



**PRESS RELEASE
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Contact: Tim Sippel, (508) 365-4487, sippelt@worcesterschools.net

**The Early College Worcester Program receives two grants from the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - \$150,000
Full School Impact Planning Grant and \$75,000 Expansion Planning Grant**

WORCESTER, Mass. – The [Worcester Public Schools](#) and the [Early College Worcester](#) program have been awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to help design and develop an impactful, large scale, or "full school" immersive Early College model. The \$150,000 [Early College Full School Impact Planning Grant](#) is designed to help schools develop an immersive model for education that allows students the opportunity to graduate high school with a minimum of 30 college credits.

In addition, [Quinsigamond Community College](#) and the [Early College Worcester](#) program have been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to significantly increase the scale of the existing Early College Worcester program. The \$75,000 [Early College Expansion Planning Grant](#) is awarded to expand the current scale of early college programs to serve a minimum of 25% of each grade level by FY24.

The Early College Worcester program is a collaborative effort of the [Worcester Public Schools](#), [Quinsigamond Community College](#), and [Worcester State University](#).

"In Worcester, we are committed to expanding the Early College Program in all our high schools. We are excited for our students and for the opportunities that this program provides them," said Maureen Binienda, Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools. "Our program is unique as it involves seven high schools and two colleges working seamlessly together to provide successful college preparation and onboarding experiences for students through a supportive environment. The success of the Early College Worcester Program serves as a model to other districts. We are excited to share our continued learnings with others."

The Early College Worcester (ECW) program has provided free college classes, college preparatory workshops, and wrap-around supports to thousands of Worcester Public Schools students since 2018. ECW is the largest early college program in the state with

over 2,000 students to date. The Full School Impact Planning Grant will allow the Early College Worcester program to work with the school and broader community so that students at [Claremont Academy](#) have an opportunity to earn a minimum of 30 college credits while satisfying their MassCore/high school graduation requirements. Existing Early College Worcester programming will continue to be offered to all students in the Worcester Public Schools and expanded thanks to the Expansion Planning Grant.

“I want to congratulate the Worcester Public Schools and the Early College Worcester Program on receiving not one, but two grants. Early college programs prepare students for higher education, increase attendance rates, and even decrease the cost of a bachelors or associates degree,” said Mayor Joseph M. Petty. “This is an important tool in the tool box as we look for more students to matriculate into higher education. Congratulations to Worcester State University and Quinsigamond Community College. I’m looking forward to seeing these grants in action in the years to come.”

“We are excited to expand our partnership with the Worcester Public Schools and Quinsigamond Community College to provide greater access to the students of the Worcester Public Schools,” said Barry M. Maloney, President of Worcester State University. “Early College Worcester offers WPS high school students the ability to succeed in college classes in a supportive environment, which builds students’ confidence, reduces the overall cost of higher education, and engages the Worcester community.”

“The Early College Worcester program has been providing WPS students college readiness opportunities such as college credit course offerings, support services, and career awareness. This program has already made college a reality for many Worcester students, particularly those historically under-privileged and under-served. This new innovative, immersive Early College model will now take the Early College Worcester program to the next level,” said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. “Expanding our existing Early College model enables more students to realize their dreams of a better life through higher education. This helps our students, their families, and our community. “

“I am very excited about this grant and the opportunities it will extend to our students here at Claremont Academy,” said Angela Plant, Principal of Claremont Academy. “I look forward to working with our school community, families, pre-existing partners and new partners to strengthen the pathway to college and career.”

To learn more about the Early College Worcester program and the exciting early college work in Worcester, please visit earlycollegeworcester.org.

About Early College Worcester

The Early College Worcester Program (ECW) is a secondary/post-secondary partnership involving Worcester Public Schools (WPS), Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), and Worcester State University (WSU). This program enables WPS high school students to participate in college and career readiness activities and college credit course offerings. The activities and courses are offered at the high school or on the QCC or WSU campuses. Students earn college and high school credits at the same time. The goals of the ECW program are to increase the percentage of students who are college ready, receive a high school diploma, enroll in college, and persist in college. To learn more, visit earlycollegeworcester.org.

About Worcester Public Schools

Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is an urban school district located in the heart of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is the second largest PreK-12 school district in the state. It is comprised of 34 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 4 comprehensive high schools, 1 technical school, two 7-12 schools and several alternative programs. There are over 24,000 students in the district from many diverse backgrounds, speaking over 74 languages. To learn more, visit worcesterschools.org.

About Quinsigamond Community College

Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) provides the community with high quality, affordable higher education in Worcester County. As a regional leader in education and workforce development, QCC serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible, and high-quality programming leading to transfer, career, and lifelong learning. To learn more, visit qcc.edu.

About Worcester State University

Worcester State University (WSU) is a liberal arts and sciences university with a long tradition of academic excellence. WSU offers 60 undergraduate majors and minors, 29 master's degrees, post-baccalaureate certificates, and graduate programs, and real-time access to online, noncredit professional training. Our accreditation by the New England Commission on Higher Education, Inc. (NECHE) demonstrates that our liberal arts and sciences curriculum meets or exceeds its criteria for assessment of quality. To learn more, visit worcester.edu.