

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 29, 2023

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MWCC Awarded \$1.3 Million in State Grants

Funds for Capital Improvements and Supporting Early College Program

Collaboration with Local High Schools

Gardner, MA - State Representative Jonathan Zlotnik (D-Gardner) announced a pair of state grants awarded to Mount Wachusett Community College. Mount Wachusett Community College was awarded an Early College Support Grant as part of the FY24 round of awards and also received funding through Fair Share funds as part of the FY24 state budget.

The Early College Support Grant Program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Education. These targeted grants provide resources to designated Early College programs and funding helps to support the partnership of both the designated secondary school and institute of higher education.

The FY24 Early College Support Grant awarded \$400,000 for Early College program collaboration between Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State University with the following schools: Athol High School, Fitchburg High School, Gardner Academy for Learning & Technology, Gardner High School, Leominster High School, Narragansett Regional High School and the Sizer School.

Additionally, Mount Wachusett College also received \$791,694 that will help to fund projects that advance decarbonization efforts, address deferred maintenance, and increase the overall climate resilience of the campus.

“Early college opportunities have been an asset for our students,” stated **Representative Zlotnik**. “It is especially advantageous for us to have this in our own backyard at MWCC. There are many individuals at the college and the school department who enable this program to be successful. Their effort, the funding from the state, and the commitment from local officials will make sure this continues and will be available to more students.”

“I’m proud of our early college program and incredibly grateful for the financial support from the state,” stated **Mayor Nicholson**. “It is crucial to continuing these programs.”

“We are so grateful for the commitment of Representative Zlotnik and the entire Legislature for their support of early college opportunities,” stated **Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven**. “These programs have proven to change lives and we look forward to our continued efforts to serve the region.”

“Approximately 30% of our juniors and seniors are taking advantage of our immersive Early College Program with Mount Wachusett Community College” stated **Gardner Public Schools Superintendent Mark Pellegrino**. “Taking between three and five classes each semester during their junior and senior years, our students are graduating with one to two years worth of college credits. Our program recently expanded by partnering with Fitchburg State University, providing additional business and English courses on Gardner High School's campus. In addition to these advanced programs, we also have a dropout prevention dual enrollment program known nationally as Gateway to College. In Gateway to College, approximately 100 students from area high schools (16 from Gardner), receive an alternative high school education on the Mount's campus. These programs support equitable access to college, and drastically improve the likelihood that participants will succeed in college. Over fifty students graduated with high school diplomas and associate degrees last year. Ultimately, these programs not only support our students, they also help many families by providing a two-year college education, free of charge. They also support our local businesses as students become graduates, and ultimately job candidates at a younger age. Thank you Representative Zlotnik for working in partnership with your fellow legislators to make these programs sustainable.”

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