform—there is a need for the test
- Lack of commitment from adults—need smaller classes, better relationships, more school counselors
- Gang violence and drug use are directly linked to this issue

Volunteer Participation & Extracurricular Activities

- Teen centers are effective way to increase participation
- More funding is needed
- More options for youth are needed

Other Important Issues for Youth Discussed by the Focus Group

- Teen Pregnancy
- Jobs for All Youth—summer and school year
- Poverty and its overall impact on youth
- School funding—as it relates to school quality

Best Ways to Reach Youth

- Texting
- Regular Postal Mail
- Flyers
- Instant Messaging
- Email—but know that youth have several email accounts

C. Youth-led Focus Groups and Feedback Sessions

This data is in response to Youth Feedback questions about the Ready By 21 State Plan. Data was collected by Christian Brewer during January, 2009 via Facebook and an online student forum and by Naimah Petigny on January 9, 2009 via a paper survey and class discussion. Youth responses come from students at Malden High School, Malden Catholic High School, Everett High School, Reading Memorial High School and Amherst Massachusetts' Minority Students Achievement Network of Amherst High School. A total of 42 students participated.

Summary of Survey Responses

- Many youth felt like the lack of not just resources, but effective resources is lacking in our community.
- Many youth realized that it was their lack of motivation in life that is hindering their success.
- Out of all the feedback the #1 definition of success was joy and happiness and the ability to live life without struggling day to day.

- Many youth said that racism and classism were the major reasons why youth are not succeeding.
- Youth feel that they are not valued and do not have the power to change things in their lives or in the lives of others.
- Lack of funding is a critical issue.
- Although most youth do not feel as though they have a voice in their community or in their school, those that are involved in afterschool programs, extracurricular activities, and community service felt they had a platform for leadership and their voice was heard.
- General apathy in a community trickles down to youth and proves to be a barrier to youth who have ideas or projects that they want to try out.

Summary of Advice from Youth

- Add mentoring programs for all students in school.
- Afterschool programs need to challenge youth and provide true leadership opportunities.
- There needs to be more opportunity for youth and adults to work together to solve community problems.
- Afterschool programs and school enrichment and extracurricular programs are working—we just need more of them.
- Expose youth to harder school work.
- There needs to be more cultural enrichment in schools
- Remember there is power in numbers.
- Make sure to include everybody.
- Provide support so that good programs can grow and get stronger.

APPENDIX #5: Endnotes

ⁱ Ready for 21st Century Success, The Patrick Administration's Education Action Agenda, June 2008

ⁱⁱ Ibid., page 8

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., page 13

^{iv} The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21[©]: ready for college, work and life.

^v Signed into law on April 12, 2006, the landmark Massachusetts healthcare reform was enacted to provide near-universal health care coverage for the Massachusetts population. As of 2008, only 2.6 percent of Massachusetts residents were uninsured, down from 6 percent in 2006. Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority. "Health Reform Facts and Figures." <http://www.mahealthconnector.org/portal/site/connector/menuitem.d7b34e88a23468a2dbef6f47d7468a0c?fiShown=default>, June 2009.

^{vi} Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools: 2007-08. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/0708/default.html>, April 2009.

^{vii} Between 2% and 3% of children with family income less than 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) are uninsured. Long, Sharon and the Urban Institute. "2008 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey." Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, December 2008.

^{viii} 2006 Massachusetts Survey of Health Insurance Status, Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, available at www.mass.gov/eohhs2/docs/dhcfp/r/surveys/res_o6_report_methods.doc

^{ix} Child Poverty in Massachusetts A Tale of Two States. Massachusetts Kids Counts and Massachusetts Citizens for Children, September 2008, page 8.

^x *ibid*

^{xi} Sum, Andrew and Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. "Youth Development Indicators for Educational and Workforce Development Programs in Massachusetts at the State, Regional, and Local WIB Service Delivery Areas." Commonwealth Corporation, April 2009.

^{xii} Cohort 2008 Four-Year Graduation Rates - State Results. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/08_4yr.html, February 2009.

- ^{xiii} Only 64 percent of special education students graduated in four years in the 2008 cohort, compared to 81 percent of all students. Similarly, only 35 percent of special education students scored proficient or higher on the English Language Arts MCAS, compared to 71 percent of all students and only 33 percent scored proficient or higher on the Math MCAS, compared to 68 percent of all students. Cohort 2008 Four-Year Graduation Rates - State Results. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/08_4yr.html, February 2009 and Spring 2008 MCAS Results: Summary of State Results. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2008/results/summary.pdf>, September 2008.
- ^{xiv} Sum, Andrew and Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. "An Assessment of the Labor Market, Income, Health, Social, Civic and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Massachusetts Adults in the 21st Century." Boston Youth Transitions Task Force and Boston Private Industry Council, January 2007.
- ^{xv} Over the course of their working years (16-64), high school dropouts, on average, will create a net fiscal burden to government of nearly \$221,000. High school graduates will contribute approximately \$205,000 more in individual tax payments and employer contribution—than they will receive in transfers from the government during their working years. Sum, Andrew and Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. "The Fiscal Economic Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Estimates of the Tax Payments and Transfers Received by Massachusetts Adults in Selected Educational Subgroups." Boston Private Industry Council, January 2007.
- ^{xvi} Sum, Andrew and Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University. An Assessment of the Labor Market, Income, Health, Social, Civic and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Massachusetts Adults in the 21st Century." Boston Youth Transitions Task Force and Boston Private Industry Council, January 2007.
- ^{xvii} Average of 2004, 2005, 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement of Current Population Survey, National Center for Children in Poverty, available at www.nccp.org (from Tale of Two States)
- ^{xviii} Ibid.
- ^{xix} Ibid.
- ^{xx} See Appendix X for a list of some of the many model programs in Massachusetts.
- ^{xxi} Currie, J. & Thomas, D. (1995). Does Head Start Make a Difference? *American Economic Review*, 85, 341-365.
- ^{xxii} Rolnick, Art "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return," Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. March 2003.
- ^{xxiii} Child Poverty in Massachusetts A Tale of Two States. Massachusetts Kids Counts and Massachusetts Citizens for Children, September 2008, page 11.
- ^{xxiv} Child Poverty in Massachusetts A Tale of Two States. Massachusetts Kids Counts and Massachusetts Citizens for Children, September 2008, page 12.
- ^{xxv} forumforyouthinvestment.org
- ^{xxvi} During the course of their work together, the members of the Massachusetts Action Planning Team (APT) proposed sample actions that would generate progress toward particular goals. The APT Identified Actions are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to offer examples of the kinds of initiatives that can be undertaken to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

