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College and Career Web Portal to Prepare Massachusetts Students for Success

BOSTON – MEFA announced today the selection of Boston-based ConnectEDU, Inc., to develop the “College and Career Web Portal,” a key strategy of the Patrick Administration's Readiness Project to help prepare all Massachusetts students for college and career readiness and success.

The College and Career Web Portal will provide students with a single point of entry for the online tools needed to plan, prepare for, research, apply to and pay for college. The portal will play a key role in the Commonwealth's overall efforts to promote college and career readiness and success.

“The College and Career Web Portal will ensure that students who have worked hard and made every effort to qualify for college academically do not miss their opportunity for higher education,” said Secretary Reville. “I am thankful to the staff at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education as well as MEFA for their leadership on this important project which will help facilitate greater access to college for a greater number of students.”

The free service will be available to all Massachusetts students, beginning with those in middle school. Phase one of the portal is scheduled to be available in the fall.

“We are pleased about the opportunity to provide access and resources that students need to pursue higher educational and career opportunities,” said ConnectEDU President and CEO, Craig Powell. “Our collective efforts will bring together in a single, secure location all of the tools and key players, including colleges, students, counselors and parents, to help put the focus and priority on the students and their life goals.”

The project is part of the Governor's Readiness Project and the focus on preparing every student for postsecondary education, career and lifelong economic, social and civic success. Specifically, the Governor's Education Action Agenda cited the need to prioritize the state's commitment to and investment in a robust high school-to-college web portal.

"We are pleased to be collaborating with our partners in education to provide state-of-the-art tools, the clearest possible information, and a simplified process for students to prepare for and succeed in college. Increasing access to higher education will spell a great future for the Commonwealth," said Richard M. Freeland, Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education. "At the same time, we are thrilled with all of the other goals that we can achieve with this portal, including the visibility and efficiency that it will bring to our educational institutions whose resources are scarce. In the current economy, gains like these are also invaluable."

"No one should be deterred from pursuing a higher education because applying was too complicated, they missed a deadline or they got bad information from an unreliable source," said Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. "In today's global economy a college education is essential and the development of this portal will be a critical step in our efforts to simplify the application process and make higher education more accessible to all students."

The College and Career Web Portal Project is a collaborative effort among the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and MEFA, the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority.

"MEFA is committed to increasing access to higher education, and the College and Career Website will provide students comprehensive support to pursue a college degree," said Thomas Graf, Executive Director of MEFA.

The College and Career Web Portal will offer significant online resources and tools for students, parents and school counselors to learn about and manage the college application and financing process, including:

- Personal accounts for students to store information about colleges, monitor progress toward high school graduation, and store data needs on college admission forms
- Test preparation tools, including practice exams and tutorials to prepare for tests such as the SAT
- Virtual campus tours
- The ability to research potential scholarships and grants
- Tools to estimate the cost of college and apply for financial aid online, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- The ability to track and manage multiple college applications and letters of recommendation
- Tools for completing college applications
- A mechanism to send high school transcripts to colleges electronically
- Resources for financing higher education

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