North Central MA: Portrait of a Graduate

Summary Results of Educator and Student Responses

February, 2022
Today's Flow

- High Level
- Bright Spots & Areas for Growth
- Differences
- Leveraging Bright Spots for Growth
HIGH LEVEL
GRADUATES CAN:

Adapt

Explore

Contribute

Aspire

Thrive

Connect

GRADUATES ARE

Confident Communicators

Critical & Creative Thinkers

Problem Solvers

Self-Aware

Responsible

Changemakers
As of January 13, 2022, a total of 2,284 students completed the survey.
Student School District (N = 2,174)

- **Fitchburg**: 24% (n = 528)
- **Gardner**: 10% (n = 217)
- **Leominster**: 49% (n = 1058)
- **MWCC**: 9% (n = 186)
- **Winchendon**: 9% (n = 185)

**Note:** 36 dual enrollment students completed the survey at their home high schools.
BRIGHT SPOTS AND ROOM FOR GROWTH
Graduates Can…..

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Somewhat Agree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

2 = Somewhat Agree

1 = Strongly Disagree
Graduates Are.....

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Somewhat Agree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

2 = Somewhat Agree

1 = Strongly Disagree
Bright Spots According to Students

69% or more of the Students somewhat or strongly agree that they:

78% Know how to use professional communication methods

74% Actively listen and ask questions to further a conversation

74% Deliver information in a clear and concise manner
Bright Spots According to Students

69% or more of the Students somewhat or strongly agree that they:

- **77%** Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals

- **73%** Understand that their story is unique, but others' stories have important value

- **72%** Seek opportunities to align themselves with their goals and vision for their future
"Through group activities I feel I am given an opportunity to thrive because I can learn a lot from others that can be applied in areas where I might need improvement."

"I’d have to say that I’ve had the most opportunity to become a confident communicator at school through my shop since we have to work on actual customer cars and we have to learn how to speak to customers properly."

"I am in the Youth Venture at school, which helps kids serve their community and follow their dreams."

"When we get assigned group projects that we can all work on together [we can] communicate and form a bond."
Room For Growth According to Students

55% or fewer of the Students somewhat or strongly agree that they:

- Develop **financial literacy** 40%
- Seek knowledge with **everyday life applicability** (e.g., cooking) 47%
- Understand how **curricular material connects to the real world** 54%
- Determine a plan to seek help when faced with struggles with their **mental or physical health** 54%
Room For Growth in Students' Own Words

"I would have taken financial topics or a budgeting class but it was not offered or made aware to me until my senior year, in which I am obviously trying to take a math class that I need for college."

"I personally think this school isn't told to teach to be prepared for the real world. They pile on work, they make us take tests alone, [and] there is only ever one solution to a very broad question...."

"I feel like mental health isn’t talked about/cared about enough and how it affects our school lives and daily lives."
Bright Spots According to Educators

70% or more of the Educators somewhat or strongly agree that students:

73% Use their skillsets and resources to solve problems they see in the world

73% Seek opportunities to find things they're passionate or curious about and pursue them

72% Are able to meaningfully contribute to creating a better world

72% Identify career interests based on an understanding of passions, skills, and real-life practice
Bright Spots According to Educators

70% or more of the Educators somewhat or strongly agree that students:

- **72%** Practice empathy and compassion to those in their world
- **71%** Advocate for themselves regarding their needs and wants
- **71%** Advocate for self and beyond
"The social justice class this year is awesome at getting the students to connect."

"Students that get involved in community-minded activities such as Link Crew contribute and connect, show empathy and leadership, and help others which builds and develops skills needed beyond high school."

"[Students thrive] in an open classroom where students are constructing their own knowledge through hands on activities or inquiry or team work."

"I...see students who participate in clubs, sports, and extra curricular activities expand themselves and their world."
Room For Growth According to Educators

55% or fewer of the Educators somewhat or strongly agree that students:

- Develop financial literacy 38%
- Seek first to understand, then be understood 45%
- Seek knowledge with everyday life applicability (e.g., cooking) 47%
- Recognize their civic duty and educate themselves to contribute meaningfully 51%
- Prioritize purposeful solutions that result in an action plan to develop both short and long-term goals 54%
55% or fewer of the Educators somewhat or strongly agree that students:

- Examine the challenges that exist in their world and take responsibility to overcome them 55%
- Demonstrate a willingness to take academic risks 55%
- Refine, strengthen, and redesign ideas fluently 55%
- Feel empowered to lead and join teams in making a difference 55%
- Understand the democratic process and how the community is part of a larger whole 55%
"We encourage all students to think critically and problem solve. However, we are limited in the courses we can offer that provide the hands-on experiences many students crave."

"Every student has the opportunity to contribute, but for some it is difficult for them to recognize and give back when they are the ones in need."

"Would like to see initiative that shows students to be proactive when they have issues or need help with something class related, and to take ownership of the issue, rather than relying on instructors to solve the problem for them."

"I can see most students being able to identify needs, but not knowing how to address them."
DIFFERENCES
**Preparing For an Academic Future**

*Educators* were significantly* more likely than students to somewhat or strongly agree that students are able to:

- Meaningfully contribute to creating a better world (THRIVE): 91% versus 81%

- Identify career interests based on understanding of passions, skills, and real-life practices (SELF AWARE): 89% versus 81%

- Create a plan for life after high school, considering college, other learning, career, and military (SELF AWARE): 89% versus 80%

- Develop skills that allow them to interact with a collegiate and career environment (ADAPT): 89% versus 80%

Chi-Square, $p < .001$
Preparing For an Academic Future in Educators' Own Words

- "[Students do best] through classes with higher teacher expectations. Classes and activities that are goal oriented."

- "All students have the opportunity to explore their interests/passions by creating meaningful relationships in the community through internships."

- "Due to students being willing to do the hard work and having the grit to persist, AP classes present the most opportunity. Additionally, students willing to work hard and have determination also have the same opportunity in the college prep classes."

- "I think the variety of class subjects and clubs offers our students the opportunity to choose an area of interest and explore it further."
Meeting Non-Academic Challenges

**Educators** were significantly* more likely than students to somewhat or strongly agree that students are able to:

- Establish a sense of belonging and contribute to an inclusive community (SELF AWARE): 91% versus 80%
- Determine a plan to seek help when faced with struggles with their mental or physical health (ADAPT): 83% versus 73%

*Chi-Square, p<.001
Meeting Non-Academic Challenges in Educators' Own Words

- "We are working hard to create an inclusive environment, welcoming all students and families."

- "I feel and have observed students thriving, if they have a comfortable and comprehensive connection with their teacher."

- "Some are very resilient but others are not - some can find and seek out help well but others do not. We provide many of opportunities for students for mental health outreach. There are more students than people to help."

- "Students feel that they can connect to teachers and support staff and other students. They share struggles and do well with connecting. That being said there are groups, and the connections are strongest within those groups."
Communicating Effectively

**Students** were significantly* more likely than educators to somewhat or strongly agree that they are able to:

- Deliver information in a clear and concise manner, in person, in writing and for a digital world (CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS): **91% versus 82%**

- Know how to use professional communication methods, including email, telephone, and in-person (CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS): **91% versus 78%**

*Chi-Square, p<.001
Communicating Effectively in Students' Own Words

- "In speech class I’ve been able to go out of my comfort zone in many ways and all the ways have helped me become a better listener and a confident communicator."

- "In my Honors Junior Composition class we had to interview people which force me out of my comfort zone since 'I don't want to bother others.'"

- "I’ve been able to be a confident communicator during sports. When asked to demonstrate a certain drill or if someone asks me questions on how to correctly do something I’m usually pretty good with helping them and giving them tips on how to do better."
Problem-Solving

**Students** were significantly* more likely than educators to somewhat or strongly agree that they are able to:

- Seek first to understand, then be understood (CONNECT): 85% versus 68%
- Refine, strengthen, and redesign ideas fluidly (CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKERS): 85% versus 76%
- Prioritize purposeful solutions that result in an action plan to develop both short and long-term goals (PROBLEM SOLVERS): 86% versus 77%
- Recognize their civic duty and educate themselves in order to contribute meaningfully (CONTRIBUTE): 84% versus 76%

*Chi-Square, p<.001
Problem-Solving in Students' Own Words

- "In GSA we are able to listen to other people problems and help them and we don’t judge each other."

- "Sports can help you think about what will come next and a plan for the next thing you will do. Like in football, you have to plan out your next move to get a touchdown."

- "[I can think critically and creatively when] what I am being taught forces me to critically think for myself and applies to the real world."
Students:

In their own words...

Curriculum
Culture
Equitable Access
"When I’m in English class we always talk about the future."

"When we are having [discussions] like a debate or such that is when I learn and that helps me see from others’ eyes."

"[I thrive] when teaching is more creative rather than sitting down and doing textbook work, or learning in a fun environment like outside."

"When we have to present projects or speak in front of the class it makes it easier when we will have to do that in the real world and in future jobs".

"I have had the opportunity to become a confident communicator in class discussions, whether I am verbally contributing or if I am just observing what others are saying and feeling."
"[I can think critically and creatively when] what I am being taught forces me to critically think for myself and applies to the real world."

"At school I had the most opportunity to become a changemaker by civics class and learning about the government and everything you can do."

"I like that we had different electives to choose from this year it makes my day more interesting."

"When I'm given guidelines for something, but still allowed to be as creative as I want."
"My classes force me to be responsible, because I know that in teamwork, if I don't do my work, I badly affect all of my teammates's project as well."

"I feel like I have the most opportunity to connect at my school when I can learn with my friends and when we help each other solve problems. This is especially evident for me in math classes."

"When teachers make me feel like I can do it and try to help me if I’m not understanding instead of giving me answers and expect I get it."

"English class where we are pushed to explain [our] opinions and respect others while learning from each other."
"[I am responsible] when people are making fun or being rude to another student and I stick up for them."

"My teachers definitely played a huge part in my success. I feel as though i can talk to certain ones which ends up helping my mental health and mindset towards school in the long run."

"I would say I have the most opportunities to thrive when I'm in interactive classes, meaning the students and teachers talk with one another not only about academics but about other things going on and can build a sense of relationship and comfort to make is easier to work in that environment."

"Being treated more like a young adult makes me feel more responsible for my own things."
"Where I have the opportunity to thrive at my school is at my Spanish class. There I am able to express myself and talk freely. I am able to learn new words even tho I am a first language Spanish speaker."

"I've been self aware for a while now and one thing I've been aware of is my learning style and how different it is to the styles a teacher teaches. It's been a hard 12 years because no teacher has truly understood how I learned nor even really tried and it's just easier for them to give me a low grade...."

"I think that I am a confident communicator in the LatinX Heritage Club, where we are able to talk with each other in our languages and learn about our cultures."
"Black heritage club can make me change people perspectives about black people and how important they are in the USA back then and now."

"I hate that I have to go home everyday and feel like my needs aren't being met and that all my learning needs are being neglected....I sometimes feel less than other because of my ADHD. My teachers make it a big deal to inform me that struggling to focus will result in me failing and making me feel like ADHD is such a weakness."

"Thanks to my school I have had the opportunity to thrive at my work and my personal life. I do not need any more nobody to translate me from English to Spanish, and that means a lot for me."
OVERALL

- Connection 1:1
- High Expectations and Positive Regard
- Belonging to an Inclusive Community
- Real World Opportunities
- Academic and Mental Health Support
Connection 1:1

Do you have one or more friends at this school that cares about you? That you can rely on for help?

Do you have one or more adult at this school that cares about you? That sees you as more than a student? That you can rely on for help?
High Expectations and Positive Regard

Do adults in this building have high expectations for you? Do the adults in this building help you meet those expectations?

Does one of more adult in this school make you feel safe? Comfortable?
Belonging to an Inclusive Community

Do you feel like you belong to this school community, overall? Why or why not?

Do you have smaller communities within the school that you feel like you belong to?

Which aspects of your identity feel most welcomed at this school? Least welcomed?
Real-World Opportunities

What happens at this school that connects you to the real world now? What happens in this school prepares you for the real world in the future?

Where do you feel least prepared? What would help you feel more prepared?
Academic & Mental Health Support

Do you have one or more adults in this school you can turn to for academic support? Do you get all of the academic support that you need?

Do you have one or more adults in this school you can turn to for mental health support? Do you get all of the mental support that you need?
What ideas are starting to form?
What ideas are being reinforced?
Student Response Differences by Grade
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Meaningfully contribute to creating a better world" (THRI
*VE)\(^*\) (n = 1,477)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th Graders</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th Graders</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th Graders</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th Graders</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The "other" category was excluded from the analysis because there was not enough data from that group.

*Chi-Square, p < .001
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Understand how curricular material connects to the real world" (CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKER)* (n = 1,141)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Graders</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Graders</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Graders</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Graders</td>
<td>68%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The MWCC and "other" category were excluded from the analysis because there was not enough data from these groups.

*Chi-Square, p < .001
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Develop financial literacy" (RESPONSIBLE)* (n = 1,006)

- 9th Graders: 59%
- 12th Graders: 58%
- 11th Graders: 52%
- 10th Graders: 43%

Note: The MWCC and "other" category were excluded from the analysis because there was not enough data from these groups.

*Chi-Square, p < .001
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Create a plan for life after high school, considering college, other learning, career, and military" (SELF AWARE)* (n = 1,005)

- 12th Graders: 88%
- 9th Graders: 80%
- 11th Graders: 78%
- 10th Graders: 43%

Note: The MWCC and "other" category were excluded from the analysis because there was not enough data from these groups

*Chi-Square, p < .001
Student Response Differences by Race/Ethnicity
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Develop financial literacy" (RESPONSIBLE) (n = 978)

- Hispanic/Latino: 63%
- Asian: 59%
- Mixed Race: 59%
- Black/African American: 56%
- White: 47%

Note: Students from other racial/ethnic groups were excluded from the analysis because there was not enough data from these groups

*Chi-Square, p < .001
Student Response Differences by Special Circumstances*

*First language not English; ELL; Low Income; First Generation College Eligible; Learning Accommodations
Percent of students who somewhat or strongly agreed with: "Seek first to understand, then be understood" (CONNECT)* (n = 1,313)

- At Least One Special Circumstance: 86%
- No Special Circumstances: 79%

Note: "Special Circumstances" include: First Language Not English, English Language Learner Services, Low Income Family, First Generation College Eligible, or Learning Accommodations Services

*Chi-Square, p < .001
LEVERAGING
How might you leverage a bright spot to address an area for growth?
Fitchburg: Bright Spots

Educators:

1. Confident Communicators: Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
2. Confident Communicators: Demonstrate a willingness to become culturally competent
3. Thrive: Advocate for myself regarding my needs and wants

Students:

1. Confident Communicators: Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
2. Confident Communicators: Know how to use professional communication methods, including email, telephone, and in-person
3. Connect: Understand that my story is unique to me, but other's stories have important value
Fitchburg: Room for Growth

Educators:

1. **Thrive:** Pursue activities outside their comfort zone
2. **Thrive:** Use my skillset and resources to solve problems I see in my world
3. **Responsible:** Develop financial literacy
4. **Responsible:** Seek knowledge with everyday life applicability (cooking, vehicle maintenance, etc)
5. **Connect:** Seek first to understand, then be understood

Students:

1. **Responsible:** Develop financial literacy
2. **Confident Communicators:** Develop an understanding of how visual communications are developed and perceived
3. **Confident Communicators:** Understand nonverbal communications and their influences on interpretation of meaning
4. **Adapt:** Determine a plan to seek help when faced with struggles with mental or physical health
Gardner: Bright Spots

Educators:

1. Thrive: Meaningfully contribute to creating a better world
2. Self-Aware: Identify career interests based on understanding of passions, skills, and real-life practice
3. Self-Aware: Create a plan for life after high school, considering college, other learning, career, and military

Students:

1. Confident Communicators: Know how to use professional communication methods, including email, telephone, and in-person
2. Confident Communicators: Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
3. Confident Communicators: Demonstrate a willingness to become culturally competent
Gardner: Room for Growth

Educators:

1. Responsible: Develop financial literacy
2. Responsible: Seek knowledge with everyday life applicability (cooking, vehicle maintenance, etc)
3. Explore: Utilize critical thinking skills to solve challenges with others and my world
4. Contribute: Recognize my civic duty and educate myself in order to contribute meaningfully

Students:

1. Aspire: Practice skills in environments in which I may not be totally comfortable
2. Critical & Creative Thinkers: Refine, strengthen, and redesign ideas fluidly
3. Explore: Pursue opportunities for more hands-on experiences and internships to enhance my education
Leominster: Bright Spots

Educators:

1. **Thrive:** Advocate for myself regarding my needs and wants
2. **Explore:** Seek opportunities to find things I'm passionate or curious about and pursue them
3. **Explore:** Pursue opportunities for more hands-on experiences and internships to enhance my education
4. **Contribute:** Practice empathy and compassion to those in my world

Students:

1. **Confident Communicators:** Know how to use professional communication methods, including email, telephone, and in-person
2. **Confident Communicators:** Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
3. **Connect:** Understand that my story is unique to me, but other's stories have important value
Leominster: Room for Growth

Educators:

1. Responsible: Develop financial literacy
2. Critical & Creative Thinkers: Demonstrate a willingness to take academic risks
3. Problem Solvers: Prioritize purposeful solutions that result in an action plan to develop both short and long-term solutions
4. Problem Solvers: Seek continuous improvement through self-reflection, growth mindset, and constructive criticism

Students:

1. Responsible: Develop financial literacy
2. Critical & Creative Thinkers: Refine, strengthen, and redesign ideas fluidly
3. Critical & Creative Thinkers: Understand how curricular material connects to the real world
MWCC: Bright Spots

Educators:
1. **Thrive**: Meaningfully contribute to creating a better world
2. **Explore**: Seek opportunities to find things I'm passionate or curious about and pursue them
3. **Aspire**: Seek opportunities to align myself with my goals and vision for my future
4. **Contribute**: Practice empathy and compassion to those in my world
5. **Connect**: Understand that my story is unique to me, but others' stories have important value

Students*:
1. **Confident Communicators**: Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
2. **Confident Communicators**: Actively listen and ask questions to further a conversation
3. **Confident Communicators**: Know how to use professional communication methods, including email, telephone, and in-person

*Due to technical difficulties, MWCC student data included only "thrive" and "confident communicators" data
MWCC: Room for Growth

Educators:

1. Responsible: Develop financial literacy
2. Adapt: Determine a plan to seek help when faced with struggles with my mental and physical healthy
3. Changemaker: Understand capacity to create positive change, demonstrating courageous and empathetic leadership
4. Changemaker: Feel empowered to lead and join teams in making a difference

Students*:

1. Thrive: Use my skillset and resources to solve problems I see in the world
2. Confident Communicators: Demonstrate an understanding of how visual communications are developed and perceived
3. Thrive: Pursue activities outside my comfort zone

*Due to technical difficulties, MWCC student data included only "thrive" and "confident communicators" data
Winchendon: Bright Spots

**Educators:**
1. **Connect:** Utilize interpersonal communications to enhance and maintain my connections with others
2. **Self-Aware:** Identify career interests based on understanding of passions, skills, and real-life practice
3. **Confident Communicators:** Actively listen and ask questions to further a conversation
4. **Problem Solvers:** Work collaboratively with a team and utilize multiple perspectives before making final conclusions

**Students:**
1. **Confident Communicators:** Seek to understand and offer respect for the identity of individuals
2. **Confident Communicators:** Demonstrate a willingness to become culturally competent
3. **Connect:** Create meaningful connections with those around me to learn more about them and myself
4. **Connect:** Understand that my story is unique to me, but other's stories have important value
Winchendon: Room for Growth

**Educators:**

1. **Aspire:** Examine the challenges that exist in my world and take responsibility to overcome them
2. **Aspire:** Seek opportunities to align myself with my goals and vision for my future
3. **Aspire:** Practice my skills in environments in which I may not be totally comfortable
4. **Problem Solvers:** Seek continuous improvement through self-reflection, growth mindset, and constructive criticism

**Students:**

1. **Responsible:** Develop financial literacy
2. **Critical & Creative Thinkers:** Refine, strengthen, and redesign ideas fluidly
3. **Aspire:** Practice skills in environments in which I may not be totally comfortable
4. **Thrive:** Pursue activities outside my comfort zone