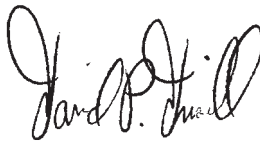


A large, light blue outline of the state of Massachusetts is centered on the page. Above the top-right corner of the state outline is a large, light blue outline of a five-pointed star. The entire graphic is set against a solid light blue background.

# Work-Based Learning: STORIES FROM STUDENTS

Reaching and engaging students in new ways requires constant effort as different times create different challenges. Districts around the Commonwealth have seen firsthand that structured work-based learning — typically called “internships” — raises student performance and positively affects other areas of a young person’s life.

This booklet captures some of the stories students have experienced during the past school year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David P. Driscoll". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

# JOHANNA DENOWITZ

Southwick-Tolland Regional High School  
Southwick-Tolland Animal Hospital



“I feel like I have some direction in my life,” explains Johanna Denowitz, a senior at Southwick-Tolland Regional High School. Johanna interns at Southwick-Tolland Animal Hospital, where she preps animals for surgery, gives shots, draws blood, and works with the customers at the front desk.

“So many kids don’t know what they want to do. I always thought that I would work with animals, but I wasn’t really sure what it would be like. Now I

know I have three options: I can jump into a job, go get a bachelor’s degree, or continue school to be a vet.”

Her focus and gain of certain skills she credits to the staff, who have made her “feel good about who I am and that I can do whatever I want to do. There were so many things that I was afraid to do before that now I am confident with.

**“Not only have I been accepted to college but I know what I want to do and I have a strong background in my field.”**

“When I came here I wasn’t just put at the bottom cleaning kennels but actually got to jump in and do real hands-on work with the animals. Everyday is something different,” she says.

She plans to attend State University of New York at Delhi in the fall and study within the veterinarian technician program. “Not only have I been accepted to college but I know what I want to do and I have a strong background in my field.”

# DIVA ORNELAS

Taunton High School  
Texas Instruments



Diva: front row, far right, white bag

Junior Diva Ornelas worked with 11 other female students from four other schools to produce a circuit breaker test fixture to stop wires from overheating. Texas Instruments intends to use the product for military aircrafts.

Once a week for an entire year the young women came together, under the direction of a Texas Instruments mentor, as part of a larger Women In Technology

program, which Texas Instruments developed to inspire female students in the field of science and technology.

“I really didn’t know much about technology until I came to Texas Instruments,” Diva says, noting that it’s exciting learning about a field that is traditionally dominated by men. Diva plans to study technology or fiber optics at a four-year college.

**“I really didn’t know much about technology until I came to Texas Instruments,” Diva says, noting that it’s exciting learning about a field that is traditionally dominated by men.**

“I understand my classes a lot more because I’m seeing how to apply all the information. It’s a lot better than just reading it in a book.” Furthermore, with an interest in theater, she has applied her knowledge of new technology to stage lighting and set design and hopes to connect her two passions in a future career.

# GARY SPRIGGS

Wayland High School  
Fleet Center

“At first I didn’t know what to expect in working at the Fleet Center,” says Wayland High School senior Gary Spriggs. “After only a few days I was put in charge of an important marketing project for my office.”



During the three weeks he worked at the Premium Seating Office, Gary researched and produced a brochure promoting a trip to Bermuda for skybox ticket-holders as a refund for the games they missed during the NBA strike last year.

Gary was responsible for writing and organizing information promoting Bermuda attractions to entice ticketholders to take the trip.

He explains, “Although my internship was not something I would like to be doing for rest of my life, it was still a great opportunity to learn about my career interests.”

**“After only a few days I was put in charge of an important marketing project for my office.”**

Gary plans to study business finance at the University of Hartford and one day wants to be a stockbroker.

# KRYSTLE BOURBEAU

Worcester Vocational High School  
Culinary Arts



“I don’t think that I would be working where I am at now if it wasn’t for my vocational education,” states senior Krystle Bourbeau of Worcester Vocational High School. Krystle is currently cooking at O’Flaherty’s piano pub in the Worcester area.

Her school’s culinary arts program included math courses addressing measurement and ingredients, nutrition classes and instruction on sanitation requirements, building displays for the school’s bake shop as well as managing food orders.

“I never thought that I would be applying my math skills to cooking but it has been so useful when trying to convert recipes and get the exact measurements,” says Krystle.

“It’s fun working with the new machines and I feel confident in getting a job at any bakery.”

**“I never thought that I would be applying my math skills to cooking but it has been so useful when trying to convert recipes and get the exact measurements.”**

She plans to attend Quinsigamond Community College and study hotel-restaurant management and continue on to Clark University to study her other favorite field, psychology.

# MONTY CAGWIN

Nauset High School

*Cape Codder Newspaper*



Photos by Monty Cagwin  
published in the *Cape Codder  
Newspaper*



“My internship has taught me about how a newspaper is run and I am gaining so many new skills which I couldn’t have learned in just the classroom.”

With a longtime interest in photography, Monty wanted to explore work in a related profession. When his school launched an art internship program, Monty jumped at the opportunity to intern at the *Cape Codder Newspaper*.

At first Monty had the opportunity to “job shadow” the daily work of Barry Donahue, one of the newspaper’s photographers. Soon Monty was assigned stories to photograph, and eventually wrote stories as well.

Initially thinking he would be assigned mainly darkroom work, Monty said, “it turned out way better than what I had expected and I didn’t realize that I would be out doing so much.”

The internship turned into a full-time job offer at the paper, which he has turned down to attend Ithaca College to study television and radio production.

“My internship has taught me about how a newspaper is run and I am gaining so many new skills which I couldn’t have learned in just the classroom.”

# PHILLIP HALE

Andover High School  
Quantic Communications



Andover High School senior Phillip Hale is the first to pilot an internship program for his high school at Quantic Communications. The internship has solidified Phil's interests for a future career path in graphic communication and design.

"Many students have an idea about what they want to do but until they experience it, they can't really know what it is going to be like." He adds, "If I hadn't come here, I don't think that I would have an idea of what I wanted to do."

Phil spends two days a week after school working at Quantic. He's participated in watching a product from start to finish — from a brainstorming session, to design, to production — for print, video and software products.

**"If I didn't come here I don't think that I would have an idea of what I wanted to do."**

Phil says he can clearly see the parallel between his class and work experience and describes how even his math came into use with an algebra project that Quantic Communications has been doing.

Phil will major in graphic communications at Franklin Pierce College in the fall.

# YADIRA ACEVEDO

Assabet Valley Regional  
Technical High School  
Polaris

“Assabet has prepared me for a career; and, because of the Business Technology program, I know what I want to do,” expressed senior Yadira Acevedo who works in the accounts payable department at Polaris, a computer company in Marlboro.

“They give me a great deal of responsibility. It’s a completely different feeling there than the feeling school gives you. At Polaris, they treat you like an adult.”

Her job involves a lot of accounting work, tracking payments, paying bills for the company, and helping the company keep their financial books organized.

**“Assabet has prepared me for a career; and, because of the Business Technology program, I know what I want to do.”**

Yadira’s work at Polaris and the experience with the company has taken her academic abilities a step further. “I have developed confidence in my accounting skills and I feel like I have a solid background from which to pursue a future career in the field,” Yadira says.

As a senior, Yadira says she is not only leaving Assabet knowledgeable in her academic classes but she has also acquired a marketable skill to enter the career world. Yadira explains that “computers are the key to tomorrow’s career success” and this notion has strengthened her interest in Business Technology.

Yadira plans to attend Johnson and Wales next fall and major in Business and Accounting. She would like to become a certified public accountant and ideally work for a public or private business.

# MINDY MCGURK

Somerville High School  
Health Careers



Senior Mindy McGurk of Somerville High School knew that she wanted to become a doctor or nurse, but before investing thousands of dollars to pursue a healthcare career, she needed a vehicle to explore — and experience — the occupations. Her high school's Health Careers program answered her call.

“Without the class I wouldn't be the same person I am today,” she says, adding, “let's just say I now look forward to coming to school.”

The two-year program explores careers in the medical profession, which culminates in a state exam, ultimately certifying students to be nursing assistants. “I realize school can be a lot more than just listening to a teacher talk for 45 minutes,” she notes.

“My communications skills, my confidence and my patience to work with others has grown enormously,” she says, adding other learned attributes such as meeting deadlines, drafting reports, having uniforms ready for work and demonstrating responsibility with patients and supervisors.

**“Without the class I wouldn't be the same person I am today,” she says, adding, “let's just say I now look forward to coming to school.”**

“My English and physiology classes have been really helpful in improving my writing skills for patient evaluations and understanding the human body,” she says. Her class time revolves around working together in teams

on specific projects related to the medical field.

Mindy plans to attend a four-year college and study rehab therapy or health psychology. She works after school and on the weekends as a dietary aid at the Jeanne Jugan Residence in Somerville.

# JASON CROWDLE

Minuteman Regional High School  
Shumacher Landscaping

At the age of fourteen, Jason Crowdle began his own business mowing neighborhood lawns. Now, as owner of J.C. Landscaping, he has office space,



two trucks and four employees. The growth and success of his company can be credited to the hard work Jason has displayed in the Horticulture program at Minuteman Regional High School.

“Before Minuteman, I had thought that landscaping was about mowing lawns and planting flowers.” After four years in the Horticulture program, he says there is more to the field than just the physical labor.

He notes his classes — such as plant science, business, and management courses — widened his originally narrow perspective.

Ever the businessman, he credits the Horticulture program for the opportunity to make key contacts in the horticultural community and for the opportunity to work with other students whom he later hired to help develop his business.

After completing his paid co-op position at Schumacher Landscaping (a large landscaping business), Jason has reversed his interests in owning a large company. “I’d rather go for quality and small,” he says.

He acknowledged Minuteman’s education as crucial to his current management abilities. “Minuteman gets you ready for the real world.”

# TIMOTHY DRESSER

Blackstone Valley Regional  
Vocational Technical High School  
Waters Cooperative



“I chose Blackstone because I wanted to go someplace where I could gain a skill and not just a diploma when I graduated,” says Timothy Dresser.

Now a first year student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute studying electrical engineering, he

will represent the United States in an international electronics competition in the fall.

“I wouldn’t be doing as well as I am if I didn’t go to Valley,” Tim says. He spent his four high school years in the Electronics program at Blackstone.

Tim went on a paid co-op experience his senior year at a company called Waters where he worked on analytical chemistry equipment — he alternated every two weeks between the internship and two weeks of classes.

**“I chose Blackstone because I wanted to go someplace where I could gain a skill and not just a diploma when I graduated.”**

“There’s just certain things you can’t get in your high school classes,” Tim says, citing such things as managing projects,

dealing professionally with clients and co-workers, making deadlines, acting responsibly, and making smart decisions. Waters offered Tim a full-time job when the work experience ended.

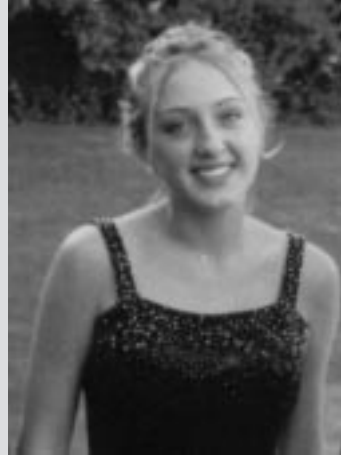
Tim says that his time at Blackstone helped him realize what he does and doesn’t want to do. “Valley prepared me for many of my classes at WPI.”

After Tim finishes his four years at WPI, he plans to go onto a graduate school program in mechanical engineering.

# KRISTEN BLANCHARD

Pittsfield High School  
Canyon Ranch

“Before this experience I didn’t know what I wanted to do. Now I know what I want to study when I go to college,” says Kristen Blanchard, a junior at Pittsfield High School. “My internship has given me a taste of what a career in travel and tourism would really be like and I feel confident that this is the career I want to pursue.”



As a student in the two-year Travel and Tourism Academy, she takes business classes focused on industry practices, participates in a structured internship centered around a work-based learning plan, and can earn an industry-recognized certificate upon successfully completing the program.

**“Before this experience I didn’t know what I wanted to do. Now I know what I want to study when I go to college.”**

Coupled with her desire to travel, Kristen entered the program and found a personal interest in Hotel Management. Her internship exposed her to various responsibilities, ranging from working in the resort’s restaurant to handling the

front desk. All of her positions greatly improved her ability in dealing with people and has developed a strong work ethic.

She plans to apply to a four-year college and continue in her study of tourism.

# COLLEEN SHAVER

Clinton High School

FIRST Robotics Competition



Before Colleen Shaver started her FIRST — For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology — Robotics Competition, she thought “engineers were people who drove trains.” Now, after three years of being one of the first females to drive her school’s robot, she hopes to pursue her own career in engineering by designing flight systems.

“FIRST gave me the ability to put ideas on paper and make them work.... I can now apply the skills I learned in the classroom to the actual hands-on work at the job.”

FIRST brings together corporations, university and high school faculty to help students build robots for high tech competitions against other schools. With the help of teachers and engineers, students are responsible for implementing and designing their school’s robot and readying it for competitions.

“I have been learning important work skills on how to meet deadlines, work in a team and be respectful by listening to others,” Colleen says.

As one of the first females in the position of head driver of the robot, she has become an influential leader to other students involved in the program and has exemplified the achievement one can accomplish through hard work and commitment.

FIRST has made Colleen more focused in her other classes. She finds that she manages her time better among classes, work, and activities. “I still have a busy schedule, but I’m better organized.”

She plans to attend Boston University next fall on a scholarship and will be enrolled in the engineering department with a potential minor in music.

**“FIRST gave me the ability to put ideas on paper and make them work.... I can now apply the skills I learned in the classroom to the actual hands-on work at the job.”**

# JOALFI PENA

Whittier Regional Technical High School  
Marketing

Joalfi Pena hopes to own a business in the medical field, connecting his enthusiasm for biology and business.

To make real his hopes, he enrolled in Whittier. After a few weeks exploring the 17 different career areas available at the school, he felt confident focusing on the Marketing program.



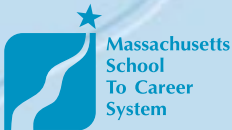
**“I am learning a lot of things about how to manage a company.”**

After one year of vocational technical education, he speaks of patience and responsibility as crucial traits for a successful business mind. Joalfi helps to manage his school’s store where he is in charge of filing and billing for all store orders.

“I am learning a lot of things about how to manage a company to help me prepare for my future,” he says.

Already, he looks forward to work-based learning opportunities for his senior year and wishes he could have such experiences sooner.

Written by Megan Budds  
Massachusetts Promise Fellow



Massachusetts Office for School to Career Transition  
Department of Education

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