

# Executive Summary

To celebrate the Rennie Center's 10-year anniversary of the Condition of Education Report, we are highlighting programs and practices with particular relevance in our contemporary education landscape. The practices and program models highlighted in this year's retrospective fall into four categories: Early Education and Care, Instructional Practices, Student Wellbeing, and College and Career Pathways. In our years of conducting research, sharing evidence-based data, developing policy proposals, and facilitating communities of practice with the field, we have found that these four categories represent critical stages of a student's development and academic journey that require holistic support from all stakeholders, from birth to career. Though not every important component of students' educational experience and development can be included in this report, we hope the strategies outlined below offer high-leverage starting points for schools and communities to consider.

## EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

### Provide Accessible & Affordable High-Quality Early Childhood Programs

- Braid public and private resources through collaborative partnerships that build on existing public school and community offerings
- Connect early educators with opportunities for ongoing professional training that align with their schedules and current responsibilities

### Support Two-Generation Programming

- Create partnerships that support career pathways for parents and caregivers (such as job training and mentorship) along with learning experiences for young children

### Assess Kindergarten Readiness

- Use consistent, locally adapted screeners to determine how schools can best support students' acclimation and adaptation to the school environment

## INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

### Support Educators

- Empower educators to identify their own learning priorities and provide time and resources for developing appropriate supports
- Establish professional learning groups that are culturally responsive and designed to intentionally connect educators across schools and communities

### Adopt High-Quality Instructional Materials

- Select instructional materials using evidence-based sources such as CURATE, an initiative that convenes MA educators to review evidence on curricular quality

### Provide After-School and Out-of-School Enrichment

- Connect students with programs that emphasize the importance of social-emotional and academic enrichment, especially when school is not in session

### Coordinate Data & Assessment

- Develop a framework bringing together academic results, surveys, school administrative data, and other sources of information to provide a fuller picture of students' experiences

## STUDENT WELLBEING

### **Develop Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems**

- Build a multi-tiered system of support to foster students' mental health and success across all developmental domains, including social-emotional, behavioral, and academic

### **Create Holistic Learning Experiences**

- Pair children with adults who can help them access tailored supports and opportunities inside and outside of school

### **Engage & Elevate Student, Family, and Community Voice**

- Rather than attempting to develop social-emotional skills in isolation, ensure social-emotional learning is infused within curricular materials, including by adopting curricula that promote student voice and are led by students' own passions and interests
- Form Children's Cabinets to bring together local stakeholders to develop a shared and collective vision for supporting children's learning, healthy development, and wellbeing

## COLLEGE & CAREER PATHWAYS

### **Offer Competency-based Learning Experiences**

- Shift to more personalized academic programming that enables students to progress based on their mastery of skills and content, not seat time
- Provide opportunities to earn high school and college credits and/or certificates through a variety of in-school and out-of-school learning experiences

### **Forge Career Pathways**

- Support students to chart their own path to a career by exploring their individual skills and interests and how those align with potential professions
- Develop collaborative partnerships with local MassHire boards and employers to offer in-person, virtual, or hybrid options for career exploration, paid internship experiences, participatory assessments, and vocational-technical opportunities

### **Establish Early College Programming**

- Create sustainable systems for partnership between high schools and institutions of higher education to prioritize building early college programs that feature equitable access, robust academic pathways, student support, and connections to careers

To learn more about these strategies in action, follow the link below for the full Retrospective Action Guide:

