

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts

LearnLaunch/MAPLE: James McManus, 617-413-9232, jim@sloweymcmanus.com
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Jacqueline Reis, 781-338-3115

First-Ever Analysis of Personalized Learning in Massachusetts Schools Reveals Need for More Professional Development and 24/7 Technology Access for Urban Students

BOSTON, MA – October 5, 2017 - [The MAPLE \(Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech\) Consortium](#), a new public-private partnership between the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) and the [LearnLaunch Institute](#), announced the results of the first-ever statewide analysis of the progress Massachusetts public school districts are making in transforming their teaching practices from the 20th century “stand and deliver,” whole class model to a more tailored, 21st century personalized learning model.

In the first analysis of this type conducted across an entire state, the [Landscape Analysis on Personalized Learning in Massachusetts](#) examined learning and teaching experiences across the Commonwealth, surveyed schools’ technical readiness, and identified emerging practices in leading districts.

“Personalized learning” is an umbrella term for efforts to accelerate student learning by tailoring the instructional environment — the what, when, how and where students learn — to address the individual needs, skills and interests of each student. The aim is to ensure that every Massachusetts student is fully prepared for college and career success in a competitive global employment marketplace. Survey participants identified the desire to differentiate instruction, to engage students and to address increasingly diverse student needs as drivers to personalize.

The analysis found that while traditional classroom practices still dominate most schools, some districts, such as Natick, Revere, Millis and Andover are making great strides. The study also found that more time for embedded professional development for teachers remains a critical need. Over 70% of survey respondents reported that giving teachers more opportunities to work with colleagues and visit other schools to see personalized learning in action would be the most helpful for making this transformation.

Finally, the study identified gaps in technology readiness between schools that serve economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers, particularly in students’ access to devices to engage in 24/7 learning. Urban districts, with the highest proportion of such students, face the biggest challenge in that regard, with only 12% of schools having sufficient devices to offer 24/7 learning experiences for all their students.

Andre Ravenelle, Superintendent of Fitchburg Public Schools (a MAPLE member district) and President of the Urban Superintendents Network, said, “The students in all of our districts are capable of achieving at a high level. This study confirms that we still have significant work to do in both teacher preparedness and technology access if we are to meet the needs of all students.”

Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner of Education Options for Massachusetts, said, “We believe our most important education priorities in the Commonwealth — early literacy, middle school mathematics, and innovative high school pathways, will require greater personalization of instruction. MAPLE’s analysis will help give us a benchmark to measure our progress in the next few years.”

This report is just the beginning of an effort by MAPLE to better understand the support schools need to make the successful transition to next-generation learning models. David O’Connor, the Executive Director of MAPLE,

said, “Massachusetts is well positioned to demonstrate that high standards and personalized learning can co-exist. This analysis highlights the need to invest in supporting teachers and principals with stronger and more innovative professional development.”

About the MAPLE Consortium

[The Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech \(MAPLE\) Consortium](#) is a public-private consortium hosted by the LearnLaunch Institute and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. MAPLE aims to catalyze personalized learning throughout Massachusetts K-12 education. As a consortium of 33 districts, MAPLE is dedicated to connecting districts and schools with necessary resources – a strong peer learning community, professional learning, digital tools, funding strategies, technology partners, and a rich evidence base – to create innovative models of teaching and learning to improve student engagement and achievement. MAPLE is supported by the Barr Foundation and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Learn more at www.learnlaunch.org/MAPLE or follow @LearnLaunch #MAPLE.

About the LearnLaunch Institute

[LearnLaunch Institute](#) catalyzes a community that drives innovation to transform learning and increase achievement. Our education innovation ecosystem mobilizes educators, entrepreneurs, learners, investors, and industry affiliates. As a nonprofit, the Institute offers learning opportunities and connections to individuals, support services to schools, and a district network. We believe in expanding access to learning that is engaging, personalized, and effective. Edtech is a critical component of achieving this vision at scale. For more information and our upcoming events, visit www.learnlaunch.org or follow us @LearnLaunch.

About the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is proud to support a public education system that is a national leader and among the best worldwide. The Department's work focuses on strengthening curriculum, instruction, and assessment; improving educator effectiveness; supporting social-emotional learning, health and safety; turning around the lowest-performing districts and schools; and using data and technology to support student performance. www.doe.mass.edu

###